

THE LIVE FASHION SHOW IN MEDIATIZED CONSUMER CULTURE

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the fashion show and its mediatization as a microcosm of online media's impact on consumer culture. The contemporary fashion show is a brief, one-off live performance that presents a fashion house or brand's upcoming seasonal collection to industrial insiders and invited clientele. The fashion show is the locus of communication between corporations and consumers and an arena in which commodities, personnel and industrial practices intersect. With the widespread mediatization of social life and the prevalence of digital media use in fashion in the past decade, critics mused that the live fashion show could become obsolete. Instead, its structure remains intact, and the entire circuit has mutated into an online spectacle, live streamed and proliferated in video, photographic and textual formats on multiple media platforms and applications. The fact that consumers can now see a collection at the moment of its debut marks a fundamental shift in fashion communication timeframes. Nonetheless, access to the fashion show remains limited to an elite cohort of fashion personnel, influencers and celebrities. This dissertation argues that the fashion show remains a focal event because it transmits the entire exclusive performance to an online spectatorship with an aim to build consumer desire to participate in fashion – desire fulfilled in networked interactions and material purchases. I seek to here to problematize claims that the mediatization of the fashion show renders fashion democratic or accessible. To this end, I draw from performance and mediatization theories to illuminate that the fashion show's elite nature is predicated on a literal and social distinction between spectators' temporal *and* spatial access. I perform qualitative close readings of fashion shows and transmitted footage and utilize content analysis and virtual and on-site participant observation to examine the class-based social relations that underpin and are re-asserted in mediatized fashion representations. This dissertation moreover situates the fashion show as a focal site via which to assess the social, industrial and material transformations that mediatization has effected in fashion's economies.

for Brian Batchelor

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Introduction

On October 6, 2009, Alexander McQueen live streamed the Paris Fashion Week presentation of his Spring/Summer 2010 ready-to wear collection, entitled “Plato’s Atlantis”. This initiative marked one of the first documented attempts by a fashion house to stream its seasonal fashion show on the Internet in so-called ‘real time’: meaning that members of the public could watch the model procession at the moment it happened. The presentation feed was transmitted via *SHOWstudio*, a website dedicated to the creation and showcase of experimental fashion film, as well as on the fashion house’s own website (Uhlirova, 2013a, p. 152). As part of the spectacle, during the finale procession, Lady Gaga gave a debut performance of her soon-to-be hit single “Bad Romance”. Thirty minutes prior to the online broadcast, Lady Gaga tweeted to her millions of followers that she would premiere the single at the fashion show (Mower, 2009c: para. 1). The subsequent rush of online traffic to *SHOWstudio* crashed the site, and untold numbers of online spectators were denied their chance to witness the fashion show at the same time as the invited attendees. Critic Sarah Mower commented that this occurrence “may have replicated, in a whole new audience, the sensation of a young hopeful stuck outside a McQueen presentation, waving a standing ticket and being unable to get in” (2009c: para. 1). Mower’s prescient observation captures the tension between the fashion show live stream as a medium that both democratizes fashion and reinforces the exclusive nature of the live performance – one that reminds online spectators that they are still not *there*.

The fashion show finds its origins in Paris in the mid-1800s, in the salons of couturiers such as Charles Frederick Worth and later Paul Poiret. The show was then termed the *mannequin parade*, a performance in which female models (or mannequins) walked about in salons, bedecked in the latest creations available for adaptation, before an audience of aristocratic clients,

retail buyers and, later, members of the press. The contemporary fashion show maintains much of this tradition: in its fundamental iteration, it is a one-off live performance of brief duration, usually lasting from ten to 30 minutes, during which a fashion house presents its upcoming seasonal collection to industrial insiders. The usual audience is comprised of retail buyers, media personnel – both accredited journalists and, more recently, fashion bloggers and other influencers – and a roster of invited clientele, often a combination of preferred customers, It-personalities specific to fashion, and celebrities.ⁱ The fashion show continues to be both an artistic celebration and an industrial event, and functions as the locus of mediation between corporations and consumers. Fashion shows offer a platform for the designer or fashion house to communicate a set of cultural aesthetics and references: while this is achieved via the collection itself, fashion shows also enhance this aesthetic through theatrical or conceptual production elements (Clark, 2001; Evans, 2001, 2003; Duggan, G. G., 2001). Attendees are then tasked with interpreting the collection for the consumer public, either as written content or in the form of retail orders (Clark, 2001; Entwistle, 2009). Fashion shows result from confluences between multiple stakeholders, all tasked with event coordination and the communication of a unified vision. Companies use numerous, separate firms to produce one fashion show, dealing with such demarcated areas as model casting, invitations, seating charts and press relations, in consultation with brands' own public relations divisions (Associate, 2017, n.p.).ⁱⁱ Even more basic fashion shows without opulent theatrics are often expensive affairs, especially when one considers the added technical costs of live streaming and other transmission methods.ⁱⁱⁱ

Fashion Weeks are scheduled *series* of fashion shows and as such form a demarcated arena in which commodities, personnel and specific social and industrial practices intersect. These events are concentrated in specific cities and often include separate trade shows or trade

fairs in addition to runway presentations (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2011; Skov, 2006). The most important Fashion Weeks are held on a biannual basis in New York, London, Milan and Paris for the seasonal presentation of women's ready-to-wear collections: in Chapter One, I outline the respective histories of their establishment. The storied "Big Four" circuit has been termed Fashion Month in this decade, since the Fashion Weeks are held back-to-back, and international personnel spend extended periods of time in transit between destinations and between individual shows (see Craik, 2013).^{iv} This dissertation focuses on fashion shows held in the "Big Four" series: firstly as Fashion Month constitutes its own defined unit of investigation, and secondly because press discussions on the state of the industry tend to happen in tandem with Fashion Month. My examination of fashion shows starts at the end of the last decade, when fashion started to experiment with digital media use and live streaming, and continues through to the adoption of an *instant fashion* or in-season presentation model in 2016.

The Mediatized Fashion Show

With the widespread adoption of online and digital media and e-commerce tools over the past decade, fashion personnel have questioned the fashion show's usefulness and even predicted its obsolescence in the face of more direct and cost-effective communication mechanisms (see Menkes, 2010; Wang & Brillson, 2013).^v Instead, the fashion show's structure remains intact, and the performance has mutated into a mediatized spectacle: one that is streamed online in 'real time,' transmitted in photographic, textual and video formats, archived for consumers' convenient access, and, in recent seasons, used as a promotional tool for collection releases on brands' e-commerce platforms. Representations of the indoor performances, backstage scenes and the streets outside venues circulate on fashion media sites, blogs (independent and attached to media outlets and brands) and an ever-increasing number of social media platforms. These

processes comprise a phenomenon that fashion scholar Agnès Rocamora (2017) terms the *mediatization of fashion*, part and parcel of an overall mediatization of social life and practice. Social and technical processes of mediatization have not simply altered consumers' access to and interactions with fashion show content but have restructured the modes of interaction that happen at the event sites themselves. As a research area, fashion in a mediatized consumer culture has started to gain concerted scholastic attention, and this dissertation is the first to examine the fashion show in detail as a site imbricated within multi-directional mediatization processes. While Rocamora dates fashion's mediatization to the first print publications, she calls for new studies of fashion's total, mediatized condition, and the transformation of the fashion show into "a public spectacle and entertainment addressed to a worldwide audience" (2017, p. 509). I offer a detailed examination of the fashion show's screen-based transmissions and close readings of particular fashion shows that explicate the complex interplay between the live and the mediatized and its implications for fashion's commercial aims.

This dissertation asserts that despite consumers' increased virtual and temporal access to fashion content, the fashion show in a mediatized climate functions to manifest high fashion as an aspirational realm. I intend here to probe how online spectators' absence from the performance space proper creates a tension between temporal and spatial access, in which the latter presupposes social membership to the exclusion of others. The representative examples I discuss establish that media representations of the fashion show position attendees as members of an elite set and the fashion show as a privileged and even rare experience, even as insiders attend dozens if not hundreds of such shows in one Fashion Week series. Brands promote the notion that the live stream and related content have democratized the fashion show as consumer-driven precisely in order to utilize the fashion show as a direct tool to build consumer interest

and desire. Representations operate through a phenomenon that performance theorist Joseph Roach terms *synthetic experience*, in which spectators feel a mode of “vicarious” identification with elite individuals and celebrities and a desire to inhabit their position (2007, pp. 26-27). Attention paid to the audience member – from fashion houses, media outlets and consumers – aids in desire production not just because of the economic capital that he or she embodies but also because of the dominant social position that he or she *represents*. Fashion houses and media outlets refocus attention onto the live event to instill in consumers the desire to participate in fashion: this is then fulfilled via consumers’ own immaterial labour and material purchases.

While Fashion Week has historically been an invitation-only event (or event series), this dissertation explores the extent to which it has transformed into a mediatized performance that reinforces the glamour of the complete live event for the remote spectator. Here, the element of spectacle resides not in the theatrical presentation but in the overall technical presentation. I examine instances in which online media re-assert the fashion show’s exclusivity, or fail to make the fashion show as immediate as brands might claim. Walter Benjamin (1936) declared that the artistic aura of the authentic work of art, in the face of mass reproduction, was solidified through modes of *ritual* use or appreciation. The fashion show as a ritual event consecrates the aura of the collection – its claim to authorship and originality and its cachet as a creative work. While online media render the fashion show virtually accessible in ‘real time,’ the live performance remains closed-off; rather, online media enhance the cultural status of the *live* event as ritual and thus elevate the collection in the consumer consciousness. The fashion show’s mediatization therefore both produces and exploits tensions between democratization and exclusivity. In order to probe these tensions, this dissertation focuses on the embodied relations that comprise the fashion show: both those in the literal performance space and the various modes of spectatorship

that online media instantiate. I trace the fashion show first from its existence as an immediate, *live* performance; then as a broadcast and transmitted event; then as the central component of interactive social media initiatives; and finally as a series of circulated representations. This focus on embodiment within mediatization illuminates spectator positionalities as the basis on which fashion differentiates insiders from outsiders, on which levels of access are offered or denied, and on which the presentation is communicated and received. Moreover, I document the effects of media use on embodied social interactions between personnel *within* the literal environments – relations that are now rendered visible in a heretofore unseen manner.

I further seek to illustrate how the fashion show, as a formalized but evolving construct, operates as a barometer for interconnected concerns that media innovations present to fashion and consumer culture. Moreover, analysis of online content and the material (or *live*) events themselves illuminates the crucial role of media use in insiders' decisions and movements. The mediatization of the fashion show has intersected with a host of interrelated communication shifts that have occurred in fashion and broader consumer culture in the new millennium. Studies of transformations in the processes of the fashion press mention the fashion show's transmission as an exemplar of a host of phenomena that include the invention of fashion blogs, overhauls to fashion media websites, instant information, the creation of digital fashion film, and e-commerce and social media platforms (see Rocamora, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016).^{vi} This dissertation reframes scholars' observations on the fashion press around the fashion show as a focal site: firstly, it illustrates the fashion show as the conduit that informs processes, timeframes and content of communication, while, secondly, it situates the fashion show as an event whose material nature persists while new professional relations, commercial endeavours and mediatized practices have formed around, in response to and in tension with it. Innovations in the production and retail

sectors have aided the rise of global *fast fashion* corporations such as Zara, H&M, Forever 21, Topshop and Joe Fresh that have invaded the market via a business model based on knock-off fashions at rock-bottom prices, the use of Third World labour and a rapid rate of product turnover (Joy, et al., 2012). Critics and designers have blamed the instant transmission of fashion collections for increased consumer impatience for the latest content and commodities that has fuelled the market for imitations and placed a demand on designers to produce off-season collections ahead of fast fashion retailers (see Sherman, 2010). At the same time, the sheer *number* of individual fashion shows has metastasized, creating an accelerated and endless production and presentation cycle. Resultant incidences of creative and mental burnout remain a prevalent issue. In 2016, a trade report found that stakeholders were concerned with the need to keep abreast of media innovations; the increased pace of production; the movement towards consumer-driven presentation models; and competition from fast fashion brands (CFDA, 2016). Personnel's overall faithfulness to the Fashion Week model, however, demonstrates that the fashion show remains a crucial industrial and social construct. Rather than render the fashion show obsolete, this dissertation establishes that mediatization has become evermore integral to brand communication as a means to transmit all facets of the fashion show itself.

Fashion show live streams and the 'instant' circulation of fashion show content have prompted scholars and critics to declare that the fashion show and even fashion as a social institution have become (further) democratized. These assertions are based, in part, on the fact that consumers can now see collections at the moment of their runway debut rather than wait six months to see the clothes in print media and in stores – visual information that scholars and critics have framed as temporal access.^{vii} This development constitutes a seismic shift in *fashion time*: timeframes of production, presentation, reportage and retail, which have been “accelerated,”

“fragmented” and “restructured” in the face of online and digital media (Rocamora, 2012, p. 97; see also Rocamora, 2013).^{viii} Related ‘democratic’ phenomena include fast fashion corporations – which offer both designer copies and capsule collections; the advent of digital fashion film; e-commerce innovations; fashion-themed reality television; and the explosion of the blogosphere (Geczy & Karaminas, 2016; Pous, 2013). Such features and occurrences offer instant visual access to or information about fashion and commodities, opportunities for outsiders to produce their own content, or material access to commodities at various price echelons. Fashion scholar Helen Warner (2014) summarizes that “democratization” has referred to a plethora of historical innovations in communication, production and retail promoted through media institutions:

[W]henever industrial, cultural or economic conditions alter within the industry there are claims that fashion is becoming ‘democratized’. The phrase ‘democratization of fashion is employed within popular discourse [and here academic discourse] whenever a shift occurs that results in fashion becoming in some way accessible to, or influenced by, the ‘masses’. Significantly, the media often plays a central role in the ‘democratization’ process. (p. 32)

Scholars state that a first wave of democratization occurred in the mid-19th century and continued into the 20th with the advent of mass communication, cinema and mass-produced clothing (Geczy & Karaminas, 2016; Schorman, 2003). The invention of smaller, “practical” sewing machines in the 1850s did not just revolutionize the tailoring and dressmaking sectors but offered consumers access to the means of production and replication at home (Walsh, 1979, p. 301). Print media publications assisted this democratization, circulating both trend information and “reliable” paper dress patterns that members of the lesser classes could use to sew their own clothes (Walsh, 1979, pp. 300-302; see also Warner, 2014, p. 32).^{ix} One hundred years later, in a second wave, the live stream has been identified as one of several alterations to consumers’ interaction with fashion content. Up until the invention of the live stream, fashion shows had been “the preserve of an elite given the privilege to see the collections months ahead of their

appearance in print media and in shops” (Rocamora, 2012, p. 97). The live stream thus bequeaths a level of information on the latest trends and commodities that had previously not existed.

Moreover, until companies embraced the live stream, the interpretation of the collection was the *sole* purview of the immediate audience. Now, amateur critics can circulate looks and produce commentaries on collections from their media devices without setting foot in Fashion Month environments: a level of access that troubles not just insiders’ roles but their authoritative claims.

Fashion scholars Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas echo Rocamora’s observations but characterize the public’s access as spatial: “Where once the runway show was the domain of press elites, journalists and catwalk photographers, now the public can access ‘front row’ seats to major couture collections” (2016, p. 112; see also Pous, 2013). The use of scare quotes around ‘front row’ refers to our perception of closeness to the garments and to the cachet of the positions occupied by fashion’s most *elite* elites. Citing Burberry’s 2011 #Tweetwalk campaign, in which the brand tweeted photographs of collection pieces prior to the fashion show’s start, Rocamora states that social media all but eliminated fashion shows’ exclusive nature: “Twitter users could see the clothes before they appeared in front of the audience of buyers, journalists, celebrities, and other fashion insiders, putting one more nail in the coffin of the shows’ elitism” (2013, p. 74). However, while online and social media have erased the time lapse in which looks are revealed to consumers, scholars still frame audiences’ visual, material and temporal access in terms that position insiders *as such*. Fashion critics Connie Wang and Leila Brillson paint fashion shows as commercialized performances of insider status that “inherently make the industry feel exclusive” (2013, para. 3). Their use of the word “feel” suggests that the fashion show’s exclusive nature is in part an illusion, or that its live element is an affect or quality. This dissertation, however, presupposes that high fashion as an industry *is* exclusive, and that the fashion show’s function is

to communicate this fact and thus to maintain fashion's industrial structures. Indeed, as this dissertation will illustrate, claims to fashion's democratization or lesser elitism from fashion studies and the fashion press parallel similar statements in media studies and related trade and commercial publications of online media as both democratic in a political sense and as democratized for consumer use. These claims, as I will describe below, have been questioned as optimistic, utopian and made in the service of media institutions' commercial aims.

This dissertation is predicated, much like the aura of the fashion show, on a qualitative *distinction* between spatial presence and temporal presence (Auslander, 2008a) – a demarcation between those bodies present in the immediate environment and consumers that access the content in the virtual realm. The press understands this difference when they state that, “[B]eing able to say ‘I was there?’ It seems that that is still priceless” (Pous, 2013, para. 12). Geczy & Karaminas nuance definitions of *exclusive* as “elite” and as inaccessible, “what seeks to exist in isolation, at the expense of everything else” (2016, p. 16). While they refer to the other worlds depicted in fashion photographs, fashion show representations also demonstrate similar effects of distance and remove. The fashion show as a *live* performance remains an exclusive event, with a select number of influential individuals permitted to see the material collection *in that space*. Despite prompting industrial reflection on the efficacies of fashion shows and Fashion Weeks, mediatization has not usurped the fashion show but has aided in its dissemination and instilled consumer interest in the immediate performance. The fashion shows that I discuss demonstrate moreover how the fashion show positions high fashion as an elite socioeconomic realm. At stake in the conversations that surround the fashion show in this decade are issues of mediatization versus the *live* and of consumerism versus high fashion's discourses of rarity and auteurship.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

This dissertation combines theoretical lenses from the fields of media studies, sociology performance studies, fashion studies, cultural studies and affect studies in order to locate the contemporary fashion show within a period of instant communication and consumer access and to frame the social and industrial effects of its mediatization. The following theoretical overview defines in detail these frameworks and the interrelated terms utilized within them. I first situate the current, supposed democratization of fashion within social debates over fashion's foundation on class, in particular the theories of Pierre Bourdieu, and outline research on Fashion Week as a manifestation of Bourdieu's social field. Fashion scholars often draw from these foundational theories to characterize fashion in terms of socioeconomic representations and consumer choices. Relevant theories of mediatization elaborate how media has informed consumer interactions with fashion shows and related content. I combine definitions of mediatization from media studies and performance studies to foreground the fashion show's condition as a live, immediate performance transmitted to an online spectatorship. Theories of *affect* in relation to live performance and its virtual circulation further illuminate experiential differences between spatial and temporal presence but also account for the fashion show's role in the production of desire in networked social formations. In a mediatized era, affect comes to assume a crucial function in both embodied and virtual relations. This dissertation unites affect theories that account for social and corporeal relations and describe the production and circulation of affect within and across the fashion show's literal and virtual realms. I read fashion show content in terms of fashion companies' attempts to manufacture affect and/as desire within brand-affiliated social media networks through the exertion of *affective labour* that is itself embodied. Participants in the mediatized spectacle from models to fashion editors and digital influencers undertake a

separate form of *glamour labour* catered to screen-based devices and the reception processes these instantiate. Consumers' interactions with fashion shows assume forms of *immaterial* and even *free labour* in the service of brands and of broader retail and promotional discourses.

Fashion, Consumer Culture and Class

This dissertation takes as its basis discussions of fashion's foundations on socioeconomic structures, as well as debates as to whether fashion and consumer culture can be considered more or less democratic at certain historical times. Fashion's nature as democratic refers in these cases to opportunities to purchase fashionable looks and commodities, more nuanced socioeconomic classifications, and more fluid class mobilities. The present tension between the fashion show's position as elite versus accessible parallels historical dialectics between exclusivity and democratization, predicated on class and related constructs. Pierre Bourdieu's theories of social distinction illustrate that practices of cultural consumption reflect and reinforce class hierarchies. For the dominant classes, attention to form and aesthetics precedes that of function (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 3-4). Fashion or sartorial choices are made based on similar considerations: the working classes perceive clothing as a practical need, while the dominant classes choose clothing based on the cleanliness, smoothness and luxuriousness of fabrics to communicate financial ease (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 247-48). For Bourdieu, high-end fashion brands operate as "emblems" of both financial wealth and the comprehension required to appreciate a product's aesthetic value (1984, p. 249). Orientations towards certain brands and products mark a particular *habitus*, which Bourdieu defines as sets of innate or inculcated *tastes* and *dispositions* derived from social position and the exposure to aesthetic forms that this affords (1984, p. 6). These aesthetic tastes function as additional modes of social "classification" that then reinforce economic means (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6).^x

Criticism of Bourdieu's formulation of consumer culture resides in its stratified model that sees consumer expression as socioeconomic competition with little room for individual mobilities or for subcultural experimentation.^{xi} Theorizations of consumerism as more fluid still reveal it as a tool for self-presentation and professional advancement, practices that have become more important in a mediatized climate and that bear intimate ties to fashion and dress. Mike Featherstone (2007) identifies the formation of the "new middle class, the new working-class and the new rich or upper class" within a postmodern culture that blurs traditional class distinctions (p. 19). Consumers in these more nuanced echelons select from an overabundance of commodities in pursuit of "self-development" and the "cultivation" of a particular "lifestyle" (Featherstone, 2007, p. 19). High fashion brands, however, cater to these consumers, promoting the aspirational nature of their (often licensed) commodities. Gilles Lipovetsky (1994) describes fashion choice as the "dominant feature" of democratic societies, as fashion "destabilizes" class hierarchies and permits the formation of aesthetics from within subcultures (pp. 6, 98). He identifies several historical periods in which fashion became more democratized but at the same time more pervasive. Mid-19th-century couture fashion instituted a "homogenization" in dress as the Parisian aesthetic was transmitted to a worldwide market, prompting consumers to locate more "nuanced" forms of distinction in materials, "labels" and cuts that emphasized "personal attributes" more so than class (Lipovetsky, 1994, p. 61). The early-1900s witnessed increased consumer access to and desire for fashion due to the advent of mass-produced clothing (then called ready-to-wear) (Lipovetsky, 1994, p. 63; see also Marcketti & Parsons, 2016).^{xii} Following World War II, the birth of more luxurious prêt-a-porter fashion (now ready-to-wear or high fashion), boutique fashion and product licensing formed the cultural moment of *open fashion*, in which consumers could purchase clothes at even more attenuated price points

(Lipovetsky, 1994, p. 88). In a late-capitalist period that Lipovetsky terms *consummate fashion*, fashion, with its inconstant nature and aesthetic focus, has infiltrated social existence (1994, p. 131). Under an ethos of *democratic individualism*, advertisements and arbiters help consumers select from commodities with miniscule differentiations in form and appearance (Lipovetsky, 1994, p. 153). But while consummate fashion promotes “the individualization of tastes,” it instills present-mindedness, while the “creation of artificial needs” and planned obsolescence exacerbates “the institutionalization of waste” (Lipovetsky, 1994, pp. 135, 153). Consummate fashion offers a precursor to the present era of *fast fashion*, a term that describes both intensified speeds of manufacture and retail and a sense of accelerated time (Okonkwo, 2007, p. 229).

As online media and fast fashion blur class and locational distinctions on a superficial level, the fashion show as a mediatized event functions as a forum for reinserting markers of social distinction even as fashion and media companies tout its mechanisms for consumer access. While Bourdieu’s theories of consumerism are based on class observations and data from the 1960s and 1970s, his conclusions that fashion functions around class articulations bear continued relevance as fashion seeks to reconstitute its class structures in the Internet era through the promotion of luxury brands and the mediatized representations of influencers, all under an ethos of democratization. Indeed, even fast fashion and middle-class brands such as BCBG Max Azria, H&M, Joe Fresh, Mango and Topshop have produced fashion shows to promote their lines as aspirational and to equate their products with high fashion (Okonkwo, 2007, p. 100), and I will discuss Topshop’s multifaceted fashion show initiatives in Chapters Five and Six. Such business tactics do not blur social strata but instead assert brand cachet via the fashion show as a medium that holds inherent class associations. Indeed, the fashion show is the precise, appropriate material site via which fashion scholars should assess this re-prioritization of class. Fashion

shows and fashion show transmissions position attendees both as social or field insiders and represent their bodies as emblematic of aesthetic and socioeconomic standards, all in the service of promotion. Such fashionable ideals are based on constructs, relations and interactions of gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality, all of which intersect profoundly with ideals of class; indeed, in discussions of cultural consumerism, it is impossible to separate taste from class, or class from other positionalities (Savran, 2009, p. 8). Moreover, even the most ‘consumer-oriented’ marketing strategies remain tailored to upper-class consumers: production models, such as “See Now Buy Now,” that permit customers to access collections *first*, still favour those with the means to purchase garments at full price or the clout to wear a look on the brand’s behalf.

Scholars theorize fashion from a cultural materialist lens as a medium of communication, considering its lexical connotations; tracing historical roles and biases; characterizing modes of embodiment; and demonstrating how fashion constructs and resists class status, artistic taste, and cultural, subcultural, racial, gender and sexual identities (see Barnard, 2002; Entwistle, 2015; Hebdige, 1979; Wilson, 2005). Fashion scholars have used Bourdieu’s social competition theories to describe the machinations of fashion’s economies and personnel, as well as more specific, localized areas of purview. Joanne Entwistle (2002, 2006, 2009) draws in part from Bourdieu to formulate a model of fashion as an *aesthetic economy* that consists of interwoven markets that circulate commodities whose value resides in aesthetic qualities, and in which intermediaries or tastemakers determine and influence what looks are on trend.^{xiii} In a similar vein, Frédéric Godart (2012) frames fashion markets in terms of six sociocultural principles: *affirmation*, in which fashion demonstrates social cohesion and differentiation; *convergence*, in which design is concentrated in “a limited number of cities” and similar trends are repeated; *autonomy*, in which fashion houses retain control over their aesthetic; *personalization*, in which

fashion's economies are concentrated around the designer; *symbolization*, which accounts for the role of signs in the maintenance of communications; and *imperialization*, in which fashion has come to dominate social life and is controlled through international corporations (pp. 13-14). Most studies of the industry are location- or sector-specific: this micro-approach risks creating an "impressionistic mosaic" but forms a nuanced sense of its intertwined economies (Aspers & Skov, 2006, p. 803). While this dissertation focuses on fashion shows and their representations rather than other practices or forums for networking and communication, it does so to outline, first, how fashion shows (or Fashion Weeks) function as foundational events within the fashion calendar and within its *aesthetic economies* – in which crucial decisions are made – and, second, how transformations to production and communication in a mediatized climate have coalesced around fashion shows and Fashion Weeks. An examination of fashion shows and Fashion Weeks bears an international scope and illuminates social processes that operate and affect personnel and consumers in markets around the world. The crucial observation that I put forth here is, that, even as mediatization increases consumers' access to fashion content and to high-end or fast fashion commodities, through communication and e-commerce processes that are often calculated around fashion shows, fashion shows function to hold up the cultural clout of designer brands and commodities as both international and aspirational in a manner that prioritizes and makes visible those with purchasing power or industrial influence.

Fashion and/as the Field of Cultural Production

Bourdieu's (1993) concept of the *field* characterizes fashion's industrial structures and the accumulation of different forms of influence. The field is a dynamic but delineated structure that is formed through the social relations between individuals that occupy various positions of influence. Field members, or *agents*, undertake particular actions and strategic calculations in the

areas of production, consumption and mediation, to acquire status. Admission to the field, and the retention or enhancement of one's positions, depends upon the accumulation and utilization of various forms of economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. As in social life, the possession of what Bourdieu termed *habitus*, aesthetic predilections predicated on class and education, is fundamental to one's inclusion and position. While Bourdieu (1984) characterized *habitus* as unconscious, he also demonstrated that *habitus* was externalized through comportment, practice and dress.^{xiv} J. L. Austin (1975) defined certain speech acts as *performative* based on their capabilities to alter certain states or outcomes (as cited in Bernstein, 2009, p. 70). Entwistle and Rocamora observe that the modes of embodiment that comprise and communicate *habitus* are also *performative* as they reify field structures and aid in the accrual of status (2006, p. 747). Ghassan Hage illustrates that dispositions, as sets of actions, become *habitus* through their social repetition (2013, p. 85). In certain material realities, *habitus* is not just crucial to one's success or survival but also formative: individuals "creat[e] the very world in which they can operate best" (Hage, 2013, p. 87). While fashion permits individuals to dress in a manner that assists in the ascension of social rank, its field protocols favour those with appropriate *habitus*.

Entwistle and Rocamora (2006, 2011) utilize the field as a framework to describe the social and industrial machinations of Fashion Week as a focal industry event. Fashion Week (and fashion shows) offer a literal manifestation of the field, in which invitations are a marker of membership and literal positions in the space indicate influence. Entwistle notes that the "bounded nature" of the field is analogous to high fashion since the latter is "an exclusive world not everyone can participate in" (2009, pp. 36-37).^{xv} To characterize the directions of audience members' gazes within the performance space, the authors reference Michel Foucault's (1977) theorization of modes of surveillance instantiated within specific environments and power

relations: in particular his illustration of the Panopticon, a prison in which a central tower oversees all inmates, who cannot see each other but maintain tacit awareness of their possible surveillance (as cited in Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, p. 744). In fashion show environments, a reverse Panopticon occurs: members that possess the most capital, “the more powerful bodies,” are seated in the front rows and become a visual focal point (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, p. 744). The runway lights also spill onto the people in the front row, keeping them visible throughout the presentation, as well as in photographs and online broadcasts. As in the theatre, the venue architecture structures the gaze: members seated in the upper risers (if at all) possess a totalizing view of the audience but the least status (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, pp. 744-45).^{xvi} *Fashion capital* is a form of capital “specific to the field of fashion”: like habitus, it is acquired through education, embodied in sartorial choices, demeanour and attractiveness, and conveyed through familiar social enactments (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, pp. 744-48). The authors cite the common ‘air kiss’ as an example of the latter, as it is a gesture performed to communicate possession of professional contacts (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, p. 747). Skov (2006) describes similar social practices at Fashion Week’s international trade fairs, a less publicized sub-section (see also Entwistle & Rocamora, 2011). More recent research has identified *subfields*: those of modeling (Entwistle, 2009; Mears, 2011), fashion blogging – in this case personal fashion blogging (Pedroni, 2015) – and street style photography (Luvaas, 2016).

The fashion show functions as a conduit through which high fashion claims its status, as one’s presence at the event – or rather inside it – signifies a measure of field influence and connection. Fashion personnel are situated as *cultural intermediaries*, a term Bourdieu coined to describe a class of workers in the creative and media industries such as “journalists” and “critics” (1984, p. 325), but that spans all positions that liaise between creators and consumers: retailers,

photographers, publicists, agents, curators and other influencer roles (see Entwistle, 2006; Negus, 2002). Featherstone (2007) locates cultural intermediaries as those who associate with “artists and intellectuals” but remain beholden to a mass public: “sustaining the prestige and cultural capital of these [elite] enclaves, while at the same time popularizing and making them more accessible to wider audiences” (p. 19). The competition for field influence in fashion was more insular prior to the rise of digital and social media, with intermediaries “performing for each other” at fashion shows, to use an oft-cited observation from performance scholar Doreen Kondo (1997, p. 103; see also Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, p. 745). However, characterizations of Fashion Week in terms of the field precede and thus do not account for consumer culture’s present mediatized condition. I contend that there now exists a *mediatized field of fashion*, whose social enactments are made visible within and beyond venues’ walls and barriers, and in which insiders have altered certain *behaviours* according to the presence and affordances of screen-based devices. Mediatization has further made possible a new form of cultural intermediaries in the form of digital and social media influencers that advertise alliances with fashion houses via appearances at relevant fashion shows, while fashion editors have assumed newfound, more public roles as arbiters that promote their own fashionable looks to virtual audiences (see Titton, 2013, pp. 134-135). Critics observe that the composition of the fashion show risers has become far more nuanced, with mediatized arbiters seated around the space and sectioned with other creatives with an aim to spark professional interactions or create content – not just photo opportunities but “multiple media moments” (Sherman, 2017, para. 11). However, the front row and the more prominent, central areas remain the site of supreme influence, or, rather, certain sections and the bodies in them remain prioritized, as I will elaborate. Insiders’ positions and

social enactments thus reinscribe status and class even at a moment in which mediatization had threatened to rewrite fashion's structures and rules of inclusion.

The Mediatization of Fashion

Media and social theorists have coined the term *mediatization* to describe the processes and institutions via which media have become imbricated in social life and culture, as well as the role of media in the constitution of social practices and the circulation of discursive representations (Couldry, 2012; Hepp, 2013; Hjarvard, 2008). Andreas Hepp calls for the use of mediatization as a meta-theoretical approach to conduct research not just into the uses and reaches of media, but into the networks, affiliations and communities that media use informs and facilitates (2013, p. 142). Current definitions of mediatization resist periodization but rather pinpoint certain conditions or criteria: “qualitative shifts in social-material relations” wherein our reliance on communication media for “material, social or cultural activity” assumes a state of *dependence*, in which practices and procedures are built around and cannot function without media use (Jansson, 2015, p. 16). A more recent call from Jukka Kortti (2017), in response to Hepp and others, complains that mediatization as meta-process offers an ahistorical methodology and seeks to situate it instead as part and parcel of “globalization, individualization and commercialization” that are pertinent to but nonetheless still preceded the digital era (2017, p. 115). Previous transformations in our mediatized interactions, specifically in our perceptions of spatial relations and temporalities, can be located with the invention of particular communication and mass media, starting with print media and continuing with the invention of the telegraph, which has its place in historical record as the medium that “permitted for the first time the effective separation of communication from transportation” (Carey, 2009, p. 157; see also Kortti, 2017, p. 116). Cultural theorist John Tomlinson (2007) outlines that a cultural and scientific fascination with

speed has existed since the modern industrial era and has been altered and enhanced with the arrival of media inventions. The use of new media, however, has instilled a condition of *immediacy*, in which instant consumer access is both assumed and demanded: our contemporary obsession with speed results from new media affordances and the rates at which devices are rendered obsolete or out of fashion (Tomlinson, 2007, pp. 131-140; see also Rocamora, 2012).^{xvii} André Jansson (2015) uses Bourdieu's concept of the *doxa*, a set of understood social standards within individual fields, to demonstrate the integration of communication media into social, corporate and political entities at the level of individual actions (see also Rocamora, 2017, p. 517). The fashion show enacts Jansson's three identified forms of media dependence: *functional* media dependence, in the form of certain "procedures ... are altered and made dependent on mediated forms of communication" and cannot be performed in their absence; *transactional* dependence, in which "social actors" adhere to practices that media have instantiated; and *ritual* dependence, in which "the possession of certain media technologies" is "normalized" in the field and its related events and actors must master their use in order to achieve successful social outcomes (2015, pp. 16-17). Media use permeates all corners of Fashion Week, from the issuance of e-mail invitations and QR codes to be scanned at the door, to the adoption of social media applications, to personnel's circulation of representations of both collections and of their own appearance.

Media scholarship cautions that conflation between consumer choice and democratic societies, such as outlined above, are overtly simplistic and can blind consumers to corporate and political machinations that often depend on the perpetuation of idealized visions of inclusion and interaction. Graeme Turner asserts that "neo-liberal" states and media industries offer a rhetoric of democratization to citizens as a means to convince them to 'buy in' to media content, products

and services: “[I]n all kinds of contexts, the proliferation of choice and access has been accompanied by assurances that the consequences will be more inclusive, democratic and empowering” (2010, p. 85). Fashion’s commercial economies can be said to operate under and in tandem with these broader forms of persuasion. Like fashion studies, media and cultural studies looks to the Internet as “the prime location” to show “that the contemporary spread of media choices and the new opportunities of access and interactivity constitute a form of democratization” (Turner, 2010, p. 85). Such statements comprise a perspective that Turner describes as “digital optimism” (2010, p. 84), and must be assessed in terms of the commercial benefits that institutions and retailers can realize from the promotion of online media (and fashion) as democratized and the various forms of labour that modes of consumer interaction constitute.^{xviii} Fashion companies in fact collaborate with top media companies to pursue consumer-oriented online initiatives: as Chapters Five and Six will elaborate, social media campaigns connected to live streams have resulted from new and overt synergies between fashion and media companies, often under the same corporate heads. A “significant” orientation towards individual access to media and its technical and social affordances, however, leads Turner to characterize a *demotic turn* which, while a locatable phenomenon, is not an incidence of class or political *democratization* (2010, p. 4). Turner does not use the term *mediatization*, a choice that I attribute to the fact that the term came in to more widespread use after 2010; nonetheless, the media saturation and networks that he describes fit within such a framework. In the 2010s, the ubiquitousness of media has further placed the onus for content production on the user *and* amplified the methods of monetization.

Mediatization also accounts for processes in which media uses form and reiterate “social orders” and maintain the ideological prominence of particular beliefs, often through the same

modes of consumer and fan interaction that inspire ideals of democratized social inclusion (Couldry, 2012, p. x). While fashion has an historical relationship to print and electronic media, its current enmeshment with media in the service of its retail imperatives, and the resultant representations, reiterate commercialism's function. I approach Fashion Weeks and certain mediatized fashion shows as *media rituals*, which Nick Couldry defines as mediatized events with a notable reach that incite and hone public sentiment and produce "condensed forms of action" via media use (2012, p. 66). Media rituals function to reproduce dominant cultural values and thus aid corporate, commercial and political interests: witness the emphasis placed on fashion at the Oscars or the astronomical price of Superbowl advertisements.^{xix} While not all mediatized fashion shows assume the criteria for a media ritual in terms of reach and scale, certain fashion companies use platforms and tools to focus consumer attention onto their fashion shows as cultural events that foster social affiliations and discourses around a brand. Fashion Weeks, as series that consist of hundreds of individual fashion shows and related events, generate thousands of individual representations and direct discussion in a manner that companies can then use for promotional and informational purposes.

Media scholars in the past decade have paid specific attention to media's facilitation of user interaction and enhanced opportunities to realize ambitions of stardom.^{xx} Turner observes that blatant declarations of media democratization stem from the fact that the present era, from the transition from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 to the social network, has effected "an opening up of the media on a scale that invites us to think of it as a new form of political enfranchisement" (2010, p. 1). In positive scenarios, media present individuals with tools for democratic discussion and resistance, content production and the fulfillment of various material and immaterial needs and desires, including access to 'live' cultural content (Turner, 2010, p. 1). Turner articulates that the

distinction between earlier “social effects” of media and our present condition lies in media’s novel “function” not to communicate “cultural identities” but as a site on which said identities are themselves “constructed,” on the part of both institutions and consumers (2010, p. 2). Rather, media no longer mediate representations but forge representations “in support of their own interests” (Turner, 2010, p. 20).^{xxi} Fashion aids in both the formation and expression of cultural and subcultural identities and consumer affiliations across multiple forums. Most remarkable for Turner is the potential offered to so-called “ordinary citizens” to attain a measure of influence or even fame and the even more instant timeframes in which ““celebrification”” occurs (2010, pp. 1, 14).^{xxii} Turner reinforces that media corporations control the protocols and mechanisms that render individuals visible, and that can erase them from the public mindset, and that while new media offer seemingly limitless routes to prominence, the machine of fame operates under “commercial” aims now moreso “than ever before” (2010, p. 4). Fashion, in collaboration with the media industries, offers some of the most visible examples of the conferral of prominence on certain bodies: the social and field ascension of bloggers and influencers; the transformation of fashion editors into *street style* and brand amassadors; the enfoldment of media celebrities within the field of fashion as *fashion celebrities* (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 23); reality television competitions; and the selection of untested female and male models from obscure locations (and social media accounts).^{xxiii}

Mediatization is moreover perceived as a process in which consumer choice is informed through the circulation of images as advertisements from media and retail companies and, more recently, as shared social media or user content. In his characterization of postmodernism, Frederic Jameson described a condition in which rampant media circulation fused commodities and images into representations (1991, p. 275, as cited in Jansson, 2002, p. 6). Drawing on

Jameson's concept, Jansson emphasizes the commodified nature of the mediatized visual representation within a post-Fordist, post-industrial culture (2002, p. 9). The circulation of images in our mediatized culture is further reminiscent of Debord's *spectacle*, in which realities under capitalism are constructed and *mediated* by an inescapable bombardment of images, advertisements and commodities (1977, n.p.). Indeed, fashion scholars have described certain theatrical fashion shows as manifestations of the spectacle, as I will outline in Chapter One. However, in the last decade, consumers have witnessed a permeation of media and mediatized content to an extent that scholars of post-modern and post-industrial culture did not account for, even if their observations can be considered prescient or remain applicable. In the past decade, mediatization has assumed a new conceptual scale, in terms of the instantaneous circulation of networked content across the globe, the sheer number of media devices and platforms available for use, and the personalized (often handheld) nature of products and interfaces. Mediatization further refers to a transfusion of media in quotidian life: it encompasses the expectation and habituation of media use in routine interactions, and the manner in which mediatized interactions have assumed the status of what Rocamora, citing Jansson, describes as "routinized mundane practices" (2017, p. 518). The mediatized fashion show does not just offer a novel form of fashion communication and mode of user interaction but extends the reach of commercial content, and thus the spectacle's ubiquitous influence, as consumers are inundated with solicited and unsolicited images, as well as discursive representations, across devices and platforms and at times both inside and outside of fashion shows' and Fashion Weeks' temporal parameters.

Rocamora's examples of fashion's mediatization illustrate the manner in which material practices and choices – from photo-posting to fashion shows – are informed or, and here she cites Hepp, "moulded" according to media affordances, specificities and economies (2016, p. 2).

Rocamora categorizes fashion's mediatised phenomena into sectors that include the use of photo-sharing applications and the invention of cosmetics tailored to digital self-presentation; the integration of digital technologies in brick and mortar stores; and, importantly, the mediatisation of the fashion show, which includes social media campaigns built around live streams (on which I will elaborate), the casting of reality television celebrities as models (and, I note, as front row attendees), and confluences between fashion shows and e-commerce. Top producer Alexandre de Bétak, who since the early 1990s has overseen fashion shows for the world's most prominent fashion houses and commercial brands (Anaya, 2013, n.p.), outlines how fashion shows are staged with technical consideration of their condition as, in Rocamora's words, "mediatised events ... with a view to being consumed online, on a digital screen" (2017, p. 510). Producers direct models' movements and build runways and sets with attention to camera placement and awareness of how colour, texture and cut will read across handheld and fixed interfaces (Anaya, 2013, n.p., as cited in Rocamora, 2017, p. 513).^{xxiv} In a separate statement to fashion critic Alix Browne, de Bétak stresses that the cameras accounted for are both those professional cameras that will live stream the event and circulate individual looks but also attendees' handheld devices that will transmit the show on social media in video and photographic formats (2016, p. 7).^{xxv}

To elaborate on the fashion show's screen-based transmission, it is useful to incorporate media and performance scholar Philip Auslander's definition of mediatisation as the infiltration of electronic media and media uses into live performance's spatialities (2008b, p. 11).

Auslander's formulation can be used to describe media's encroachment into the fashion show and the transmission of that environment as its own form of virtual performance. Auslander asserts that the live as concept (as *liveness*) cannot be separated from the mediatised, and that the dialectical relation between these realms must instead be reconceptualized as "historical and

contingent, rather than determined by immutable differences” (2008b, p. 11), while the live must be viewed in terms of its mediatized after-effects. Rocamora’s sketch of fashion shows as produced for mediatization thus offers an exemplar of a condition in which, as Auslander describes, “the live event exists as much to serve as the basis for a mediatized representation as to be an end in itself” (2008b, pp. 30-31). Auslander (2008b) traces mediatization back to the advent of cinema and later to the invention of television, which became the chief medium for and honed the technical mechanisms of ‘live’ broadcast. His concept of *liveness* accounts for the embodied performer-audience relationship that underlies the fashion show as construct. Auslander proposes examination of events based on matrices of *spatial* and *temporal co-presence*, whose combination establishes *classic liveness*, a “default” condition that can deliver a more affective experience for persons within an enclosed environment (2008a, p. 108). This model reveals how the fashion show positions its insider audience in relation to the models and to each other, and exposes how the entire performance is translated to an online spectatorship invited to interact with the virtual content as if it is *live*.

The term *performance* remains contested within theatre and performance studies, and scholars’ discussion as to what conditions constitute performance further help me to elucidate the fashion show in its fundamental, dual status as both *live* and mediatized content. Performance involves the positioning of bodies before an audience for a defined temporal period in a demarcated, non-quotidian space. Josette Féral (1982) outlines its three “essential elements”:

[F]irst, the manipulation to which performance subjects the performer’s body ... ; second, the manipulation of space ... ; and finally, the relation that performance institutes between the artist and the spectators, between the spectators and the work of art, and between the work of art and the artist. (p. 171)

Féral’s itemization of these components draws attention to performers’ bodies, and thus provides a useful framework for considering the crucial role of the model, in addition to the material

collection as artistic product. The fashion show with its attendant customs adheres also to Diana Taylor's definition of performance as "practices and events – dance, theatre, ritual, political rallies, funerals – that involve theatrical, rehearsed or conventional/event-appropriate behaviours" (2003, p. 3), or what Richard Schechner termed *twice-behaved behaviour* (1985, p. 36).

Increased media pervasiveness has sparked a debate within performance studies as to whether performance can be transmitted, broadcast, recorded or archived and still be defined as such: this debate in fact exposes the lynchpin that defines access to fashion shows and related content.

Peggy Phelan declared in 1993 that performance's inevitable disappearance constituted its *ontological* status, while its records took the form of after-effects that reified the aura of presence.

In this idealized formulation, performance's unrecordable or unrepeatable nature was purported to "resist capitalist commodification" (Jackson, 2011, p. 39). Auslander (2008b) responds to Phelan with the assertion that that the idea of the *live* is a product of mediatization.

Contemporary fashion shows demonstrate the total imbrication of electronic media into live performance, a realm that was once one of the last bastions of *liveness*. However, while it is no longer possible to talk about a fashion show without accounting for mediatization, Phelan's statement reiterates that its cultural status still depends precisely on its ephemeral nature as a one-off presentation and its accompanying inclusions and exclusions.^{xxvi} More recent scholarship has unpacked the function of digital and virtual records (Bay-Cheng, 2010), and of reenactments, citations and *remains* as material components of performance that call into question claims to time and place (Schneider, 2011). However, in the midst of countless fashion show transmissions and our interactions with them, the fashion show's enclosed nature and stratified relations remain solidified, and it is *this* construct that has become mediatized. Performance thus becomes a crucial concept in a discussion of fashion's mediatization as it locates the fashion show as first

and foremost an evanescent presentation to an elite audience within a demarcated space. It further illuminates both the embodied relations between models and audience members and the manner in which all present in the performance space become in some manner visible to online consumers via the function of cameras and screen-based media. Moreover, performance scholars' examinations of issues of labour, access and democratization in artistic production parallel media studies discourses: specifically a critique of neoliberal subjectivities such as the *prosumer*, a label coined by Alvin and Heidi Toffler to refer to individuals that operate as both producers and consumers of (online) content in a self-sufficient manner (see Harvie, 2013, p. 50; Turner, 2010). To combine performance and media studies frameworks is thus to reveal how logics of inclusion and exclusion circulate and are implicated in artistic, commercial and affective economies.

The Affective Economies of the Fashion Show

The fashion shows that I discuss as *live* performances transmit the affect inside sometimes immersive fashion show spaces and also hone and exhibit a potent consumer desire created in branded representations. Studies of affect both in live performance and in Internet and consumer culture draw heavily from Brian Massumi's (2002) characterization of affect as preconscious sensations or *intensities* that are felt prior to their manifestation in and as conscious emotion. In performance, audience members experience affect in response to particular (often theatrical) occurrences (Hurley, 2010, p. 20). The immediate reaction to a fashion show constitutes a *transmission of affect*, a direct occurrence between and among bodies that parallels the transmission of electronic content between users within a network (Brennan, 2004). Teresa Brennan describes affective transmission in crowds as a process of "entrainment" (2004, p. 70), a collective experience based on shared external stimuli such as rhythmic sound and on the presence of hormones and pheromones that establish a palpable "atmosphere" (2004, pp. 1, 49).

Entrainment informs audiences' immediate and critical reception: "it unites within a more conscious frame of reference" (Brennan, 2004, p. 70). Fashion shows are noted for the use of bass-laden music, which underscores the model procession and heightens the excitement factor. Visual stimuli (images) also contain and transmit affect as *vibrations*, but both forms of stimulus are needed to produce entrainment as a "chemical reaction" between bodies (Brennan, 2004, pp. 70-71). During fashion shows, the use of music to underscore the models' parade enhances mood and builds excitement but also reminds attendees of their presence *at the fashion show* and focuses their attention towards the collection pieces. The pleasure of entrainment is articulated in press discourses on the live fashion show, in which attendees describe the incomparable thrill of live co-presence. Toronto retail consultant Nicholas Mellamphy remarks that the audience's reaction to a collection informs his decision to place an order (as cited in Mesbur, 2015, para. 5). He invokes a music metaphor to explain the supremacy of the *live* show: "To be in the room ... It's the difference between seeing a concert live and seeing a concert filmed. It's not the same" (as cited in Mesbur, 2015, para. 9).^{xxvii} Brennan's model, however, calls to the desire for shared presence, as affect is limited to proximal bodies and does not move into or across the virtual.

Researchers of affect's movement in digital culture draw from Sara Ahmed's notion of *affective economies*, which offers a lens to examine the discourses formed around social affiliations, identities, beliefs and consumer preferences. Ahmed observes that affect as emotion is built and accumulated as it *circulates* between bodies and statements within a network, and comes to constitute its own form of Marxist rather than Bourdieusian *capital* (2004, p. 45). For Ahmed, emotions "stick" both to texts and to the bodies that produce and respond to them.^{xxviii} Arguing that interactions on social networks take the form of affective utterances, Jodi Dean conceptualizes social networks as nodes between individual users and describes affect in

Lacanian terms as *drive*, as a form of forever unfulfilled desire parallel to consumer desire and co-opted under capitalism (2010a, p. 27). Each statement made into the network is an articulation of desire that seeks a reciprocal utterance (Dean, 2010a, p. 42). Dean's situation of affect as desire unpacks the cultural and commercial work of brand initiatives that mobilize affective interaction as consumer desire for the transient fulfillment of commodities. Affect assumes an additional, crucial role in the production of consumer desire in its translation as *affective labour*, a form of immaterial but still corporeal labour that traffics in "human contact and interaction" and "manipulates" affective circulation (Hardt and Negri, 2000, pp. 292-293). Affective labour can be conducted in both in-person and screen-based communications, and further shapes the interactions and structures of the virtual realm (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 293).

The Labour of the Mediatized Fashion Show

Additional forms of *labour* pertinent to a mediatized era become apparent to various extents in the fashion shows I discuss – on the part of both participants and consumers – and are integral to the mediatization and circulation of content. Models and fashion show attendees (in addition to fashion-interested social media users) perform a certain measure of what fashion scholar Elizabeth Wissinger (2014) terms *glamour labour*, a form derived from modeling but specific to mediatization. *Glamour labour* describes the maintenance and enhancement of one's appearance with a comprehension of how this translates via visual media formats. Wissinger traces its ubiquitous nature in the Internet era to the rise of television and its perceived immediate and "instantaneous" nature, which placed a demand on models to appear natural and authentic – attractive (and thin) in person and onscreen: "This air of 'calculated spontaneity' required strenuous effortlessness, foreshadowing an age when the instantaneity of Instagram belies hours of careful filtering" (2014, p. 3).^{xxix} Digital mediatization has ushered in a state in which

information is so constant that we process images at the peripheries of our perception and must develop “new techniques of attention to manage the flow” (Wissinger, 2013, p. 134). Models’ labour at Fashion Week continues the fashion show’s historical objectification of female bodies (see Evans, 2001) and articulates a new set of poses intended for screen-based media. Moreover, attendees now engage in performances of the self for camera devices. Glamour labour elucidates all mediatized practices of photo-taking and posing in terms of their embodied and affective demands.^{xxx} In the Internet era, such labour encompasses a “physical mode” of exercise, diet, grooming and dress, and a “virtual mode” of online image management and constant research in fashion trends (Wissinger, 2014, pp. 4-5). Glamour labour is thus comparable to demands on models and intermediaries to communicate *fashion capital* but also accounts for the fact that this embodied capital is now transmitted to networked, attention-deficient publics (Wissinger, 2014, p. 4). Mediatization has increased the venues to perform glamour labour but also enhanced the cultural and biopolitical expectations to perform it at all times, whether one is a professional model or wants to appear as ‘effortless’ as one (Wissinger, 2014, pp. 4, 11).^{xxxi} Embodied in corporeal poses or computational processes, these forms of labour are enmeshed within fashion’s “affective economics” and networks under post-industrial capitalism (Wissinger, 2014, p. 7).

While the fashion show is a material event and the labour exerted in its production is often strenuous, much of the labour that models, attendees and even online spectators perform can be considered *immaterial labour* in that its output resides first in cultural and even biopolitical economies while it is translatable into economic capital and fashion commodities. I incorporate Maurizio Lazzarato’s concept of *immaterial labour* here to describe in particular the manner in which fashion companies harness the content of consumers’ online interactions with fashion shows for their own financial gain, while all of attendees’ circulation of images and

video clips from venues enhances brand reach. *Immaterial labour* is a two-sided, self-referential form of labour specific to a post-industrial work ethos: it is that which “produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity” (Lazzarato, 1996, p. 133). Its first component consists of the computational processes that generate information and/or maintain networks, while its second aspect pertains to activities and practices “not normally recognized as ‘work’” but that assign aesthetic values and consecrate culture and influence (Lazzarato, 1996, p. 133). This labour is in essence that of *cultural intermediaries*, and Lazzarato locates immaterial labourers as such (1996, p. 133). Much of the creative and commercial work that fuels fashion’s economies can be classified as immaterial labour. Tiziana Terranova (2000, 2004, 2013) classifies specific practices as *free labour*, or labour that is not remunerated. In a climate in which consumers can access, interact with and even produce cultural content, free labour occurs when “the knowledgeable consumption of culture is translated into productive activities that are pleasurably embraced and at the same time shamelessly exploited” (Terranova, 2000, p. 37). Though free labour can take the form of volunteer computational and creative work or pleasurable networked interactions for which performers do not desire monetary compensation, corporations can and do reap social and financial benefits from consumer-produced content (Terranova, 2013). I describe cases in which fashion companies have not just garnered media impressions but also mined consumer data from networked participation in Twitter discussions centered on live streams.

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN

The chapters in this dissertation are organized around the fashion show’s matrix of embodied relations (Auslander, 2008a): from the fashion show as performance for a *live* audience, then to its mediatized condition, and then to the representations that circulate around the event. The final

chapter returns to the literal site as I describe the role of devices, in particular the camera, in the mediation of social interactions in both indoor and outdoor environments. Part One, comprised of the first three chapters, examines the fashion show in terms of its nature as a more-or-less theatrical performance and demonstrates how this construct has evolved or been altered in the online era. Here, I examine three fashion shows and one fashion-themed play, all of which illuminate fashion companies' reactions to mediatization. These fashion shows are not standard productions: rather, their modes of representation demonstrate how the fashion show continues to function as a creative and even political medium. These presentations further emblemize and in some instances critique consumerism in a post-industrial era, in particular our shifting intimacies with celebrities. However, while each show undertakes a calculated level of mediatization, it remains tailored to a *live* audience as perceptual and informational conduit. Part Two, which consists of Chapters Four to Six, transitions to fashion shows' mediatization, first in the form of live streams and later as simultaneous social media 'experiences' that brands orchestrate. These chapters probe the difference in spatial and temporal access between the immediate audience and the online spectator, and how consumers are hailed to interact with mediatized content via exertions and actions of immaterial and free labour.^{xxxii} Part Three, the final two chapters, addresses photographs of Fashion Week series, first through content analysis of outdoor *street style* photographs taken of influencers and then through on-site observation of the mediatized but still embodied relations that underpin them. Examination of the photographs and the dynamics between photographer and subject reveals Fashion Month's media representations and their creation processes to contain and reinforce inherent social biases.

Chapter One provides a historical overview of the creation of the fashion show itself and the establishment of Fashion Week series in New York, London, Milan and Paris. I then trace the

development of the fashion show in terms of producers' incorporation of theatrical, intermedial and mediatized elements, from the earliest couture houses' built-in theatres to fashion shows' first intersections with digital media in the late-2000s. I do so to provide a context both for the fashion show's interrelation to media and press protocols and to situate the fashion show as first and foremost a live and historically exclusive, elite performance.

Chapter Two summarizes historical research on fashion's interconnectedness with professional and even vaudeville theatre in the 1900s in order to demonstrate resonances of these artistic confluences in recent fashion-related events. I bring to bear the thematic content and social function of the *millinery play* genre that dramatized and even satirized the business side of couture design and retail, onto industry concerns theatricalized in contemporary fashion shows and theatre productions (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995). I examine American brand Opening Ceremony's decision to produce a satirical play entitled *100% Lost Cotton* at the Metropolitan Opera House, as a vehicle to display its Spring/Summer 2015 collection. Based on the limited photograph and video records, interviews, and press accounts available of this one-off production, I determine that the play's content bore marked similarities to the themes and narratives of *millinery theatre*, revealing that the industry continues to face pressing issues of creative and embodied labour that must be placated for commercial ends. I also examine the underwhelmed critical response to *McQueen*, a 2015 play about the late couturier produced at London's St. James Theatre. Here, I suggest that traditional theatre remains an underused medium for exploring fashion in a mediatized era due to a perceived ineffectiveness in audiences' material closeness to the fashions, and, in an ironic double standard, to cinema's dominance as a vehicle for the production of consumer fantasies.

Chapter Three then examines fashion shows that can be said to have entered the realm of simulation: Chanel Ready-to-Wear at Fall/Winter 2014 Paris Fashion Week and Kanye West's Yeezy Season 3 collection release at Fall/Winter 2016 New York Fashion Week. I read both of these presentations via Baudrillard's musings on fashion as simulacrum and via more contemporary performance-based concepts of *simming* as practice (Magelssen, 2014) and the *brandscape* (Wickstrom, 2006). Theories of simulation explain audience members' belief in and affective responses to the immersive presentations but account too for moments in which unexpected material actions occurred. Chanel's construction of a simulated supermarket for Fall/Winter 2014 demonstrated a profound and complex re-insertion of representational elements into the fashion show to earn press attention. Kanye West's spectacle for his Yeezy Season 3 Fall/Winter 2016 launch (which I attended) offered a dizzying spectacle of fashion and celebrity culture that approached the condition of simulacrum. Nonetheless, I read the politicized fashion show component, which itself simulated a Rwandan refugee camp, as a performance of endurance, in which models' spontaneous breaks and embodied articulations became an act of resistance both to the immediate conditions of their performance and to the current racialized climate in the United States. Despite the profound nature of their live elements, however, both fashion shows operated within a mediatized climate in which content transmission is assumed.

Chapter Four traces the fashion show's mediatization across print, film and television to situate the fashion show live stream within a historical tradition of fashion show transmissions to and for consumer audiences. I use performance and media studies examinations of mediatization (Auslander, 2008a, 2008b) and remediation (Bolter & Grusin, 2000) to assess spectatorial relations and positionalities, and to interrogate notions of *immediate* access and 'real time' reception. Just as I opened Part One with a historical overview of fashion's relation to theatre,

here I provide a genealogy of fashion show representations from print media to early cinema newsreels to television footage in both journalistic and fictional programs, to online and even handheld transmissions, accounting for how prior representations and conceptualizations of fashion shows' *liveness* have informed the reception of online content (Auslander, 2008b).

Finally, I describe the characteristics of fashion show live streams in terms of their screen-based access and cite more recent innovations, from social media applications that create a *handheld front row perspective* to the use of more cinematic techniques in 'live' broadcasts.

Chapter Five investigates companies' tandem use of live streaming and social media to promote consumer interaction with brands via fashion shows, and assesses the campaigns' 'interactive' and 'immediate' nature. I compare and examine the commercial ethos of Burberry's and Topshop Unique's digital initiatives during London Fashion Week, Autumn/Winter 2015: Burberry's #TweetCam campaign, in which users could tweet to a designated hashtag to receive an automatic, "personalised" photograph from the fashion show, and Topshop's #livetrends campaign which aggregated consumer and trend data from social media conversations related to London Fashion Week. This chapter uses Jodi Dean's (2010a, 2010b) theories on the production of affective desire within online networks to examine how each brand mobilized luxury discourses in the initiatives' coordination. Through content analysis of the #TweetCam photographs, I determine that, rather than create a unique virtual experience for the consumer, the content reinforced spectator exclusion through an aesthetic distancing. In addition, these campaigns utilized and even mined content derived from consumers' immaterial labour and free labour in order to achieve a commercial return on investment.

Chapter Six examines the attempted production of consumer affect in live-streamed fashion show content. I document Topshop Unique's Autumn/Winter 2015 *preshow*, which was

live streamed before the live stream proper and purported to offer spectators a never-before-seen glimpse of the fashion show's backstage and front row environs prior to the model procession. I demonstrate that the host, brand personnel and celebrities attempt to create a *manufactured affect* from the live arena for consumers in order to build desire, itself a form of affect in virtual and social networks (Dean, 2010a, 2010b). Through a close reading of the 30-minute preshow and content analysis of the affective utterances contained in the (few) social media responses, I find that the brand's efforts to offer online spectators a sense of the backstage excitement of the fashion show fail, and instead leave the spectator positioned at the literal peripheries of the event.

Chapter Seven uses the photographs of street style photographer Tommy Ton to illustrate how the circulation of photographs on media sites perpetuates fantasies of inclusion and reinscribes certain cities as *fashion capitals* (Craik, 2013; Gilbert, 2006, 2013). I discuss Ton's practice within a history of street fashion photography and situate contemporary street style within tensions between high and street fashion, a loaded term used to describe urban and subcultural dress. I perform content analysis on photographs in two Fashion Month albums posted to former fashion show bible *Style.com* (now part of the *Vogue* website) for Spring/Summer 2014 and Autumn/Winter 2014. I find that Ton utilizes New York, London, Milan and Paris as editorialized landscapes and imposes a set of internationalized, luxurious aesthetics onto the streets and the bodies of fashion insiders.

Chapter Eight returns to the audience-performer relations that construct the live fashion show; here, I locate my own researcher position within Fashion Week's indoor and outdoor arenas. This chapter draws from my observations at Fall/Winter 2016 New York Fashion Week to document the effects of media use on fashion's social structures and enactments. I use Robin Bernstein's (2009) material culture-based concept of the *scriptive thing* to position the camera as

a central mediator of interactions. I outline how the camera/phone mediatizes the fashion show, as attendees interact with each other and with the performance via their devices. Outside the venues, I observe the protocols of address between photographers and attendees – all centered on the use of the camera and on performances of a *glamour labour* specific to screen-based media (Wissinger, 2014). This chapter roots analysis of the fashion show's mediatization in its material structures and interactions, both in terms of the technical elements that facilitate transmission and circulation and of the social performances and labour that communicate influence to publics: those that are visible and co-present and those that are assumed and virtual.

This dissertation offers a multi-perspectival and multi-site examination of the fashion show as both malleable artistic platform and structured networking event, and Fashion Week as an established but always fluctuating social, industrial and cultural institution – located at the epicentre of the transformational effects of an international, neoliberal and mediatized consumer culture. Its chief aim is to position the fashion show as a representative site to nuance claims of fashion's democratization. Turner (2010) problematizes statements of the democratization of media, or of consumer and political culture in the online era, as ahistorical, idealistic, oversimplified and premature. Mediatized fashion communication is of course an observable transformation and has created novel forms and forums of e-commerce, retail environments, content transmission, artistic experimentation, sartorial expression and brand affiliation. Nonetheless, both fashion and media share an imperative that is “uncontestably, commercial” (Turner, 2010, p. 98). Under such a mandate, fashion must maintain brand distinction at the same time as it offers access; or, rather, fashion show production, however directed or oriented towards online spectators, must instill the need to consume. The fashion show's historical and reinforced nature as an elite event for field members – despite the new forms of intermediaries

that are admitted into its enclosed environs - demonstrates how fashion excludes certain bodies in both literal and aesthetic senses to build a consumer desire for inclusion into its discursive, representational fabrics. Attention to the embodied and affective nature of the relations between fashion show and immediate audience, and between the assembled, co-present bodies and online spectators, illuminates the measure of visual and temporal access that transmissions offer and identifies moments in which transmissions elevate attendees' presence through aesthetic and performative distancing. The dissertation's second component probes the fashion show as the focal point on which trade debates, practices and shifts in a mediatized era continue to intersect, and on which mediatized arbiter personas are created, maintained and performed. I describe fashion shows both in terms of the mediatized material interactions that occur on the literal risers and streets of Fashion Week and of the corporate synergies at play in their mediatized broadcasts – as well as the broader implications of the confluences between fashion and media institutions. At stake here are the fashion show's communicative and cultural functions: the fashion shows and related content I describe are located within but nonetheless transcend historical debates as to whether fashion shows should remain elite or accessible, informational or fantastical, and instead interrogate the fashion show as a mode of mediatized entertainment, with an aim to confront what commercial, profound or spectacular forms such entertainment should assume.

Chapter 1: The Evolution of the Fashion Show

This chapter offers two separate but intertwined historical genealogies in order to situate the fashion show in its simultaneous conditions an industrial event and a mode of aesthetic performance into our present mediatized era. First, I chronicle the formation of Fashion Week series and frame the current internationalized state of fashion and fashion show production. While I focus on the establishment of the “Big Four” or Fashion Month events in New York, London, Milan and Paris, I document the manner in which less dominant fashion cities have made their claims to industry relevance and cosmopolitanism via Fashion Week events. Second, I trace fashion shows’ use of theatrical and intermedial elements since the first couture mannequin parades to offer a comprehensive historical and theoretical foundation for the analysis of fashion shows that I conduct in later chapters – from both audience member and online spectator positions – and to dissect the various embodied and mediatized relations formed between performance and spectator. Literature on the nature and purpose of the fashion show and its related events is limited but nonetheless rich in description and in articulation of the fashion show’s dual artistic and commercial roles. Curator Judith Clark stresses that at its most fundamental, the fashion show operates as an informational conduit via which the press and retailers place collections within what Roland Barthes (1990) famously termed the *fashion system*, the semiotic construct that differentiates the garment as product from *fashion* with its additional codes and connotations, and between fashion as mediated in images and that appraised in text, or *written fashion* (2001, p. 347). Clark stresses that attendees assume an essential role as intermediaries in producing the content that positions collections and pieces within the fashion system: “Without the audience’s participation, i.e. without photographic documentation, editorial, shop orders etc., the collection is rendered invisible” (2001, p. 347). While I derive much of the

material here from the wealth of historical research conducted by fashion and performance scholars to date, the compilation of this research into a series of intertwined genealogies demonstrates the extent to which theatrical and intermedial elements have since the first 1850s *mannequin parades* been intrinsic to the fashion show, which has honed their imaginative possibilities in the service of the production of consumer desire across numerous market echelons. Finally, I draw from recent research on the fashion show as a social and communicative event, and the interrelation between the fashion show and other contemporary mediatized and commercial practices: the inclusion of this literature further unpacks the fashion show's integral role within fashion's fluctuating timelines and practices, its usefulness as a site on which to document the shifts that online media have effected and, as stated, the essential role of creative elements in this form of artistic and brand communication.

THE EVOLUTION OF FASHION WEEK

While much research has addressed the formation of presentation series within New York and Paris, there exists to date no authoritative document on the creation of the “Big Four” Fashion Week series (see Fortini, 2006). An overview of the formation of Fashion Weeks in the storied fashion cities unpacks these series' cultural function in the promotion of domestic talent. Fashion scholar Caroline Evans documents that the couture houses of the mid-1800s first held two separate showcases: “biannual” parades for international buyers and more personalised shows for “individual clients” (2013, p. 33). The international press covered fashion shows from the early-1900s onward and hired professional illustrators to sketch collection pieces for print publications (Evans, 2013, pp. 57-58). American buyers traveled to Paris twice a year by steamship to purchase “model [sample] dresses” for later release at what were then termed “seasonal openings” at home (Evans, 2013, p. 33). The formalization of an “international fashion calendar” did not

occur until the pre-World War I era, with showcase series held in February and August lasting “seven to ten days,” during which couture houses repeated their presentations several times each day (Evans, 2013, p. 33). Buyers came to Paris in the spring to watch as models wore couturiers’ creations at the racetrack and in the resort towns, while houses offered “advanced previews” and “models for advanced sales” to preferred retailers, who then sent them back home to reveal to consumers as the latest collections; the actual collections would still be revealed during the showcase week proper (Evans, 2013, p. 33). These practices indicate that even from the earliest couture presentations, retailers placed a premium on advance informational and material access to the latest trends, and business models catered to retailers’ need to be the first to debut items. Nonetheless, Elizabeth Wissinger stresses that trend reports and clothes still took “months” to arrive and that press and retailer machinations were far from rapid by present-day standards (2013, p. 135).

Official Fashion Week events arose out of competition between the dominant Parisian couture sector and a nascent American fashion scene. Since the 1860s, New York had operated as a national epicentre of apparel manufacture and retail (Rantisi, 2004, p. 91), but consumers still obtained their sartorial inspiration from Parisian collections as of the early 1900s. The first formal showcase of American fashions occurred in November 1914, when US *Vogue* produced a “Fashion Fête of American designs from prominent New York stores at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel” (Evans, 2013, p. 90). The event was billed as a war relief fundraiser for France and did include French looks but featured “American sportswear,” a decision that “caused a fashion diplomatic incident” in which couturiers threatened to blacklist *Vogue* editors until Condé Nast proposed a French-oriented Fashion Fête, held the following year (Evans, 2013, p. 91). In the late-1930s, American journalists and manufacturers formed associations to implement more concerted

measures to increase awareness of local talent (Rantisi, 2004, pp. 96-97). In the mid-1940s, World War Two again halted fashion production in Paris, and the US stepped up its promotion initiatives: the Garment Retailers of America financed fashion shows in New York as part of these efforts (Milbank, 1989, as cited in Rantisi, 2004, p. 96). The first New York Fashion Week, then titled Press Week, was produced in 1943 under the direction of publicist Eleanor Lambert (Milbank, 1989; see also Fortini, 2006). The press continued to devote attention to New York fashion into the postwar era, even as the Parisian scene was rehabilitated (Rantisi, 2004, p. 97).

In 1945, France's Chambre de la Syndicale de la Haute Couture established a bi-annual fashion show calendar for its members: this series was dubbed Paris Fashion Week but is not considered the direct predecessor to the current ready-to-wear iteration (Fashion Week Online, n.d.). In 1973, the first version of the current (ready-to-wear) Paris Fashion Week was held under the auspices of the French Fashion Federation, which continues to oversee the Paris Fashion Week calendar. The event was produced at the Palace of Versailles as a fundraiser for needed site renovations and took the form of a competition between French and American designers (Banks, 2015, para. 3).^{xxxiii} The roster of French designers included Hubert de Givenchy, Pierre Cardin and Yves Saint Laurent, while the American "upstarts" included Halston, Anne Klein, Bill Blass, Stephen Burrows and Oscar de la Renta (Banks, 2015, para. 2). Critics consider the "Battle of Versailles" to be one of the most memorable fashion shows of all time (Banks, 2015, para. 13; see also Givhan, 2015). After performances from Liza Minnelli and Josephine Baker, the Parisian component "lasted two hours and featured a full orchestra" (Banks, 2015, para. 6). The Americans, however, won the competition both with their designs and with the appearance of 12 Black models of the likes of Bethann Hardison and Beverly Johnson on one platform,

creating a profound moment in fashion's representation of models of colour, one commemorated in 2011 at a reception at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Banks, 2015, para. 13).^{xxxiv}

While the histories of Milan Fashion Week and London Fashion Week are not as intertwined as those of the Fashion Weeks and New York and Paris, and their respective national scenes, these events were launched with a similar aim to promote a particular domestic aesthetic to an international market. In the 1950s, the popularization of air travel facilitated international press trips to storied and nascent fashion cities and increased the “pace” of fashion reportage and information access (Wissinger, 2013, p. 135). Milan Fashion Week debuted in 1958 as an initiative from the Camera Nazionale della Moda Italiana (National Chamber of Italian Fashion) (Fashion Week Online, n.d.), part and parcel of Italian fashion's claim to international notice in the postwar period (see Steele, 2000, pp. 15-16; N. White, 2000). The rise of Italian fashion occurred in tandem with that of Italian film, aided through Hollywood's increased interest in Italy and its actors and the production of an Italian cinema (White, 2000, pp. 190-191; see also Paulicelli, 2016). In the 1960s cultural Youthquake, British ready-to-wear and boutique fashion placed London on the international map (Steele, 2000, p. 10). Its status as one of the dominant fashion cities was cemented in 1983, when London Fashion Week was launched under the new British Fashion Council (British Fashion Council, 2010, p. 2). While London Fashion Week is the newest entrant to the “Big Four” series, it was the first to centralize live streaming as part of the event, ensuring as of Autumn/Winter 2010 that all calendar shows could be streamed via its main website (Rice, 2010, n.p.).

Fashion Week series straddle continued tensions and interplays between local, national and international cultural economic interests. Fashion Weeks work in tandem with businesses, advertisements and cultural discourses to assert, affirm and enhance cities' status as *fashion*

capitals, tourist destinations and centers of manufacture (Craik, 2013, Gilbert, 2006, 2013). Indeed, Norma M. Rantisi (2011) proposes that Fashion Weeks can be used as a unit of analysis through which to characterize a *network of relations* within local cultural economies. At the same time, host cities have historically stood in as a metonymic referent for a national fashion scene and promoted its aesthetics to international markets (Gilbert, 2006). Fashion Weeks' connections to place remain tenuous and fluid even as the dominant series have become entrenched industrial events within their cities. Under fashion's *internationalization*, designers with marked ties to nation have chosen to establish their careers in disparate locations, or have showcased at Fashion Weeks that offered higher prestige and/or press attendance (Steele, 2000, p. 16-17; see also Bradford, 2015, p. 129). Valerie Steele (2000) finds that two of the earliest examples of internationalization are the decisions of the Italian Elsa Schiaparelli and the Basque Cristobal Balenciaga to establish their couture houses in Paris, while the "Japanese invasion of the 1980s" and the prominence of the German and Belgian scenes offer later, notable phenomena (p. 17). In the 2000s, British stars Alexander McQueen, Stella McCartney and Matthew Williamson presented at Paris Fashion Week – a series of decisions that called London Fashion Week's clout into question; London Fashion Week has found new relevance in this decade, however, due to the fealty of British talent such as Christopher Kane and Mary Katrantzou (Bradford, 2015, p. 129). Creative auteurs have moreover been installed at the helms of brands derived from different national aesthetics, as demonstrated in the 1990s in the American Tom Ford's tenure at Gucci and the appointment of McQueen and his peer John Galliano to French couture houses (Steele, 2000, pp. 16-17). More recently, in 2016, the Italian Maria Grazia Chiuri, formerly at Valentino, was appointed Creative Director at Christian Dior, replacing the Belgian Raf Simons, who assumed the directorship of Calvin Klein in the United States.^{xxxv}

The sheer number of Fashion Week series around the world, and of individual shows scheduled back-to-back within these series, has proliferated in the past 30 years, with a notable influx of Fashion Weeks the early-to-mid-2000s. Several international cities now run established Fashion Weeks of various scales, from regional events that showcase local independent designers to elite affairs that earn participants exposure on an international scale, and are covered on fashion media sites. In addition to the “Big Four,” *Vogue*’s fashion show database currently covers series in Australia (Sydney), Tbilisi, São Paulo, Seoul, Tokyo, Russia, Ukraine, Kiev, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Berlin.^{xxxvi} Several Fashion Weeks are coordinated under the banner of the WME/IMG, a fusion of William Morris Endeavour with the International Management Group that specializes in the production of fashion and sports as entertainment. WME/IMG oversees Fashion Week events, represents workers in various facets of production from directors to models to celebrities, and influences the production of digital content. The list of international Fashion Weeks would moreover remain incomplete without mention of Paris’s Couture Fashion Week, dedicated to the presentation of haute couture to fashion’s wealthiest consumers, or the Men’s Fashion Weeks held alternately in Milan and Florence, with more recent endeavours in New York and Paris, as well as other less renowned fashion cities. In addition, the institutional and geographical structures of Fashion Weeks are becoming evermore diffused. Companies from smaller independents to major players, produce off-season Pre-Fall and Resort collections, necessitating additional fashion shows, while select (often corporate-owned) companies such as Chanel, Gucci and Louis Vuitton have eschewed Fashion Week schedules and hosted presentations at times and in locations of their choosing, in addition to their standard seasonal shows.^{xxxvii} Even within Fashion Week series, contestations occur between

event producers such as IMG that dictate that all participants present in mandated, central venues and designers that want to show off-site in alternative or found spaces (see Friedman, 2015).^{xxxviii}

THE FASHION SHOW AND/AS THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE

From its inception in industrial modern couture houses, the fashion show has negotiated modes of theatrical representation in order to communicate collections' aesthetic references and to build consumer fascination around fashion as a fantastical realm. Central to accounts of fashion shows is a timeworn debate as to whether production elements and collections should work in tandem to produce an overall effect (or affect), or whether focus should remain on the clothes.^{xxxix} As outlined in the Introduction, the fashion show qualifies as a performance due to its embodied performer-spectator relationship and formalized set of protocols. Theatre, however, should be considered a "subsidiary form" or subset of performance, on a categorical plane with other forms such as "dance" and "oration" (Jackson, 2004, p. 11). A performance's condition as *theatrical* or as *theatre* resides in a calculated intention to make the collection *mean* something other than itself. Scholars locate the condition of the *theatrical* in or as a more pronounced "semiotic function" (Fischer-Lichte, as cited in Postlewait & Davis, 2003, p. 24) or the presence of "material to be interpreted" (Carlson, 1996, p. 198). The term "can be defined exclusively as a specific type of performance style" or refer to the professional theatre as institution, or be defined "inclusively as all the semiotic codes of theatrical representation" (Postlewait & Davis, 2003, p. 1). Féral posits that the theatre transfers performance into the realms of the *imaginary* and the *symbolic* (1982, p. 178), while Marvin Carlson observes that performance's "liminoid nature is foregrounded" (1996, p. 198). The fashion show's mode of representation can be considered more or less theatrical depending on the profound or even narrative nature of the collection and/or technical features deployed. The fashion show can therefore be rendered

theatrical through the use of production elements that represent a distinct conceptual or political theme or that create a simulated space. The terms *theatrical* and *theatre* have held an ambivalent status in the fashion press, used, often depending on critics' mindsets, to deem fashion shows profound, narrational or immersive, or to criticize those in which production elements read as frivolous or superficial or fail to cohere to the collection to communicate a meaningful statement; this can be attributed to an overall "ambivalence" towards the terms within other art and cultural discourses (Jackson, 2011, pp. 19-20). The dismissal of fashion shows as theatrical or too theatrical has its roots in centuries-old anti-theatrical discourses in Western art criticism, which, as theatre and performance scholar Shannon Jackson outlines, are predicated on representation's inherent inferiorities, or rather on "the debased condition of artifice," and its capacities "to lie, to dissemble, to deceive" (2004, p. 116, see also pp. 115-126). Fashion scholars have of course documented that critics and consumers have levied similar accusations against fashion itself for its material and semiotic excesses and its doubled and sometimes illusive nature (see Vinken, 2005; Wilson, 2005, 2007).^{x1}

Parisian *mannequin parades* realized and performed class elitism in couture houses' intimate presentation environs. Evans illustrates that mannequin parades operated in terms of Goffman's *front region* to represent the (exclusive) public façade of the fashion house and hide evidence of industrial labour and machinations (2013, p. 148; Troy, 2004, p. 85). Mannequin parades dramatized class itself rather than incorporate theatrical elements or constructs:

[In these] often sober affairs, models struck dramatic poses and walked sedately, reflecting the social status of their clientele. The show was about buying the fashions on parade. Models sometimes held a small card denoting the model number of the gown they wore, for ease of ordering. Unscripted, often without set pieces or music, their sole purpose was to show the fashions to the clientele. (Wissinger, 2013, p. 135)

The mannequin parade later started to incorporate the rituals and class associations of the professional theatre. Joel H. Kaplan and Sheila Stowell describe fashion shows as “the theatricalization of fashion marketing” (1995, p. 114; see also Evans, 2001). Likewise, Mila Ganeva comments that fashion shows “borrowed from theatre pomp and exclusivity” in both their production and protocols “in an effort to legitimize their own high cultural status” (2008, p. 120). Fashion shows furthermore utilized act-based structures and established seasonal repertoires like those of theatre (Troy, 2004 p. 85). The audience was permitted to scrutinize both the sartorial wares available and the bodies of the female mannequins (Evans, 2001, 2013). Production elements enhanced spectators’ perceptions of clothes and bodies: the House of Chanel is notable for its use of mirrors that replicated the linear bodies of the models in the service of an industrial, modernist aesthetic (Evans, 2013, pp. 150-160). The mannequin or model can be considered a theatrical performer insofar as she took on a different role in each dress (Troy, 2004, p. 85). Indeed, the model embodied a host of associations: her form at once eroticized, empowered, commodified, politicized, degraded or disappeared depending on the presentational context and audience-performer situations (see Evans, 2001, 2003, 2013; Schweitzer, M., 2009b; Wissinger, 2013).

More adventurous couturiers incorporated mannequin parades within a dramatic narrative or fantastical milieu in order to position their collections within a more artistic realm. Such endeavours were held in actual theatres built inside couture establishments. These fashion shows infused couture’s commercial elements into the elite cultural representations, but remained for the most part exclusive affairs (Troy, 2004, pp. 250-251). Poiret established his literal couture house, with its lush garden, as an immersive environment, where “art and interior design functioned both to mask and to promote the business purpose of Poiret’s principal enterprise:

selling clothes” (Troy, 2004, pp. 67-70). Poiret hosted a series of presentations-cum-costume-parties under exoticized themes. His “Thousand and Second Night Party,” held on June 24, 1911, explored France’s fascination with the Orient interpreted in the Ballet Russes and other theatrical productions (Troy, 2004, pp. 106-109). Poiret’s event “enabled not just Poiret but also his art-world guests ... to act out another fantastic evocation of the Orient, this time staged like an extravagant fashion show, a theatrical performance on the grounds of his *maison de couture*,” with Poiret in the lead role (Troy, 2004, pp. 114-116). The couturière Lucile (Lady Duff Gordon) assigned whimsical names to each of her dresses, such as “Passion’s Thrall,” “Do You Love Me?” and “A Frenzied Song of Amorous Things” (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, p. 119; Schweitzer, M., 2009b, p. 197). In her London studio, and later in New York, she honed more elaborate affairs for both “elite and mass audiences” (Evans, 2013, p. 98), with structures based on theatre conventions – these affairs were combined with an afternoon tea (Evans, 2001, pp. 274-278; Troy, 2004, p. 90). Historian Erika Rappaport (2001) documents that, “Like many of her fellow retailers, Lucile believed that theatrical environments triggered a psychological urge to purchase goods” (p. 188). Lucile’s theatricalized fashion show used elements of “music, lighting, and a luxurious environment” to permit for fantasizing and to harness processes of “identification between the audience/shopper and model/actress” in order to produce a moment in which the female consumers present “abandoned a sense of difference between their real and ideal self” (Rappaport, 2001, p. 188). As later chapters will address, fashion shows’ mediatization has effected multi-directional, embodied identifications: while the process of fashion show attendees’ identification with models persists, online spectators experience a vicarious identification with both the models and the privileged attendees. During World War One, Lucile created *Fleurette’s Dream*, a relief fundraiser that toured on the vaudeville circuit. The production doubled as a

showcase for American fashion (in this case Lucile's creations) and featured her most famous cadre of models. Evans finds that *Fleurette's Dream* adhered to a convenient narrative common to fashion shows at that time, one that "frequently took the form of a reverie: a young woman falls asleep and dreams of a fantastical and splendid fashion show" (2013, pp. 97-99). Theatre historian Marlis Schweitzer (2009b) explicates that despite its stated purpose as a benefit, *Fleurette's Dream* "made extensive use of advertisements and other promotional materials to frame the act as *haute couture* fantasy, using the very language that justified *Fleurette's* excesses to *celebrate* those excesses as well" (pp. 214-215, author's emphasis). Still, *Fleurette's Dream* connected couture moreso "to the social and commercial aspirations of American show business [rather] than the hard realities of European trade" (Troy, 2004, p. 99). The production thus marks the diffusion of Parisian fashion into an American middle-class consciousness and its modes and forums of theatre consumption through the medium of professional, here vaudeville, theatre.

In the United States, the fashion show took on a more democratic function as a theatrical performance that displayed the latest Parisian and, later, American fashions for middle-class consumers. However, couturiers' and retailers' decisions to increase public 'access' to fashion through more public and middle-class modes of presentation in fact fuelled a nascent mass market sector that threatened the authorial and economic position of couture itself (see Troy, 2004, pp. 330-337). Parisian fashion was exhibited to an enthralled public in productions mounted with an incredible "scale and drama" (Evans, 2013, p. 81). Historian William Leach (2011) credits Ehrich Brothers, a New York retailer that catered to an "upper-middle-class clientele," with introducing the "exclusive and intimate" Paris fashion show model to the United States as early as 1903 (pp. 101-102). Within the next decade, department stores such as Gimbel's and Wanamaker's had adopted the trend, producing ever more elaborate affairs: "the

form of the fashion show was nearly fixed,” as “living models paraded down ramps in store theatres or departments” to innovative technical effects and under exoticized and Orientalist themes (Leach, 2011, pp. 102). In department stores, as Marlis Schweitzer notes, fashion shows functioned “as spectacle and advertisement in one”: the events offered a win-win scenario for both retailers and consumers, as they allowed department stores to “circumvent licensing laws” that forbade producing “theatrical events on their premises” and permitted customers to “consummate their consumer desires” on-site (2009b, p. 181). As of 1915, fashion shows were held in department stores in cities across the nation, while by the end of the 1910s, the events “had even evolved into fantastic spectacle pageants held outdoors, multimedia affairs with orchestras, models, and special effects” (Leach, 2011, pp. 103-104). In certain instances, stores collaborated to produce fashion shows that “drew thousands of people at a time,” forming a footprint on the public streets not unlike that of the current New York Fashion Week, albeit as a more mass consumer event:

[The shows] were so potentially disruptive to the ordinary conduct of city life that police in New York and elsewhere ordered merchants to take out licenses for all shows that employed live models, and, in Manhattan, even threatened to terminate the shows altogether. Merchants, too, worried about the ‘demoralizing’ impact on other store business as customers packed into theatres, tearooms, and restaurants, or lined the promenades. (Leach, 2011, p. 103).

Fashion shows were also held at public arenas such as Madison Square Garden (a site that I return to as the location of Kanye West’s Yeezy Season 3 presentation in 2016). Jeanne Paquin showcased her fashions in the US via a series of presentations at New York’s Ritz-Carlton hotel and a subsequent exhibition at the Altman’s department store for which “60,000 people lined up” (Troy, 2004, p. 250). However, Paquin “in fact embraced a vulgarized form of theatre – the [public] fashion show – in order to stave off a parallel vulgarization of haute couture” (Troy, 2004, p. 251). Sarah Berry likewise remarks that while more accessible presentations built an

allure around couture fashion in (often female) audiences, these were middle-class “spectators” rather than couture clients (2000, p. 55). Both forms nonetheless utilized theatrical effects to enhance fashion houses’ aura and maintain consumers’ perception of couture as aspirational.

In the post-World War Two period, fashion shows placed increased representational emphasis on the role and movements of the model rather than the spectacular nature of production – a shift in the location of theatrical representation from runways to bodies. Evans’s detailed examination of this time documents that “there did, of course, continue to be spectacular shows,” but their theatricality was provided through models’ walks as opposed to the earlier shows’ use of “*mise-en-scènes*” (2001, p. 291).^{xli} In 1947, Christian Dior introduced his infamous New Look via a fashion show in which models performed an “extravagant, theatrical” walk “in marked contrast to the austerity of wartime fashion” that evoked a palpable sense of cultural reinvention (Evans, 2001, p. 291). Here, I read the descriptor “theatrical” as a reference to an overt, aristocratic stance and flair: in archival photographs, models stand tall with their hands to the sides, off their hips, while their walk was intended to accentuate the new silhouette which offered “the gait an elegant swing that had never been seen before” (La Maison Dior, n.d., para. 4). The couture shows of Pierre Balmain involved opulent and sometimes even “orientalist” (and racist) entrances that often utilized animals (Evans, 2001, p. 291). Balmain recalls that at one show, during a tour, his star model Praline “emerge[d] in evening dress from a hat-box that four Negro porters carried into the Waldorf-Astoria in New York” (1964, p. 151, as cited in Evans, 2001, p. 292). Balmain incorporated the model, and later the *cabine* or retinue of house models, as a featured performer, and sparked the development of differentiated modeling styles, actions and attitudes specific to individual houses (Evans, 2001, pp. 291-295). However, Evans concedes that most fashion shows “were more sedate” affairs presented “in the couturier’s salon,

or some other space decorated in *ancien regime* style” with at most an elevated runway and a “strict order of presentation” and rigid press and customer protocols (2001, p. 295).

In the 1960s, the fashion show infused a more upbeat air into its presentations, credited in part to the Youthquake, personified in British designers such as Mary Quant and the ‘Space Age’ designs of Courrèges (Evans, 2001, p. 297). This new era of fashion show arose moreover from the addition of designer ready-to-wear to Fashion Week calendars: pioneers of this time include Quant, Courrèges, Ossie Clark, Paco Rabanne, Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche and Pierre Cardin (Evans, 2001, pp. 297-300). Evans (2001) declares that 1960s fashion shows paved the way for the spectacles of the 1990s due to their experimentation with audience-performer constructs in more stark, modern spaces and non-traditional, outdoor locations, and to the speed of presentation, often accompanied by bass-laden or up-tempo music (pp. 298-299). These experiments were undertaken at the same time as the rise of performance art and happenings.

1970s ready-to-wear fashion produced more “show-stopping modeling techniques” that preceded the supermodel era (Evans, 2001, pp. 299-300). Thierry Mugler’s 1984 ready-to-wear show took the form of “an enormous spectacle, produced by a rock impresario” (Evans, 2001, p. 201). Mugler made half of the tickets available for sale to the public and in so doing birthed the contemporary notion of “the fashion show as mass entertainment” (Evans, 2001, p. 201). Other collaborations between fashion and popular culture included Claude Montana’s presentations and Gianni Versace’s March 1991 show whose finale witnessed Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Linda Evangelista and Christy Turlington – the soon-to-be icons of the supermodel era – link arms and walk to George Michael’s cultural anthem “Freedom ’90”: the foursome had also appeared in the music video (Evans, 2001, p. 301; on Versace, see also Blanks, 2013; Duggan, 2001, pp. 246-247).

The fashion show reached an unprecedented level of ostentation and production values during the 1990s, exemplified by the often unsettling and politicized shows of designers such as Olivier Theyskens, Maison Martin Margiela, Hussein Chalayan, Alexander McQueen and John Galiano. Evans describes the 1990s as the historical moment when the fashion show “*mutated* into performance” (2003, p. 4). I attribute Evans’s phrasing here to her earlier characterization of 1990s fashion as a demonstration of Butler’s concept of *performativity* in which designers negotiated various “postmodern” identities (2001, p. 306). Here, however, her statement that the fashion show *became* performance suggests that it bore some prior condition, when the notion of a model procession before an audience has always fit performance scholars’ established definition of the term. Veteran critic Suzy Menkes refers to the “creative expressions” from this period in a nostalgic sense as “fashion as *theater*” (2010, para. 18, author’s emphasis). This statement indicates that shows exceeded their function as an artistic vessel for the collection and transformed into a more complete narrative experience, though it offers a broad application of the term that does not account for fashion’s various forms of performance during this period.^{xliii}

Galiano operated as the producer of fashion as *spectacle* par excellence: his productions for Christian Dior installed or recreated immaculate interiors within architectural and theatrical structures such as Paris’s Grand Hotel, the Opera House and the Carousel du Louvre (Evans, 2003, p. 67; see also Duggan, G. G., 2001). The lavish presentations were “haunted by the excessive displays of conspicuous consumption of consumer capitalism” and notorious for a “historical and cultural promiscuity” that celebrated racial pastiche (Evans, 2003, p. 33). Curator Ginger Gregg Duggan (2001) frames 1990s fashion shows as *performance art* within the context of increased, multi-directional collaborations between the fields of fashion and performance art in that decade. Fashion houses adopted not just theatrical tools but also manifestos and traditions

specific to performance art and political movements (Duggan, 2001, p. 268). Examining Hussein Chalayan's "After Words" collection from 2000, which turned into a transformational piece that confronted issues of displacement, Megan Hoffman (2009) finds that fashion shows' political intentions operate in constant tension with commercial and retail aims that threaten to supersede them, but she concludes, however, that the fashion show nonetheless offers a productive site via which to explore social issues. Curator Judith Clark (2001), writing on these full-scale, thematic presentations, explicated that the invitation, itself a creative medium, acts as a "contract" between fashion house and audience, which is trusted to contextualize the collection within the house's *oeuvre* and to enumerate its artistic and cultural references (p. 347).

Haute couture at the turn of the millennium, also known as fashion's supermodel era, relied on a more celebrity-infused mode of spectacle. While shows were still presented to invited attendees, the presentations proliferated after-the-fact in photographs, print media and recorded television snippets. Since the 1970s, as Lou Taylor notes, almost all couture houses "had run at a financial loss," a situation exacerbated in the 1990s due to the infiltration of "US-driven leisure and sportswear" lines that targeted consumers across the market (2000, pp. 131-35). Fashion houses in the 1990s used the fashion show to build aspirational fantasies and entice consumers to purchase their lower-priced lines and licensed accessories and cosmetics (L. Taylor, 2000, p. 138). Fashion Weeks became public spectacles of opulence in which the presence of celebrities was paramount: "The concentration of designer brands, fabulous frocks, name models and celebrity guests, all under the glare of publicity and feted with lavish hospitality, amounts to an irresistible cocktail of all that is desirable in contemporary commercial culture" (Buckley & Gundle, 2000, p. 38). The semiotics of couture promoted "notions of elitism," while fashion shows' "presentational glamour" functioned as a smokescreen to occlude fashion's business

aspects (2000, pp. 121-22), in an even more sensational manner than predecessors such as Poiret. In the new millennium, critics commented that fashion shows' industrial role had diminished, as designers used the platform to display opulent museum pieces and front-row celebrities while retailers purchased more wearable pieces from showrooms (see Cartner-Morley, 2003).

The international economic recession of the late-2000s prompted companies to strip the fashion show to its most basic structure, as fashion houses faced financial constraints and critics expressed a moral ambivalence towards opulence and excess. In her reviews of couture presentations from 2009, Sarah Mower stated that the recession had become a popular talking point (2009a, para. 1), and complimented houses that produced "cleaner, minimalist" shows and thus demonstrated proper taste and aesthetic and financial restraint (2009b, para. 1). Critics later complained, however, that fashion shows had become predictable, mechanical and all-too-brief affairs that offered nothing more than models marching up and down runways while "throbbing techno-disco-rock blared from a mediocre sound system" (Isherwood, 2010, n.p.). The 2000s also witnessed a more profound use of *intermedial* elements to enhance the *live* performance and to experiment with nascent digital technologies.^{xliii} I use *intermedial* to reference performances that do not just combine electronic media interfaces within the frame in a *hypermedial* fashion (Bolter & Grusin, 2000) but that explore the interconnections between these media and *live* bodies; these fashion shows also happened during what performance scholars term the *intermedial turn* (Bay-Cheng, 2010a).^{xliiv} Galliano's 2005 couture presentation for Christian Dior piled television monitors on the runway as a Warhol-inspired throwback to the MTV generation (Mower, 2005). McQueen's 2009 Plato's Atlantis presentation was combined with "premade video footage" from *SHOWstudio* founder and photographer Nick Knight, of model Raquel Zimmerman "lying on sand, naked, with snakes writhing across her body" run on a screen

(Mower, 2009c, para. 2). For its Fall/Winter 2011 collection, *In the Mood for China*, Italian brand Ermenegildo Zegna presented a “Live-D” spectacle in which prerecorded footage of models was “projected onto a huge backdrop of the Great Wall of China, simultaneously to their appearing live on the catwalk” (Uhlirva, 2013a, pp. 152-153). Also in 2011, Burberry fused the intermedial and the real in a promotional show in Beijing in which models interacted with holographs of their own bodies in a “hybrid spectacle in which the physical and the virtual could hardly be distinguished” (Ju, 2011, para. 3). More recent shows have demonstrated technical advances in fabrics. Alexander Wang’s Fall/Winter 2014 show had models stand on a rotating platform in black clothing that turned various neon colours when heat was blasted on them through vents at different temperatures (B. Moore, 2014).^{xlv}

THE LIVE FASHION SHOW IN A MEDIATIZED ERA

Fashion’s separate initiatives in alternative, digital communication formats – separate from but inevitably imbricated with live presentations – can be considered in part as a response to concerns over the financial expense of the fashion show. Starting in 2008, industry creatives embarked on experiments in digital short films, facilitated via websites such as *SHOWstudio* (Uhlirva, 2013b, p. 122; see also Geczy & Karaminas, 2016; Uhlirva, 2013a). Digital film not only offered innovators a new artistic medium but let brands communicate these visions to an online audience of millions, off the mandated Fashion Month schedules and without the production, travel and indeed environmental costs of a one-off fashion show (Menkes, 2010). A miniscule number of designers, notably British conceptual designer Gareth Pugh, attempted to screen fashion films to the attendees of their seasonal fashion shows: while select fashion houses such as Hussein Chalayan and Yves Saint Laurent had experimented with showing fashion films instead of collections at times off the fashion show calendar in the late-2000s (see Uhlirva,

2013a, p. 151), these fashion films were distinct in that the screenings occurred *at* Fashion Week proper, where attendees thus expected a *live* performance.^{xlvi} Fashion insiders, however, were unimpressed with the concept of film shown *in lieu of* a fashion show and insisted that they needed to see the *actual* clothes to review collections or place orders. The debates that fashion film incited illuminated the entrenched industry preference for and cultural fascination with the *material* and *live* aspect of the fashion show. Since the late 2000s, fashion film has established itself as a distinct conceptual and/or commercial medium (Uhlirva, 2013b, p. 122). However, fashion film has not unseated the fashion show from its industrial or aesthetic functions; instead, the fashion show has become more mediatized while it has become more entrenched as the focal reason for the production of Fashion Week series.

The expansion of electronic media into the fashion show environment has manifested itself not only in terms of the presence of media devices and practitioners in the literal performance spaces but also the transformation of Fashion Months' social interactions into a more totalized performance circulated to the public in the virtual realm. The evolution of the blogosphere and the invention of social media applications created a platform for individuals with a recreational or professional interest in fashion but without pre-existing media credentials to submit commentaries or to post photographs of their own sartorial choices or those of others. Although fashion blogs had existed since approximately 2001 (see Rocamora, 2011), scholars consider 2009 to be the year in which personal fashion bloggers and street style bloggers attained visible influence in the industry. Fashion bestowed a symbolic consecration on notable practitioners in the form of invitations to fashion shows, and, more significantly, seats in the first and second rows (Findlay, 2015). In the most documented incidence, at its Spring/Summer 2010 show, Dolce & Gabbana invited bloggers Garance Doré, Scott Schuman, Tommy Ton and Bryan

Grey Yambao (Bryanboy) to sit front row in a foursome. Some fashion houses demanded that these special invitees sit with their laptops present: the devices thus marked them as fashion's new media users and literalized the newfound prominence of online content, even as it came off as a gimmick, as bloggers did not tend to post *during* the shows (Schuman, as cited in Phelps, 2016, para. 19). The admission of non-accredited fashion critics, fashionistas and photographers into fashion's exclusive, enclosed spaces sparked consternation in the veteran fashion press (see Rocamora, 2012). Moreover, bloggers' physical presence in the most privileged seats exposed fashion's hierarchies as such and the fashion show as a literal site in which contestations over influence were made. Street style bloggers' and later freelance photographers' enhanced interest in attendees' arrivals and exits established a frenzied performance of photo-taking in the streets outside the venues – a scene that Menkes dismissed as amateur posturing in an infamous 2013 editorial entitled “The Circus of Fashion,” a title that indicates its spectacular nature. This conflict between ‘novice’ critics and photographers and ‘seasoned’ editors (several of whom have also seized opportunities for mediatized visibility) illustrates Turner's observation that media access and influence are often bestowed or withheld by existing gatekeepers (2010, p. 4).

The mediatization of the fashion show has moreover had a direct impact on fashion's retail and production schedules, as certain fashion companies have attempted to release collections to consumers concurrent with the production of the fashion show. The earliest fashion show live streams, launched in 2009, occurred in tandem with brands' initial e-commerce innovations (see Uhlirova, 2013a), with brands making specific collection items available on their websites within seconds after live streams had ended. More recent seasons have witnessed attempts to collapse fashion's timelines altogether. In Fall 2016, companies such as Burberry, Tommy Hilfiger, Tom Ford and Paul Smith took the first steps towards the adoption of a

consumer-driven ‘see now buy now’ or ‘instant fashion’ model that coordinates presentations with the current retail season. Nevertheless, concurrent in-store and online releases of collections remain dependent on star-studded fashion shows that are promoted in advance, and then also live streamed and photographed for social media. The instant fashion movement indicates an embrace of media’s pervasiveness on the part of several of its major players; however, the production of in-season collections is an expensive and often prohibitive endeavour.

Recent occurrences in fashion show promotion reiterate companies’ and producers’ intention and need to promote the fashion show as an elite *live* event. Fashion companies have combined live streams with elaborate virtual innovations oriented to consumers in their brick and mortar stores. In 2010, Burberry built 3D live stream installations at select flagship stores to let its customers “experience the clothes, the music, the energy and the atmosphere” of its London Fashion Week presentation “in real time” (Alexander, 2010, para. 4-5). In 2014, Topshop partnered with 3D innovator Inition to have customers watch its fashion show stream on Oculus Rift headsets (Creevy, 2014). These companies have remained reticent to open fashion shows to the public, instead investing tens of thousands of dollars to create mediatized experiences that offer consumers a sense of *virtual* presence. *WWD* has reported on the “unauthorized” fashion show ticket market, built via the machinations of a series of “ticket agents, event planners and scalpers” that obtain tickets through nebulous deals with event firms and the exploitation of corporate and brand partnerships (Edelson, 2016, n.p.). While some tickets are resold online, a roster of event companies now offer complete fashion “experiences” that promise free product or backstage visits; often the shows are not specified beforehand, nor is the location of the seats, as the promoters obtain the tickets at the last minute pending availability (Edelson, 2016, n.p.). New York Fashion Week ticket prices range between \$950 for lesser-known designers and \$3,500 for

household names; ticket prices for international Fashion Weeks start at the top of this echelon (Edelson, 2016, n.p.). The cost to attend even one fashion show remains prohibitive for all but the wealthiest consumers, and indeed, promoters describe their “clients” as influential citizens (Edelson, 2016, n.p.). For the rest of us, the virtual fashion show is marketed, like the realm of fashion itself, as “an experience that can be had for the price of our attention” (Wissinger, 2013, p. 141). The proliferation of online promoters and the appearance of tickets on resale sites reveals the social and market value of the fashion show as experience, since purchasers sometimes do not even know *which* show they will attend until the tickets are presented, and exposes the privileged locus of the *live* event.

While producers must now consider how fashion shows will read from multiple camera angles and across various-sized screens, most companies’ use of innovative technical elements, opulent theatrics and set pieces has not increased overall. Moreover, productions that can be called *theatrical* or *spectacle* operate in a more self-referential manner than their predecessors, even as the term continues to be sprinkled over reviews.^{xlvii} For several companies the complete transmission, with its behind-the-scenes access and attendee arrivals, has become the performance, with the runway show as but one (albeit crucial) component. Critics lament that Fashion Week has metastasized into a multi-media affair whose enactments extend outside of the individual venues and occlude the *point* of the clothes: “The clothes on the catwalk have become overshadowed by the circus of celebrity, models, gossip and street style that wraps around them. The actual show has become the excuse for the party, rather than the party itself” (Cartner-Morley, 2014, para. 1). Companies that want to earn press and public notice must either produce shows that provoke online discussion, circulate images across the web, or implement innovative digital media initiatives to focus consumer attention onto presentations. The calculated allure of

the mediatized fashion show contrasts moreover with the material realities and strenuous *labour* of attending and evaluating one fashion show after another within Fashion Month (see Zee, 2015, pp. 117-121). Critics lament that fashion shows “are more about the chance to create marketing initiatives, activations, and branding opportunities around fashion companies than about the actual process of creating, distributing, and promoting that season’s clothing” (Wang & Brillson, 2013, para. 3). This observation bears some truth but fails to consider that brands understand the commercial possibilities of the mediatized fashion show and have articulated that the future of brand differentiation resides in these virtual events.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has drawn on historical research and more recent fashion criticism in order to trace the parallel evolutionary histories of Fashion Weeks and the fashion show, with an emphasis on both as cultural forums. Since its inception, the fashion show has utilized various performance and theatrical repertoires and intermedial elements to communicate the creative intent behind a collection and to construct an enduring attraction to fashion houses and the elite social realms that their calculated fantasies epitomize. To provide an overview of public interest in fashion shows and the longstanding social distinction between exclusive couture and ready-to-wear fashion shows at the legitimate Fashion Week events and more middle-class fashion parades offered the public in retail settings helps to explain the current trend towards selling fashion show tickets for top dollar as part of branded experiences, a practice that still orients the fashion show towards the richest consumers. The chapter’s final interconnection of transformations to the fashion industry with the advent of new media practices (and *new* media practices) illustrates how the social issues that fashion’s mediatization has effected have converged onto the fashion show as itself a mediatized site and one open to further intermedial experimentation. Critics’

concern towards the superficial nature of the *mediatized* fashion show, however, hearkens back to concerns over the artifice of theatrical representation: hinting that without its technological or virtual decorations, the fashion show could just be exposed as an industrial or even just informational event – a revelation that the Emperor has no clothes, or rather that the Emperor has *just* clothes.^{xlviii} The next two chapters analyze fashion shows’ overt incorporation of theatrical representation as part of, and in response to, the mediatization of fashion: from the production of a more ‘traditional’ play to the construction of full-scale simulated environments and multi-media commercial spectacles geared for social media dissemination. These fashion shows, and the others discussed in this dissertation, reveal that the narratives, artistic statements and branding processes in the mediatized fashion show are far more complex than mere consumer bait or superficial masking.

Chapter 2: The Fashion Show and/as Theatre

For its Spring/Summer 2015 New York Fashion Week presentation, held on September 7, 2014, the hip Los Angeles-based retailer and clothing brand Opening Ceremony produced a new, one-act fashion-themed play, entitled *100% Lost Cotton*, at the Metropolitan Opera House. The use of theatre *as* a fashion show – what promotional materials termed a “fashion show-play hybrid” (Hines, 2014, para. 1) – combined the rehearsed enactment of a prewritten dramatic text with models standing behind the actors wearing pieces from the collection. *100% Lost Cotton* was directed by Oscar-winning film director and screenwriter Spike Jonze, a close friend of brand founders Humberto Leon and Carol Lim.^{xlix} Jonze co-wrote the script with film actor Jonah Hill, and the brand acquired sponsorship from the likes of Coca-Cola and Grandlife Hotels to rent the venue (Friedman, 2014, para. 16). The script depicted in a darkly comedic manner Opening Ceremony’s fictionalized process of casting and last-minute alterations for its upcoming fashion show – the clothes were, of course, those of the real collection debuted. The production cast included model, actress and socialite Dree Hemingway (daughter of Mariel Hemingway); Internet-era supermodel Karlie Kloss; theatre, television and film actor/director John Cameron Mitchell; actor Bobby Cannavale; and film and television actresses Elle Fanning, Rashida Jones, Catherine Keener and Alia Shawkat. A cast of runway models appeared in behind the dramatic action, wearing pieces from the collection: during the showroom scenes, the models enacted the roles of the models at the fictional casting. While the creative team chose to produce a play as more of a one-off creative endeavour than a communicative platform, the press nonetheless read the exclusive *theatre* event as a refreshing antidote to fashion’s media saturation. The use of theatre proper refocused press attention onto the fashion show’s function as event: the brand’s decision to produce the play, in a famous performance venue, became the hook.

This chapter situates *100% Lost Cotton* as a historical successor to a genre of commercial theatre made popular one hundred years prior, fashion-themed *millinery plays*, produced in the professional theatres of London and Paris in the 1910s. While *100% Lost Cotton* was intended as a one-time chance for Jonze and Hill to dip their toes into the medium of theatre, its thematic content nonetheless echoes that of these modern-era productions. The critical material on *100% Cotton* is scant, and it is not possible to obtain a full textual or video record of the performance; furthermore, press reports, reviews and interviews offer no evidence that Jonze and Hill researched any historical connections between fashion and theatre (based on the brief timeline between script development, rehearsal and production, this is unlikely). Nonetheless, one can position *100% Lost Cotton* within the history of fashion-themed theatre and its representations and social themes, as well as its collaborations with theatre and film actresses of some renown. A comparison of the material across one hundred years reveals that fashion remains embroiled in concerns of class, commercialism and labour; ultimately, however, fashion uses its status as an artistic medium as justification for its continuance and as a defense for companies' inability to find or implement solutions. Indeed, in both *millinery theatre* and at New York Fashion Week, the social semiotics and audience expectations of the here more upper-class theatre help to bolster fashion's artistic claim. However, *100% Lost Cotton's* collaboration with Hollywood celebrities and resultant associations with contemporary film aligned with its more commercial purposes. The show provides a useful representative example of contemporary fashion shows *because* it was not live streamed: it exposes the degree of mediatization that consumers have come to expect, while, moreover, its status as *theatre* incited continuing discourse as to how much fashion show producers should direct audiences' focus to the clothes in relation to additional elements.

The chapter's first section outlines collaborations between fashion and professional theatre in the 1900s and 1910s. In particular, it describes *millinery theatre's* characteristics and themes and summarizes the plots of its notable productions, based on prior research (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995; Troy, 2004). Next, I describe the production and reception of *100% Lost Cotton* and assess the play's dual functions, first as a medium for showcasing a commercial collection, and, second, as a satirical examination of fashion design and retail. In examining *100% Lost Cotton's* critical, in this instance *satirical* function, I compare it to satirical fashion-themed films, notably Robert Altman's *Prêt-à-Porter (Ready to Wear)* (1994). A final section examines a fashion-themed professional theatre production mounted in 2015 in London. *McQueen*, which co-starred British actor Steven Wight and American television actress Dianna Agron, confronted the myth and mindset of the late British couturier to an ambivalent critical reaction, based in part on the fact that without McQueen's *real* pieces it was impossible to conjure and do aesthetic justice to the man's immense vision – and those same *real* pieces were on exhibition in London at the same time. In the end, these productions reaffirm that professional theatre still maintains a marginalized status as a communicative vehicle for fashion in a mediatized era: while sufficient time has passed since the modern period that to produce a fashion show that *is theatre* is considered a noteworthy project, the use of dramatic text in a fashion show becomes its own theatrical conceit. In an ironic manner, the professional theatre show that meditated on a real-life fashion figure suffered, in the 2010s, due to a weariness with the same class politics that had propelled and sustained the fashion, theatre and art worlds' distinction one hundred years prior.

HISTORICAL CONFLUENCES BETWEEN FASHION AND THEATRE

In the 1910s, the realms of fashion and professional theatre intersected in direct collaborations between couturiers and theatre producers and in the use of the professional theatre as a forum to

showcase the latest fashions. Troy (2004) describes these cross-promotions as on a scale with later interconnections between fashion and cinema (to be discussed in Chapter Three). These confluences spanned “not simply the design of costumes for the stage, or the dramatic potential of fashion shows, or even the performative aspect of wearing clothes, but also the exploitation of the ‘star’ system for the purpose of launching new clothing styles” (Troy, 2004, p. 81). Cross-pollinations offered a platform to showcase current fashions to elite audiences while maintaining public interest in fashion as a professional sphere whose cultural status paralleled that of high art. European professional theatre offered a beneficial promotional forum for couturiers:

Couturiers collaborated in the presentation of plays about couture houses, mannequins and dresses, recognizing these as ideal opportunities to parade their latest styles before audiences made up in large part of wealthy bourgeois women who were said to patronize the theatre simply because it satisfied their desire to see the latest styles modeled in a spectacular and, therefore, compelling context. (Troy, 2004, pp. 82-83)

These collaborations continued in the United States, where fashion-in-theatre reached a broader cross-section of classes. Lucile bore a host of theatrical credits, the most notable of which are her costume designs for the London production of Franz Lehar’s operetta *The Merry Widow* and her work with the Ziegfeld Follies from 1915 to 1921, for whom she designed costumes and choreographed numbers.¹ Lucile used the professional theatre to earn herself an income “after her husband left her for a chorus girl,” finding that the platform offered her “financial independence and even artistic inspiration” (Rappaport, 2001, pp. 187-188). Theatre historian Marlis Schweitzer (2009b) documents that Broadway theatre actresses took on additional roles as fashion ambassadors both onstage and off, while department stores collaborated with theatre companies to feature the latest trends from Paris in theatrical productions and to build fantastical window installations in the retail environments. Poiret and his staff produced costumes for Parisian theatre productions, including “several hundred” for *Le Minaret*, an Orientalist spectacle

that premiered in 1913 at the Théâtre de la Renaissance and was then “reinvented as a fashion show and commercial vehicle in numerous department stores in New York” (Troy, 2004, p. 197). The forms of cross-promotion between fashion and theatre, in costume, thematic content and public life, were therefore manifold and offered European fashion an international reach.

In London, at the end of the 19th century, theatre attendance became a popular pastime for citizens: as theatregoing’s associations with shopping and leisure became more solidified, theatre producers started to set their productions in sites of material consumption with increasing frequency (Rappaport, 2001, pp. 178-184). Erika Rappaport (2001) elucidates that, at this time, British theatre assumed a simultaneous function as “a promotional arena that also questioned the nature of consumption, commodification, and consumer desire” (p. 192). The theatre as cultural institution offered “a venue for both producers and consumers to explore the profits, pleasures, and problems of consumer society” while it doubled as a showcase for department store fashions, enticing consumers to consume through a seductive process of “packing anxieties about modern consumer culture as entertainment” (pp. 180-184).^{li} While *millinery theatre* in London was the domain of the West End commercial theatre and tourist district and aimed at a more upper-class audience, as I will describe below, fashion also featured in more populist musical comedies produced for “middle- and lower-middle-class audiences” at the Daly theatre and Gaiety theatre under George Edwardes, credited with turning the famous Gaiety Girl burlesque performers into musical and professional theatre actresses (Rappaport, 2001, p. 192). Musical comedies, with titles such as *The Shop Girl* (1984) and *Our Miss Gibbs* (1909) were often centered around a (in one case titular) shop girl as protagonist, and were set in “a site of exchange: a shopping street, a tea shop, a dressmaker’s, an exhibition, a restaurant, the theater itself, or, most popular of all, a department store” (Rappaport, 2001, p. 195). Rappaport reveals that as “West End commercial

culture” became more pervasive in London’s urban environments, “musical comedy addressed the tensions and pleasures of that culture” in a more lighthearted portrayal of consumerism than that of its more upper-class but socially inquisitive counterparts in the West End district proper (2001, p. 192). While the West End commercial district had been the site of more commercial and democratized theatre for the middle classes in the mid- to late-1800s, into and throughout the 20th century, and parallel to the rise of cinema, West End theatre became more expensive and thus less economically accessible:

West End theatre maintained and indeed strengthened an elitist image, while American cinema became the quintessential mass entertainment. The expense involved in staging elaborate productions (which had been designed to appeal to mass female tastes) led to soaring prices and the eventual disappearance of poorer audiences. Cinema, in contrast, distributed opulent material worlds at cut-rate prices. (Rappaport, 2001, p. 191)

West End theatre has held its more upper-class associations into the new millennium, a fact that critics feel has undermined its capacities to explore themes of fashion and consumer culture with due seriousness, as I will illustrate below in the case of the 2015 production of *McQueen*.

In the 1910s, *millinery theatre* emerged in Britain and in Paris, consisting of plays that confronted and often satirized couture fashion’s commercial and gender politics and retail and consumption practices. Extensive historical and archival research has offered a detailed comprehension of the social themes depicted in these dramatic texts, the nature of the fashion collaborations and the players involved, and the productions’ critical reception and commercial successes. Historians Joel H. Kaplan and Sheila Stowell (1995) detail the narratives and enactments through which *millinery theatre* or *millinery plays* addressed couture fashion’s concerns. These plays formulated a “resonant image” in the theatre of the period through a characterization of fashion and retail environments and the characters that worked within them, from female sales personnel to self-important couturiers. Moreover, the texts negotiated issues of

women's material and affective labour conditions, class construction, and the shift from couture houses to department stores as preeminent places of commerce (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, pp. 121-122). Certain productions featured mannequin parades and can thus be read as thematic forebears to the fashion-themed films of the 1930s. *The Madras House*, a 1910 production penned by Harley Granville Barker for theatre impresario Charles Frohman, presented an "indictment" of fashion, theatrical fandom and the role of women as commodities (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, pp. 124-127, 137). In this production, and other socially-minded productions of its ilk, the popular trope of the shop girl was "portrayed ... as the victim of advanced capitalism" (Rappaport, 2001, p. 202). Kaplan and Stowell (1995) note that the character of the couturier Constantine Madras mirrors real-life accounts of Charles Frederick Worth, while a brief mention of Orientalism in the fictional couture house invoked Paul Poiret's controversial aesthetics (p. 128). A mannequin parade scene offered a critical depiction of men's erotic fascination with models' bodies while simultaneously presenting audience members with their own visual stimulation in the form of select members of Frohman's showgirls retinue in costumes designed by Madame Hayward, a "rival" of Lucile (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, pp. 134-137). The year 1914 marked the successful run of Edward Knoblock's *My Lady's Dress*, which critiqued *The Madras House's* "sexual and sartorial radicalism" (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, p. 140). This play consisted of a three-act "dream vision" in which a couture customer envisioned the labour that went into the creation of her gown (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, p. 140). While the script illuminated couture's industrial hardships and power imbalances, it was received more as entertainment than as "socialism" (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, p. 141). The script incorporated both a mannequin parade and a scene in which "an abused mannequin [model] stab[bed] a couturier with his own pinking shears" (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, p. 141). The mannequin parade was performed in the

manner of a realistic, fashionable spectacle that featured former Gaiety Girl and model Gladys Cooper, whose real-life fashion connections were known to the audience, in the roles of customer, couture house worker and mannequin (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, pp. 147-48). The production offered a favourable verdict on millinery as the lead character decided to wear her dress *because* of its inherent labour: the play disconnected worker suffering from the industry and attributed it instead to character flaws based in womanhood and patriarchal structures (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, pp. 142-43). The final scene satirized the theatrical practices of Poiret and Lucile and exonerated couture enough to entice the audience to purchase Madame Ospovat's costume dresses, which were available for sale (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, pp. 144-45). This latter production, with its acceptance of fashion, was more commercially viable than the more critical Barker production (Kaplan & Stowell, 1995, p. 150).

Troy (2004) describes similar productions in the Parisian theatre that presented satirical depictions of both couturiers and their female clientele. Abel Hermant's and Marc de Toledo's *Rue de la Paix* (1912) was named for the street on which most of Paris's couture houses were located and illuminated "the tensions between established traditions and upshot modernity that were implicit in these urban markers" (Troy, 2004, p. 133). These tensions are dramatized in a rivalry between two couture houses, which, while representative of "any one of the highly respected couture houses located on the rue de la Paix," stood in for the houses of Poiret and of Paquin, his chief competitor (Troy, 2004, pp. 133-134). *Millinery theatre* therefore did not simply dramatize the back spaces of couture for an audience of fashion consumers (often the clients of the couturiers) but could be read in terms of its references to specific real-life personas of the world of couture at the time. Film ultimately usurped the theatre as the dominant medium for the transmission of fashion content and footage, as well as for the fashion industry's fictional

representation. In the 21st century, to produce an actual *play* in the service of a fashion show constituted both a break with standard fashion show protocol and a mode of garment presentation with which contemporary audiences were unfamiliar.

100% LOST COTTON, OPENING CEREMONY, SPRING/SUMMER 2015

Opening Ceremony's production of *100% Lost Cotton* was a one-off event, it was not live-streamed, and few records remain of it. There is also no definitive statement as to its runtime, as brand and press accounts reported that it ran anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour. So exclusive was the performance that Jonze and Hill instructed the audience prior to curtain, "Do not social media anything" (as cited in Hines, 2014). The producers' decision *not* to stream the event flew in the face of the current immediate and (virtually) accessible modes of fashion communication. At the same time, the move reiterated that the performance was a real *play* since theatre (and opera) audiences expect to be told to turn off their cell phones and/or recording devices in the same moment prior to performance. While professional theatre productions have extended runs with multiple performances, the one-time, ephemeral performance of *100% Lost Cotton* situated the event as a proper fashion show. Interested persons not present at the *live* performance had to access it via a series of digital fragments in the form of short promotional videos, six-second Vine clips transmitted on Twitter (these are even harder to find at the time of writing as some sites have removed the links), and snippets of text reproduced in reviews and other accounts. In June 2015, the brand posted an 8-minute behind-the-scenes film documenting the rehearsal process, but at the time of writing that film has been made private. The brand also announced plans to release the video of the entire show, but it has to date not done so (Jagernauth, 2015). Opening Ceremony did release several professional publicity shots of the performance on its website and to the press (see Hines, 2014). However, overall, it offered more

behind-the-scenes photographs and videos from the rehearsal period and product shots of the models in the collection pieces, in addition to black-and-white shots from the star-studded after-party (see Dewberry, 2014). This decision seems to be an intentional wink at fashion's emphasis on behind-the-scenes access, transmissions and visual records, reminding us that, in the Internet era, the complete series of representations from all facets and spaces constitutes the total performance. Such a move is also meta-theatrical since the play dramatized showroom preparations. I discuss the performance insofar as possible using the photographs and short video clips, in addition to press reviews, brand promotional materials and press interviews with the production team. Digital records of a performance by no means offer inferior copies but can provide richer interactive materials and additional performances in their own right (Bay-Cheng, 2010). I draw here too from Hoffmann's (2009) reading of the interplay between the dictates of art and commerce in Hussein Chalayan's *After Words* presentation, in which the author emphasizes how fashion show and industry conventions inform audience expectations and reception. This perspective is useful to an analysis of a performance that unites the semiotics and conventions of the fashion show and those of (in this case commercial or professional) theatre.^{lii}

100% Lost Cotton: The Fashion Show as Theatre

The creative team's decision to comment on the nature of the fashion industry during Fashion Week was based on some measure of thematic convenience. Each of the creators has had some involvement with the fashion industry. Jonze is known for a prolific series of films and music videos that address postmodern filmic and inter-textual narrative, meta-representation and mediation, often in an ironic and even satirical manner: notable films include *Her* (2013), *Adaptation* (2002) and *Being John Malkovich* (1999). As a photographer and music video director, he has worked with artists such as The Beastie Boys, Bjork, The Chemical Brothers,

Daft Punk, Fatboy Slim, Jay-Z and Kanye West, and Weezer. Jonze was also married to the film director Sofia Coppola, who has also collaborated in the field of fashion (Church Gibson, 2012, pp. 10, 84). *100% Lost Cotton* was but one of a handful of collaborations that Jonze has embarked on with Opening Ceremony. In 2013, the brand produced a special collection prior to the premiere of *Her*, with outfits that referenced the appearance of Joaquin Phoenix's reclusive character.^{liii} In 2015, at New York Fashion Week, Leon and Lim held an exhibition of 35mm photographs that Jonze had taken between 1985 and 2005, often of film and music celebrities. Male models at the exhibition wore suits made of fabric printed with photograph outtakes (Schneier, 2015; Weinger, 2015). The brand also created another capsule collection in tribute to Jonze with vintage Kodak brand icons emblazoned onto men's sweatshirts (Fischer, 2015). In 2016, Jonze directed a short fashion film for Kenzo World, a perfume from the brand Kenzo, which Leon and Lim have headed since 2011. In the film, actress/model Margaret Qualley performs an athletic dance routine through a hotel concourse in a citation of Jonze's iconic music video for Fatboy Slim's "Weapon of Choice" (2001), which starred Christopher Walken. In December 2016, Leon and Lim auctioned off a lunch with Jonze and Hill as part of a series of branded experiences concocted as a non-profit fundraiser: bids opened at \$5,500.00 (Reed, 2016).

Jonah Hill launched his Hollywood career via a rather unfashionable, oafish persona in such films as *Superbad* (2007) and others from Judd Apatow's production team. He has since branched out (and slimmed down) to take acclaimed roles in dramatic fare such as *Moneyball* (2011) and *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) but has still assumed the role of the awkward sidekick in comedies such as the remakes *21 Jump Street* (2012) and *22 Jump Street* (2014). Hill has shown an adherence to popular streetwear brands and has been photographed wearing Kanye West's limited edition Yeezy Boost sneaker for Adidas (Woolf, 2017).^{liv} He also appears in a

two-minute web commercial for Palace x Reebok, a sneaker collaboration between Reebok and the streetwear and skateboard brand Palace, in which he offers an endorsement in his familiar, awkward persona, spoofing the conventions of the actor as brand ambassador (Woolf, 2016). Hill maintains an ironic and detached relationship to his fashion collaborations, even as he has incorporated men's fashion trends to enhance his own star persona.

The use of a play to present a fashion show constituted its own convenient narrative, as neither Jonze nor Hill had prior involvement in professional theatre. In an interview, Jonze and Hill presented themselves as novice theatre practitioners that knew little about the form. The pair joked that they were now “actual playwrights” and declared that the interview should comprise the program notes because “playwrights have [programs]” – the same interview was included in the program (Allwood, 2014, n.p., edit in original). The creators cracked too that the fact that the brand had booked the Met lent legitimacy to the work, considering it was the authors' first script (Allwood, 2014, n.p.).^{lv} It is also possible to read Jonze and Hill's self-reflections on their rookie status as a further meta-theatrical performance for the press. Jonze mentioned that he sought advice on playwriting from Matthew Weiner, creator of the television series *Mad Men*, and was informed that, “there's no close-ups in theatre, so everything has to play from farther away, as if it were in a head-to-toe shot” (Allwood, 2014, n.p.). This construct is also true of the live fashion show and illuminates the theatre as its counterpart. In a manner reminiscent of Lucile's late-1910s *Fleurette's Dream*, which utilized a looser narrative conceit, the theatrical production became the conduit for the collection presentation, its *raison d'être*.

100% Lost Cotton reignited the debate over whether or not fashion shows' theatrical elements should complement or overshadow the pieces from the collection, with the added twist that the fashion show was not simply *theatrical* but both *theatre* and fashion show at once, or

theatre-as-fashion-show. Critics invoked mediatization metaphors to describe the supposed newness of the dramatic form within Fashion Week. Connie Wang deemed the event “one of the most innovative things to happen to Fashion Week since the camera phone” (2014, para. 1).^{lvi} *The Guardian*’s Jess Cartner-Morley praised the team for its execution and observed that theatre (or a play) offered a novel tool that could be used “to reboot the fashion show” (2014, para. 2-5): here, a medium that had been used one hundred years earlier was considered innovative insofar as audiences did not expect a full dramatic narrative and characterizations. At the same time, she stated that the theatrical conventions, specifically the decision to “prohibit the use of phones or cameras” served as “a bold move in an age where being shared on social media is all-important, but one which restored a sense of occasion which Fashion Week sometimes seems to have lost, and imbued the evening with nostalgia” (Cartner-Morley, 2014, para. 2-4). This was not a nostalgia for preceding historical forms of theatre but rather a longing for a more exclusive, intimate fashion show format without the pervasiveness of media. Critics also perceived the theatrical production as the first such initiative of its kind. While this marked the first time in recent cultural memory that a fashion house had staged a *play*, reviews showed a lack of education in historical collaborations between fashion and theatre, or even fashion and film. Kate Schweitzer (2014) expressed initial concern that the production would be an aesthetic failure: “New York Fashion Week often doesn’t have the same level of theatrics as their European counterparts, and this felt like a serious leap of faith” (para. 1). Here, she made a mental leap in equating a one-act with couture spectacle or conceptual performance art. *Dazed*’s Katherine Bernard declared that the production presented “a living example of the creative symbiosis fashion has within Hollywood, outside of just dresses shipped to actresses” and offered a forum “to share new clothes in a completely new way” (2014, para. 4). This comment indicates that the

author lacked a historical background, as it omits confluences between fashion and film, while the embodied presence of the professional actresses in the service of a fashion show was read as a never-before-seen occurrence.^{lvii} Opening Ceremony relied on the semiotics of the Met as a posh, *real* theatrical environment and a visual attraction that both enhanced a sense of grandeur and illuminated the clothes. Unlike a standard setup, audience members at *100% Lost Cotton* were seated on risers backstage so that the proscenium arch revealed the red velvet seats of the auditorium. Both the cast and the show's location were kept secret, and invitees were taken into the Met via the back door so that the reveal would make a maximum audience impression:

... [G]uests were ushered in behind [then Fashion Week hub] Lincoln Center in what looked like a loading dock and made to wander through the bowels of a stage to get to their seats. The result appeared to be something like a community theater. Until the show started and the curtain came up, revealing the Metropolitan Opera's majestic chandeliers and vast rows of red seats. (Weinger, 2014, n.p.)^{lviii}

The set choice rendered the production at once elaborate and insular and perhaps instilled a sense of excitement in some audience members at their situation in close quarters with screen celebrities and supermodels. Within a fashion show space, as Hoffmann describes, closer "proximity between stage and audience ... reinforces the audience's expectation that they are viewing costumed bodies primarily for the aesthetic details of the garments" (2009, p. 43). With the industry protocols of a fashion show and Fashion Week in mind, the intimate configuration would have therefore kept the clothes at the forefront of critics' and retailers' minds. The lead actresses that portrayed the fictional models wore collection ensembles as their costumes, while a handful of show and rehearsal photos show the 'real' models walking as part of the fictional showroom scenes, an action that dramatized the walks performed at castings and doubled as the standard runway walk that illustrated cut and movement in the 'real' fashion show. In most photos, however, the models stand behind the actors. While it remains unclear just how much

detail the audience could discern of the individual garments, photos of the show's finale reveal that the models in the collection pieces provided a visual stimulus for the audience and backdrop for the dramatic action, and were illuminated in front of the expansive rows of red velvet seats and below the auditorium houselights (Figure 1). The seasonal skirts, sundresses and sleeveless tops were done in streamlined cuts with mod, geometric and animal prints. A third of the looks were colour-blocked in black and white and another set was rendered in pinks and pastels. In the finale shot, models in each set are positioned on either side of the proscenium forming diagonal lines. Freestanding pastel curtains that appear to be set pieces run behind the models in the pastel clothes. A final set of looks combined citrus with black: these models were positioned upstage center, drawing the viewer's focus to that area and creating a visual complement to the red seats. The presentation and colour composition was therefore calculated to show both the actors and the collection in the most pleasing visual and theatrical lights both above and behind the stage.

Critical opinions were divided as to whether the event placed the appropriate audience focus on the collection or whether the performance and its star power eclipsed the clothes. Those critics that decided the latter disagreed as to whether the theatrical production or the collection should have taken precedence. Cartner-Morley commented that the collection served as a "theatrical costume" for the play itself but concluded that this relation was productive since the brand had put forth such a fresh artistic production (2014, para. 2-4). *The New York Times's* Vanessa Friedman complained, however, that the representational force of the actors' presence "overshadowed" the clothes and observed that members of the press "kvelling over the 'fashion moment' of the week" failed to describe the actual collection (2014, para. 6).^{lix} The brand perhaps predicted that the audience would focus more on the actors and so placed an

“impeccably-detailed *Playbill-cum-lookbook* ... on each seat” (Weinger, 2014), another pre-produced fusion of theatre and fashion show convention that emphasized the retail element.

***100% Lost Cotton* as Millinery Theatre**

While it performed a dual function, *100% Lost Cotton* operates within the tradition of fashion-themed plays in which women in lower- or intro-level positions confront the field’s commercial and industrial realities, often under the auspices of a fashion house and its bombastic director.^{lx}

The account of the production provided on Opening Ceremony’s website states that the brand intended for the script to be received as “satire” – a “lighthearted, meta take on the fashion circuit” (Hines, 2014, para. 1). Fashion critics tend to use the term *satire* with liberal abandon to describe fashion shows that incorporate humourous critique or intertextual or self-referential winks (as the next chapter will also demonstrate). Linda Hutcheon’s (2000) distinction between *parody* and *satire* assists in an unpacking of the differences between the declared function of *100% Lost Cotton* per the brand and its documented result. Satire utilizes parodic elements for broader political ends: it is “extramural (social, moral) in its ameliorative aim to hold up to ridicule the vices and follies of mankind, with an eye to their correction” (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 43). Both producers and readers must possess the textual and critical awareness to appreciate both or all sets of references (Hutcheon, 2000, p. 37). To label *100% Cotton* as satire illuminates its comedic intent but also instills an expectation that the text would render a criticism of fashion that could force its audience to consider concrete, *real* solutions.

The text did not stretch far in terms of its levels of representation, depicting exaggerated, indeed parodic, versions of Humberto Leon and Carol Lim. Jonze and Hill had observed Lim and Leon’s showroom prior to Fashion Week (The Creators Project, 2015, para. 5). The collection that “Humberto” and “Carol” prepare in the play, which is, as mentioned, the collection the

brand debuted, was inspired by Leon and Lim’s real-life teenage summer adventures back in 1991 (Hines, 2014, para. 2).^{lxi} The duo felt that a collection that invoked a more innocent period in their friendship recalled a time when a career as a fashion creative was considered a “dream” (Bernard, 2014, para. 3). The decision to produce a show from scratch – the ““Hey, let’s put on a show! spirit”” – was intended to encapsulate the fresh, “naïve” sense of optimism that the season’s collection sought to evoke (Browne, 2016, p. 205). Catherine Keener (who has worked on films with both Jonze and Hill) and John Cameron Mitchell assumed the respective roles of Carol and Humberto.^{lxii} Carol became “a ferocious, quick-tempered alpha who hardly utters a line that’s not a bellow” and was preoccupied with company finances (Hines, 2014, para. 3). Lim was written as his apparent polar opposite, in Jonze’s words, “the biggest neurotic asshole in the world” (Bernard, 2014, n.p.). Elle Fanning starred as Julie, “an earnest newbie model from Oklahoma,” who has arrived for the casting (Hines, 2014, para. 3). The cherubic actress could be considered at the time to be one of the more recent *fashion celebrities* (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 23) – though she has had more prominent film roles since. She contributed her own behind-the-scenes video diaries on the brand’s behalf (see Fanning, 2014). Dree Hemingway played Bella, an “insecure” and jaded veteran model who works as a professional muse for wealthy clients (Hines, 2014, para. 3). Rashida Jones performed the role of a *Vogue* editor-in-chief named Lisa Love. Lisa Love is the real-life West Coast Director of *Vogue* and *Teen Vogue*, and no doubt knows Leon and Lim as founders of a popular West Coast brand, though the extent to which Jones invoked her remains unclear. Supermodel Karlie Kloss performed the role of supermodel Karlie Kloss. The script also included a love triangle in which brand stylist Brian Molloy (Cannavale) declares his love for Humberto’s husband, Patrick, which culminates in a climactic scene in which Humberto attacks Brian in a choreographed fight sequence (Hines, 2014, para. 3).

Brian Molloy is a real-life stylist who has worked with the brand but whose depiction was, one assumes, fictionalized – pinking shears did not appear to be used in the fight sequence (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Finale. Opening Ceremony's *100% Lost Cotton*, Spring/Summer 2015. Photo: Julia Cervantes (Cooper Hewitt National Design Awards, 2016). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://ndagallery.cooperhewitt.org/gallery/36832601/Spring-Summer-2015-100-Lost-Cotton>

Figure 2. Fight scene. Opening Ceremony's *100% Lost Cotton*, Spring/Summer 2015. Photo: Julia Cervantes (Hines, 2014). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://blog.openingceremony.com/entry.asp?pid=10275>

Towards the second half, the characters express their frustration and disillusionment with fashion's commercial imperatives and egomaniacal personalities, and the model characters comment on the strenuous demands of female models' affective and embodied labour. The theatre medium allowed the writers to explore what they perceived as fashion's "human" aspect, or rather to emphasize the creative impetus behind its practitioners' entrance into the field (Bernard, 2014).^{lxiii} Julie offers Bella three options (paraphrased in a recap): "1. Quit modelling 2. Find a way to change the attitude and actions of everyone in the fashion industry 3. Focus on the good parts of the job and ignore the bad" (Bernard, 2014, n.p.). In the end, the characters decide that fashion is a worthwhile pursuit since it offers opportunities for self-realization. Bella declares, "[Fashion] is about invention and reinvention. Every morning you wake up and you get to decide what person you want to be" (Hines, 2014, para. 4). The production ends with a musical sequence in which the characters burst into Drake's hit song "Hold On We're Going Home" and perform a carefree dance, with their arms linked, intended to act as a balm for the audience's lingering anxieties about the issues raised (Figure 3). According to the brand's online recap, "You got the feeling that even with its outsized egos and rampant superficiality, fashion is a worthwhile pursuit" (Hines, 2014, para. 4). The production functioned further as a "close-to-home reminder for the audience" of fashion's "transformative potential" (Bernard, 2014, para. 4),

as the audience were all members of the field of fashion and were thus in a sense ‘home’.

However, the line “just hold on” could also suggest a sense of resignation that real changes to fashion’s business models remain impossible as the whirlwind schedule of Fashion Week continued and critics transited from show to show. The play’s overall fashion-positive message was symbolically reinforced through the presence of film, television and Broadway celebrities that were moonlighting in the one-time one-act for the sheer excitement and perhaps additional ‘cool’ credibility of working with a hip, reputable fashion brand – and perhaps at the behest of Jonze and Hill. *The Hollywood Reporter* dedicated a brief paragraph to reflection on the play’s depictions of “alcoholism” and “depression” and its reminder of the “sad wistfulness of just how complicated life gets when adulthood strikes” (Weinger, 2014, n.p.). The recap then turned its attention “back to all of those happy people who wanted to be there” and proceeded to list the invited celebrities (as is its beat) and to quote the actors expressing their thrill at having performed at “the Met” (Weinger, 2014, n.p.).

Figure 3. Final dance number. Opening Ceremony’s *100% Lost Cotton*, Spring/Summer 2015. Photo: Julia Cervantes. (Cooper Hewitt National Design Awards, 2016). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:
<http://ndagallery.cooperhewitt.org/gallery/36832601/Spring-Summer-2015-100-Lost-Cotton>

While most critics praised *100% Lost Cotton* for its self-referential wit and admitted that an industry critique is needed, critics stopped short of deeming the production an impactful provocation. Cartner-Morley declared that the play offered a vibrant, no-holds-barred “satire of the fashion industry in which its superficiality, absurdity, addiction problems, and shoddy treatment of young women were all skewered with black humour” (2014, para. 4). However, Friedman reprimanded the brand for stringing together a series of superficial thematic jabs, “full of easy laughs and ersatz emotion” (2014, para. 7), that “served to perpetrate the worst fashion stereotypes” and catered to people that already held anti-fashion biases based on notions of

trivial excess and commercialism (2014, para. 3). She differentiated between the field members and the actor friends of the cast and crew in the audience and observed that the fashion outsiders had the most demonstrative responses: “the nonfashion celebrities ... laughed the loudest” (Friedman, 2014, para. 10). Friedman lamented that a more introspective, considered and even full-length theatrical satire could have effected ‘real’ inward reflection among the insiders present (2014, para. 12). However, for Opening Ceremony to “dabble” in a theatre piece as a gimmick rather than “commit to the task” of industry criticism meant that whatever potential was opened to transform Fashion Week “from trade show to entertainment content creation” was erased (Friedman, 2014, para. 17-18). From Friedman’s perspective, the brand’s decision to mount a play in collaboration with celebrities resulted in a production whose theatricality as such became as superficial as the industry that it commented on, if not more so. Rather, the decision to produce a fashion show in the form of a play was the artistic, press and commercial construct around which Opening Ceremony legitimated its collection and its brand, and the media for the most part dwelled on the fact of the play rather than its critical content. Moreover, fashion shows’ commercial imperatives, which exist in a state of “uneasy tension” with cultural or political statements (Hoffmann, 2009, p. 40), were predicated on the brand’s dual use of the play as an event that would earn press notice and as a forum for the embodied showcase of the collection. This commercial function, within the Fashion Week milieu, required a positive take on fashion that inevitably subsumed *100% Lost Cotton*’s critical discourse.

The numerous thematic overlaps between the theatrical productions of past and present indicate at minimum that concerns of models’ affective and embodied labour and the class issues that surround haute couture remain, even as the ready-to-wear market has democratized fashion to some extent. *100% Lost Cotton* draws from several of these concerns, even though there is no

evidence that the playwrights conducted historical research or formal research on writing for the stage period. *100% Lost Cotton* reminded its audience that fashion remains riddled with social and labour concerns, even if it did not make explicit historical references to either fashion or theatre. However, as far as the online snippets reveal, the play limited its commentaries on these (still real) concerns to the arenas of design, retail and modeling rather than address contemporary problems of international, Third World production that would perhaps be more unsettling to the Fashion Week audience. Benjamin used the metaphor of the tiger's leap to describe the manner in which fashion mines moments from the historical past, reinvoking seemingly disparate, dissonant references into new relevance (1940, n.p.).^{lxiv} In *100% Lost Cotton*, issues of the industrial modern past, as illustrated in *millinery theatre*, come to bear on the present in the form of a tiger's leap, in which fashion's industrial practices are reconstituted for the purposes of scrutiny and satire, even if the creative teams behind the brand and the play appear to have been unaware of the precedent that the play was calling forth. This act of here unwitting historical invocation raises another central issue in fashion: that of its continual reinvention and aesthetic citation with lip service (or none at all) to historical context.

***100% Lost Cotton* and Fashion-Themed Satire**

100% Lost Cotton moreover operates in the vein of late-20th-century *filmic* satires of the fashion industry which could well have informed audience reception: in particular, it bears remarkable thematic and narrative likenesses to the late director Robert Altman's film *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994), renamed *Ready to Wear* to appeal to North American audiences. This section offers a more thematic comparison between *100% Lost Cotton* and fashion-themed films such as *Prêt-à-Porter* in terms of their critical function: as such, it takes a detour from a discussion of form and does not attempt to compare theatre and cinema as mediums. What I *do* intend here is to illuminate the

similar cultural work of films that might have existed in the cultural consciousness of New York Fashion Week attendees in 2014, several of whom had professional ties to Hollywood film. *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994) lambasted fashion through similar modes of representation intended to resonate with both fashion-aware and unfashionable or anti-fashion audiences.^{lxv} Altman, who boasted “recognized art-house credentials and acclaimed auteur status,” cast a list of film celebrities: cultural icons such as Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni; French actress Anouk Aimée; British actors Rupert Everett, Richard E. Grant and Stephen Rea; and American actors Kim Basinger, Julia Roberts, Tim Robbins and Forest Whitaker, all of whom were famous to some extent at the time of production and have become more so in the past two decades (see Church Gibson, 2012, p. 83). The fictional designers produce and show their latest Paris Fashion Week collections in sequences interspersed with real fashion shows that Altman filmed at Paris Fashion Week. The film also features cameo appearances from the same designers whose fashion shows Altman filmed in speaking roles “as *themselves*” (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 83, author’s emphasis). The designers’ appearances often occur in fictional showroom and interview sequences after the ‘fictional’ fashion shows. Altman’s juxtaposition of the wackiest real-life couture shows with other *fictionalized* presentations from the film’s characters aids, as Stella Bruzzi observes, in his “extended critique” of fashion, as it functions “to maximize the trivialization of the former through their proximity to the latter” (1997, p. 31). In *100% Lost Cotton*, Karlie Kloss’s spoken performance as herself, on a different meta-theatrical plane from the anonymous but also real models that surround her, is reminiscent of the film’s references to supermodels such as Naomi Campbell, Helena Christensen, Elaine Irwin, Claudia Schiffer and Christy Turlington and its shots of these models in fashion show and red carpet sequences.

Moreover, *Prêt-à-Porter* includes several showroom scenes in which anonymous models are cast in and fitted for the collections, their bodies and appearances scrutinized in an often flippant and sometimes overtly callous manner.^{lxvi} When the pretentious designer Cort Romney learns that the model of the moment, the fictional Albertine (Ute Lemper), has arrived at Paris Fashion Week 8 ½ months pregnant, he seethes, “Pregnant is not my silhouette this season!” In *100% Lost Cotton*, Humberto Leon declares about a model, “Her legs are making this skirt look horrible!” (Bernard, 2014, n.p.). This reference to legs and other body parts as detached from the model (who would have been present onstage) recalls Romney’s itemization of the ideal body parts that a woman must possess: “she doesn’t have to have legs but it’s wonderful if she does.” The film’s final scenes are ambivalent towards fashion, much in the same manner that *100% Lost Cotton* admits to the industry’s inherent problems but chooses to tout fashion’s emancipatory potential. Top designer Simone Lo (Aimée), “whose own son has sold her business behind her back ... sends a host of naked models down the runway in revenge, with a pregnant, naked bride [Albertine] wearing only a veil to round off the show” (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 85). This sequence provokes an intense, mixed reaction from the fictional audience. The erstwhile American fashion reporter (Basinger) throws down her microphone in frustration and declares that she has “had it with this fucking fruitcake scene” (as cited in Church Gibson, 2012, p. 85).^{lxvii} The rest of the assembled offer an impassioned standing ovation to what they perceive as a (doubly) climactic fashion moment – one that in its use of nudity ‘explicitly’ calls forth the old tale *The Emperor’s New Clothes* (Bruzzi, 1997, p. 33; Church Gibson, 2012, p. 85). The measure of *Prêt-à-Porter*’s success as a satire, like that of *100% Lost Cotton*, depends on the fashion awareness of the audience. Church Gibson (2012) remarks that the film was a box-office failure but was “ahead of its time in a commercial sense” (2012, p. 83), in terms of its meta-theatrical

depiction of the fashion industry and its over-the-top personalities. She credits Altman with establishing a “series of tropes” that has populated fashion-themed films into the 2000s: these include runway sequences “within the cinematic narrative” and “the appearance of recognizable supermodels and other fashion-friendly celebrities,” as well as depictions of real retail spaces and “fashionable locations” and obvious brand name references and placements (2012, p. 84). To this list I would add the portrayal of other fictional fashion characters with real-life referents familiar to both fashion and ‘nonfashion’ audiences.^{lxviii}

While *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994) bears the most plentiful points of comparison, more recent satirical fashion-themed films would have influenced the audience interpretation of *100% Lost Cotton*. *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), one of the more successful Hollywood fashion films of the 2000s, also contains a sequence (albeit much shorter) set at Paris Fashion Week in which the lead characters attend a Valentino fashion show and chat with the real-life couturier backstage afterwards. While the film owes much of its critical bite to films such as *Prêt-à-Porter* (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 85-86), it remains more mainstream fare.^{lxix} Ben Stiller’s cult-classic film *Zoolander* (2001) also offers a ridiculous but sometimes canny spoof of fashion through an over-the-top depiction of the career of the world’s most famous male supermodel. The film lampoons fashion in a manner just pointed and politically incorrect enough to provoke uncomfortable laughter, with a dose of cameos from icons such as David Bowie, real-life designers Tommy Hilfiger and Tom Ford and real-life male and female supermodels.^{lxx} However, *Zoolander* tread closer to the real than fashion insiders would care to admit. In 2010, critics noted similarities between Vivienne Westwood’s homeless chic menswear collection and *Derehlicte*, the line from the film’s villain Mugatu (Will Ferrell), prompting Suzanne Merkelson (2011) to dub fashion’s

racial, class and political blunders “The Zoolander Effect”.^{lxxi} While these films are still satirical, their aims remained more commercial and less art-house.

All of the films mentioned here epitomize moreover the newfound cross-pollinations that Church Gibson (2012) describes between fashion and celebrity since the turn of the millennium – and of which she considers Altman’s *Prêt-à-Porter* a prescient forebear. While the *fashion celebrities* as Church Gibson (2012) terms them attended in droves (the likes of Rosario Dawson, Leigh Lezark, Chloe Sevigny and the other Fanning sister, Dakota, also a fashion muse, were all present), one cannot but dwell on Friedman’s mention of the “non-fashion celebrities” (2014, n.p.) who seemed to be the most impressionable towards and prone to chuckle at the anti-fashion content, perhaps because it fit within a filmic frame of reference. Indeed, it speaks to such fashion and film confluences that Friedman would identify which celebrities were “fashion” or “non-fashion” despite the attendance of both at a New York Fashion Week show: one assumes that the “non-fashion” celebrities were still present to see their fellow celebrities. While several of the actors were familiar for more indie or art-house fare in addition to mainstream cinema, the more junior fashion journalists and entertainment reporters moreover fixated on the *fact* of their presence onstage and off. I posit therefore that the increased filmic representations of fashion – sometimes satirical but often tamer or even ridiculous – and the possible resonances to recent fare, reinforced in the presence of film celebrities and supermodels on the real Met stage located its narrative and its actors within a Hollywood star system that utilizes fashion narratives for consumer pleasure and entertainment. At the same time, the presence of known film actors as theatre actors hearkened back to the social semiotics of professional theatre in the early-1900s, specifically the eventual crossovers of popular actresses such as Sarah Bernhardt and Billie Burke into cinema. The theatrical class associations of the Met with more elite culture (though

even its shows are now mediatized) were therefore intertwined with those of art-house and cinema features, all of which positioned the Opening Ceremony brand as media-aware, hip and of-the-moment but threatened to dilute rather than enhance the critical bent of *100% Lost Cotton*.

MCQUEEN, ST. JAMES THEATER, LONDON, 2015

While fashion's behind-the-scenes environs have become a popular topic in feature films and documentaries in the 2000s, the same interest has not taken root in professional or commercial theatre, at least outside of New York Fashion Week. In May 2015, *McQueen*, a biopic and hagiographic tribute to Britain's late fashion star debuted at the St. James Theater in London. This production also fits within the rubric of *millinery theatre* as it addresses the industrial workings and cultural fascination of couture through the perspective of a female protagonist and contains depictions of fashion characters, here real-life (albeit deceased) persons with whom the audience would have been familiar. While the play had been in development since 2012, its 2015 premiere commemorated five years since Alexander McQueen's suicide (Guardian staff, 2015, para. 1). The production also opened two months after the European launch of the retrospective exhibition *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* at the Victoria & Albert Museum. Both the theatre production and the museum exhibition were derived from a latent national adoration and mourning for McQueen; the production was not affiliated with the exhibition but likely benefited from the extreme public interest that it generated. *McQueen* starred Steven Wight opposite actress Dianna Agron, famous for her role in the internationally popular US television series *Glee* (Figure 4).^{lxxii} The play explored the realm of couture from the perspective of the designer, here referred to by his first name Lee, and borrowed thematic and visual "inspiration from [McQueen's] imaginative runway shows" (Guardian staff, 2015, para. 2). The loose narrative centered on a female fan named Dahlia, who sneaks into McQueen's studio in the middle of the

night to “borrow a dress” and encounters the designer. The pair embark on a tour of London, during which they drop in to the tailors’ outfit at Old Burlington Street where the real McQueen began his career working as a cutter; meet with the (also real-life, deceased) fashion stylist Isabella Blow; attend “A-list parties” at the Victoria & Albert Museum (Trueman, 2015, para. 3); enter a church in Spitalfields after Dahlia attempts suicide herself; stand atop a tower block at Stratford and contemplate life and death; and “end up on Lee’s home turf in the East End” (Billington, 2015, para. 1; see also Lawrence, 2015). Critics, unsure of how to interpret this narrative pretense, read Dahlia as McQueen’s “alter-ego” (Billington, 2015, para. 1), or rather “the depressive side of McQueen’s own personality” whose suicidal tendencies are his own and with whom he has to reconcile before the sun comes up and her character disappears as an apparition (Trueman, 2015, para. 4). Playwright James Phillips chose to depict McQueen in symbolic strokes as “tortured genius” or as an “archetype of the doomed artist suffering under the pressure of out-topping his last creation” and dealt with depression and “survival” as broad themes rather than scrutinize the title character’s mental condition (Billington, 2015, para. 2-5). Absent too was a probe of fashion’s real industrial processes in a mediatized and tabloid climate, and their documented ramifications on the man that the drama had resurrected for examination.

Figure 4. McQueen, St. James Theatre, London, May 2015. Photo: Specular (Billington, 2015). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/may/20/mcqueen-review-fashion-designer-bio-cut-too-far-on-the-bias>

For a play to do justice to the theatrical oeuvre of McQueen represented a monumental task, as audiences would have had access to photographs and video footage of his opulent, political and often twisted fashion shows from the mid-1990s to his death (see Evans, 2003), and perhaps wanted to witness some of these aesthetics replicated, or to see his clothes placed in the theatrical frame. It is possible too that attendees had seen the expansive Victoria & Albert

exhibition in the two months before the show's premiere, and the museum's appearance in the play could have reinforced this connection. A scene in which McQueen "gets to work with scissors and pins" to construct a dress for Dahlia, a garment "that echoes The Girl Who Lived in the Tree collection" was deemed the moment when the production "comes most alive" (Billington, 2015, para. 2). *The Telegraph* found the technical elements to be the production's sole achievement, calling out "a series of fashion show-style interludes [that] ... create both a sense of McQueen's creative chutzpah and the residual darkness which hung over his designs" and in which "models, played by an octet of dancers, perfectly capture the pop video aesthetic of McQueen's fashion shows..." (Lawrence, 2015, para. 5). While the production boasted replicas of McQueen dresses, these were juxtaposed with screens that showed "panoramas" to indicate the various locations the characters visit, creating an effect that was "tacky in the extreme" and undermined the garments' material and representational potency (Trueman, 2015, para. 6).

Critics praised the performance of Steven Wight as Lee McQueen as one of the production's few strengths and its overall anchor, and observed that the actor bore an uncanny resemblance to the couturier; however, critics *savaged* Dianna Agron's performance (to use a verb appropriate to McQueen). *The Telegraph* devoted particular description to her terrible diction: "She speaks in a strange, sing-song voice throughout, reciting rather than metabolising her lines. It's an uncomfortably stilted performance" (Lawrence, 2015, para. 4). In a similar manner, *The Guardian* described Agron's performance as a series of "monotonous vocal rhythms" (Billington, 2015, para. 3), while *Variety* referred to her characterization of Dahlia as an "expressionless void ... vocally monotone, facially inert and deeply unwatchable" (Trueman, 2015, para. 8). So profuse were reviewers with their criticism that the website *Defamer* collected the most damning passages (via *Broadway World*) under the (slightly hyperbolic) headline,

“London theater critics tear Dianna Agron limb from limb, then BURN HER” (Jones, 2015). All of the reviews made reference to her pedigree in *Glee* either in parentheses or as an implication that her skills were beneath the theatre. Hoffmann extends the constant push-and-pull between the political and the commercial in the fashion show to the sphere of professional theatre and other forms of performance “when all genres operate through a relationship with capitalism” (2009, p. 46). The production’s financial dictates could explain the casting of an American television actress, as it was clear from the reviews that critics felt that her inclusion stemmed from no other reason than to pander to a media-obsessed audience: the casting was attributed to her television fame and dismissed as a commercial and, worse, *fashionable* move on the part of the producers. Agron’s apparent lack of stage presence recalls various historical experiments in which theatre companies have cast screen actors that could not adapt to the medium and in which fashion houses have recruited celebrities in failed creative ventures – I think here of Lindsay Lohan’s debacle as Artistic Advisor for Emanuel Ungaro in 2010 (see Church Gibson, 2012, p. 23). Two of the reviews demonstrate an almost anti-*fashion* bias in references to the production’s flaws and in particular those of its lead actress. Lawrence notes that Agron fails to “elevate her character beyond a clothes-horse spouting psychobabble” (2015, para. 4). The phrase “clothes-horse” trivializes the character’s love of fashion and thus denigrates fashion as feminine. Trueman, however, refers to Agron herself as “little more than a clothes-horse” (2015, para. 8), conflating the under-developed female fashionista character with the presumed fashionable associations of the American starlet portraying her. Lawrence uses the stock phrase “fashion faux pas” to refer to the show’s tastelessness (2015, para. 1). Trueman recalls that McQueen’s fashion heyday coincided with the provocative London theatre of the ‘Cool Britannia’ movement and reprimands the play for emblemizing the “crass” nature of London theatre post-McQueen:

“London has become ... modish, unfeeling and out of touch with reality. This is theater for oligarchs’ wives. It looks impressive, but it’s insubstantial; all brand, no craft” (2015, para. 8). Such illustrations of London’s theatre’s classism and commercialism reek with anti-fashion sentiment, and anti-theatrical sentiment aimed *toward* fashion – here fashion has made the theatre superficial. Trueman (2015) declares that the writing was at its most effective when the script meditates on fashion, but it remains unclear from his review whether the tone of these reflections was critical or no – based on his anti-fashion sentiment one can assume the former.

The production of *McQueen* broke box office records at the St. James Theatre for *advance* ticket sales (West End Frame, 2015, n.p.), again suggesting public interest in the subject matter and the American actress. Trueman speculates, “her presence has helped *McQueen* to a record advance for the St. James, proving that today’s London has more money than taste” (2015, para. 8). Despite the unenthusiastic critical response, the show transferred to London’s West End for a limited run later in 2015, minus Agron, who was reported to have other commitments. *McQueen*’s modest commercial success must still be contrasted with that of the museum exhibition. In 2011, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* premiered at the Costume Institute at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, where it became the Institute’s most successful exhibition to date and had the eighth-highest attendance of all of the Met’s exhibitions (Steele, 2013, pp. 419-420). The exhibition continued to set attendance records when it moved to the Victoria & Albert Museum: at 480,000 tickets sold over 21 weeks to visitors from across Europe, it was the most popular exhibition ever put on at the museum, and staff had to add overnight viewing hours and hire a separate firm to oversee the lineups (Press Association, 2015). The exhibition enhanced a renewed interest in retrospective, thematic and period-based fashion exhibitions worldwide, in particular those dedicated to the work of creative visionaries (see

Steele, 2008, 2013). The comparative lack of success of the theatrical meditation on McQueen's brilliance and mental condition can be attributed to its dramaturgical and production flaws, but was perhaps also due to the fact that audiences prefer to see the clothes in a more immersive space. Indeed, one critic closed his review with the recommendation, "For a truer insight into McQueen, go and see the V&A show" (Lawrence, 2015, para. 6). The museum exhibition offered level of presence and access that a proscenium theatre denied, even if the production had included actual pieces from McQueen collections, when in fact it relied on reconstructions that resembled the originals but could never realize their craftsmanship or their artistic aura as the authentic remnants of the life and career of a deceased master. Worse still, the storied bastion of culture that is the Victoria & Albert museum opened its doors to a fashion-interested and tourist public at extended hours for the *McQueen* exhibition and thus became in this sense a more accessible and less elitist institution than the West End circa 2015.

CONCLUSION

In the new millennium, the professional theatre retains a lesser cultural status as a platform for the exploration of fashion's social and industrial themes, whether done so in a satirical, comedic or reflective manner. Prior to the rise of film, theatre did offer a live forum for the spectacular showcase of often-opulent couture fashion pieces, under the rubric of a dramatic narrative: even if, as in the case of Lucile's Ziegfeld Follies presentations and *Fleurette's Dream* these were the flimsiest narratives that could be considered as such. One hundred years later, the one-off production of *100% Lost Cotton* demonstrates that the use of a theatre production to showcase a fashion collection becomes its own conceit, one that is ironically considered 'novel' within a mediatized climate. No fashion company since has attempted to produce a similar show. As the satirical content of *millinery theatre* productions is known primarily to fashion and theatre

historians, contemporary audiences would instead have contextualized the themes within more recent satirical portrayals of fashion and its eccentric characters in art-house and commercial film. Nonetheless, *100% Lost Cotton* demonstrated for its fashion-insider audience a certain pleasure in the use of theatre for the display of a clothing collection and moreover reinforced the fact that fashion companies are now beholden to use unusual, innovative or remarkable presentational methods to garner press coverage. The initial box-office sales for the brief run of *McQueen* illustrate that theatre audiences remain interested in the idea of a fashion-themed theatre production, especially one that dramatizes the life of a deceased national icon. However, the production was a critical failure in part because it could not replicate the full-scale theatricality of couture fashion in the new millennium – whose technical capabilities far exceeded that found in the 1910s – nor did it present audiences with the materiality of the couturier’s pieces, while those pieces could be accessed in the simultaneous museum exhibition. In the end, both *100% Lost Cotton* and *McQueen* drew attention to fashion’s issues of class elitism, albeit in an unexpected and perhaps unintended manner via negotiations with the social connotations of professional theatre as such, while the presence of film and television celebrities augmented the productions’ commercial appeal and drew in possible associations with screen-based depictions of fashion. *100% Lost Cotton* interrogated high culture through its sardonic depiction of fashion personnel and wealthy consumers as self-interested and out-of-touch; however, it maintained a fundamental status as an *ultra-exclusive* fashion show performed at one of New York’s most prestigious venues. While *McQueen* depicted a character that would steal a dress just to indulge her adoration for fashion, it too, in critics’ opinions, tailored its exploration to an audience that preferred to indulge in or consume fashion, or theatre-as-fashion, rather than criticize it. The following chapter examines a use of theatrical elements that operates at the other

end of a production spectrum. Here, I turn from the use of a theatrical playscript to more immersive, spectacular fashion shows that assume the scale and modes of simulations, calculated and intended for live and virtual audiences. At the same time, these productions too probe and reveal much about the ubiquitous nature of fashion and commercialism in a mediatized era.

Chapter 3: The Fashion Show as Simulation

In recent seasons, certain fashion companies have poured immense resources into the construction of fashion show sets that are not just theatrical but could productively be analyzed as simulations. For Chanel's Fall/Winter 2014 ready-to-wear fashion show, held March 4, 2014, infamous Creative Director Karl Lagerfeld had an elaborate supermarket, named the Chanel Shopping Center, built inside Paris's Grand Palais. The immersive installation was 'real' in all respects save for the presence of cashiers and the purchase of retail commodities.^{lxxiii} The most palpable moment of the show arose at the end of the presentation, when audience members rushed to the set in a race to take the branded products off the shelves. On February 11, 2016, hip-hop superstar Kanye West launched his third collection for his Yeezy streetwear line at New York's Madison Square Garden, in conjunction with the debut of his latest album, *The Life of Pablo*. These fashion shows are not exemplars of *all* fashion companies' presentational approaches in a mediatized era, but are rather remarkable: the presentations operated on an immense scale that provided ceaseless sensory stimulation to the *live* audience and virtual content to be transmitted and circulated during and after. To demonstrate how these fashion shows transcend the more traditional plays described in the previous chapter, I read them via theories of simulation from both cultural and performance studies. The Chanel Shopping Center (or the Chanel Supermarket as it was also termed) formed a complete and self-referential brand simulation that winked at and exposed class-based distinctions and consumption practices, and the environment produced in attendees an affective demonstration of consumer desire. The various moments and performances contained in Kanye West's Yeezy Season 3 presentation – as I witnessed from the *live* audience risers – combined to produce a star-studded and highly mediatized affair that when read in its totality approached the condition of simulacrum. Both

fashion companies installed spectacular environments that reinforced the pervasive nature of fashion and brand culture even as they utilized its same references for purposes of satirical reflection or political critique. However, these simulations instantiated potent and unscripted actions that arose out of the embodied spatial relations between performer and audience.

FASHION AS IMMERSIVE SIMULATION

This chapter discusses the two fashion shows in terms of processes of *simming*, which utilize calculated simulations or preset enactments to produce a social outcome (Magelssen, 2014). The use of this theoretical lens articulates the constructed representations and immersiveness of both fashion shows, accounts for tensions between the performances' social and political critiques and the presentations' commercial imperatives, and illuminates how more impromptu audience and performer utterances arose in and from the environment. Scott Magelssen (2014) characterizes the condition of *simming* as “a simulated, immersive, performative environment” that “use[s] theater and performance practices to stage environments in which participants play out a scripted or improvised narrative” (p. 3). *Simming* functions as a “deliberate, embodied practice” that places “participants in a simulated, three-dimensional physical environment” that renegotiates standard audience-performer roles (Magelssen, 2014, p. 5). However, while *simming* has the potential to enhance critical or historical awareness, the process of “embodied participation” nonetheless “activates the narratives intended by the producers – either reinscribing hegemonic discourses imposed from above [...] or cocreating the discourses as invested stakeholders” (Magelssen, 2014, p. 6). Magelssen observes that, “*simmings* present as much as they *represent* other events or situations” in an educational and/or social fashion (p. 9). Presentations are predicated on some measure of cultural comprehension of the occurrence (Magelssen, 2014, p. 10). Magelssen (2014) identifies two complementary operations in *simming*: *reification*, which

“confirms and cements values, dilemmas, political states, or doctrines” (p. 13), and *aesthetics*, which “aims to induce pleasure through beauty, surprise or virtuosity” (p. 17). *Aesthetic simmings* function as a distinct form due to their greater potential for the maintenance of the status quo as for social action (Magelssen, 2014, p. 17), and the fashion shows analyzed below demonstrate this dual operation. Moreover, *aesthetic simmings* “can entail tremendous labour, resources, and attention to detail on the part of the producers” (Magelssen, 2014, p. 17). While the exact numbers are unknown, I would estimate that each fashion show cost hundreds of thousands if not millions of dollars and countless hours of compensated and uncompensated labour time to realize. In the vastness and completion of their respective *mise-en-scenes*, not to mention the artistic ambitions of the impresarios that envisioned them, the Chanel Fall/Winter 2014 fashion show and the Yeezy Season 3 fashion show are moreover comparable to Wagner’s *Gesamtkunstwerk* or total work of art that uses multiple art forms (and here multimedia) to immerse participants in a performance environment that bombards the senses.^{lxxiv}

The aesthetic operations of the fashion shows depended further on assertions of the fashion houses and their impresarios under the social and semiotic function of the *brand* as a total and familiar construct. The concept of the *brandscape* thus offers an additional frame via which to document both the extension of the fashion house or auteur as brand in an evocative and in some cases staggeringly material sense, as well as to explain further the *live* audience members’ reactions to the simulations as produced under the affective machinations of consumer culture. Maurya Wickstrom (2006) defines the brandscape as a mimetic environment that instills an embodied response in the consumer, who perceives a sense of self-transformation via the embrace of the brand’s associations. The brandscape is rooted in literalized, often expansive “shopping/entertainment environments” constructed for multinational brands, but extends to

brands' infiltration of our lives outside of retail locations (Wickstrom, 2006, p. 3). Crucial to the brandscape's function is the consumer's willing belief in the brand's promise to enhance one's personal life, career prospects, health, attractiveness, environment or social status, even as one understands this potential to be a fiction: a process akin to a theatre audience's suspension of disbelief. Drawing from Michael Taussig's condition of the *really made up*, Wickstrom (2006) articulates that, "Our consumption practices are shaped by our theatrical ability to hold the real and the not real as a simultaneous instance of embodied experience, an ability to live the truth of the make-believe" (p. 2). The consumer's active immersion in the brand spectacle instills a sense of transcendence, in a Massumian formulation, a moment of "unfixing" that refers both to a profound, embodied stir and to the relinquishing of oneself to the ethos of the brand (Wickstrom, 2006, p. 23). While the provocation of affect hints at the consumer's liberation, pleasure is inevitably incorporated into the network of "global capitalism" that manifests itself in the brand spectacle (Wickstrom, 2006, p. 23). Wickstrom admits therefore that the mimetic potential that the brand affords is co-opted under the brand and within the market, and thus the brand spectacle functions as "a means to domination" (2006, p. 6, 23), in a manner similar to the probable result of *aesthetic simming*. While the fashion shows' material simulations remained within the venues, the mediatization of the fashion shows extended the respective brands into the virtual realm.

Discussion of the two fashion shows below as productions that entered or attempted to enter the realm of simulation invokes, moreover, structural and poststructural theories of representation as applied to fashion's economies, as the fashion shows must be read as elaborate performances that above all else foregrounded the logic of fashion itself under capitalism. Jean Baudrillard (1981) posited that simulation functioned to cloud the distinction between semiotic representation and its real referent. His concept of the *simulacrum* describes a postmodern

cultural condition in which all notion of the real referent has been effaced and only the simulation remains as accurate. Simulation for Baudrillard calls representation itself into question: “Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as simulacrum” (1994, p. 6). Baudrillard’s (1993) characterization of fashion in terms of the simulacrum illuminates the representational processes and multi-faceted, individual performances contained in these fashion shows. Baudrillard (1993) declared that fashion’s processes of commodification and fetishism effect a promiscuous interchange of signifiers, rendering it “the perfection of a system where nothing is any longer exchanged against the real ... the arbitrariness of this sign at the time as its absolute incoherence” (p. 95). Under fashion, the ‘real’ – “the most beautiful of our connotations” – has been eliminated (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 95). Fashion holds no referent aside from its own pronouncements. Efrat Tseëlon (2015) posits that although the fashion show for Baudrillard holds no representational function, it remains as a “self-referential” form of meaning production (p. 228). However, such meaning as Tseëlon describes it still circulates within and reinforces the histories and logics of fashion brands. Baudrillard’s postmodernist considerations on fashion draw from the modern structural semiotics of Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes (Tseëlon, 2015, pp. 216-217). His formulation can thus be read in tandem with Barthes’s model of the *fashion system* in which the relation “Clothing | Fashion” is always already implied (pp. 22-25). While both the Chanel and the Yeezy Season 3 shows prioritized the brand as referent, the presentations operated too within the overarching referent of (*F*)*ashion*, what is fashionable this season and the condition of said ‘fashionableness’, within the constructs of their respective Fashion Week series and its multifarious media representations.

Likewise, these fashion shows operate in terms of Debord's (1967) *spectacle*, in which an influx of commodity representations and images is presented to consumers in a disorienting fashion while the real referent shifts and slips into faint cultural memory, if it is indeed called forth at all. In the case of the Chanel Supermarket, the spectacle was a calculated, pleasurable experience in which attendees were surrounded with interrelated brand icons and commodities in a contained area. Kanye West's Yeezy Season 3 presentation, however, is only comprehensible as an attempt to establish a total, mediatized extravaganza; however, analysis of each of its elements reveals disjunctions between its social semiotics and elucidates moments in which the real asserted itself. An analysis of these two fashion show case studies in terms of simulation and spectacle demonstrates the extent to which our social and material relations to fashion and to each other are, to call forth Debord, *mediated* by a surfeit of representations. An itemization of the individual facets of production reveals moments of class tension and contestation that tend towards a proclamation of the cultural dominance of high end (F)ashion.

CHANEL SUPERMARKET FASHION SHOW, FALL/WINTER 2014

Chanel's Fall/Winter 2014 fashion show created an exclusive, ephemeral manifestation of the Chanel brand that, as accounts and video footage of the event demonstrate, instilled an affective reaction in participants. When faced with an abundance of commodities and then forbidden to procure them, attendees abandoned their roles as cultural intermediaries and instead revealed their latent status as consumers. The Chanel Supermarket functioned not simply as the ritual of the seasonal fashion show but further instantiated both a "satire" of commodity fetishism and a celebration of brand culture (Blanks, 2014) that functioned at the affective level. Chanel is a more than 100-year-old, storied fashion house with international clout in both high and popular culture realms, and the salacious details of its founder's life have been chronicled in films,

memoirs and biographies. The Chanel Supermarket manifested the House of Chanel as a physical brandscape with an incredible attention to historical reference and product detail: this was an actual indoor *landscape* of aisle upon aisle of Chanel-branded products as far as consumers could see, instilling “a Chanel dream” (Doré, 2014). For Tim Blanks (2014), Lagerfeld did not just simulate a (Chanel-branded) supermarket but revealed “the world as megastore,” (para. 1), or rather the ubiquitous nature of the brandscape in external life. Participants (attendees) maintained awareness that this was not a ‘real’ Chanel supermarket but nonetheless started to *behave* as if present in the most awesome Chanel reverie of all time, which was in essence the case. The Chanel Supermarket simulation differs from Magelssen’s case studies in minor respects: it was not used for educational or commemorative purposes (though it did provoke self-reflection on the part of the fashion press); attendees were not aware of the nature of the simulation or its behavioural contract beforehand, save for invitations marked CHANEL SHOPPING CENTER; and for the duration of the runway procession, attendees were seated at the peripheries of the installation. However, attendees were invited to *feel* and to *act* as if present in a ‘real’ store with ‘real’ Chanel-branded commodities, taking pleasure in the material realities of the immersive environment and subscribing to the mimetic fictions of the Chanel brand. The presence of models in the latest *actual* Chanel commodities beside the branded but still ‘real’ simulated commodities enhanced the ‘consumer’ experience. When each model had finished his or her standard runway march, he or she remained on the set and simulated the actions of shopping by placing items from the shelves into branded and embellished baskets and shopping carts, until the space was filled with models-turned-consumers “strolling around the superstore in a choreographed performance” (Fox, 2014). These motions were accompanied by a “muzak-inspired version of Rihanna’s ‘Shine Bright Like A Diamond’”

(Fox, 2014, para. 6), a possible reference to Coco Chanel's famous diamond jewelry collection for Chanel, and an appropriate selection since Rihanna was in attendance. The choice of a muzak version of a pop hit was also suitable for the simulation since supermarkets often purchase 'lite,' packaged versions of pop music to enhance the customer experience without additional licensing fees: an inferior, replicated work of art, pace Benjamin, much as the screen-based transmission offered a lesser experience of the Chanel-branded environment that lacked the material aspect.

Lagerfeld's simulation rendered the Chanel brand more accessible on a material level, appealing to a semiotics of supermarkets, mass retailers and chain stores in a fast fashion era. The simulation foregrounded the commercial element of the fashion house in an unexpected manner antithetical to the first Parisian couture presentations, which, as Caroline Evans (2013) describes, emphasized craft, aesthetics and refined taste. The supermarket as a branded space in Lagerfeld's conceptualization functioned as a high-low equalizer even if the models that inhabited the Chanel simulation were dressed in clothing that costs thousands of dollars, albeit tweed pieces mixed with sweatsuits that had been distressed to 'appear' lower-end. Lagerfeld observed that the supermarket is a familiar place: "something of today's life and even people who dress at Chanel go there" (as cited in Menkes, 2014, para. 5). Fashion columnist Hamish Bowles quipped, however, that Lagerfeld has "never set foot in a supermarket, but that minor detail was of little consequence" to the impresario of a fashion house that has the economic capital to build a supermarket from thin air (2014, para. 1) and disassemble it hours later. *Gawker* commented that Chanel's actual customers might not have set foot in a mass-market chain retailer for some time and would prefer more luxurious retail environments if they even shopped for their own food at all (Weaver, 2014, para. 2). It should be noted too that the supermarket is a comparatively North American rather than European construct.^{lxxv} Lagerfeld

outfitted his models in practical sneakers or knee-high sneaker-boots (Blanks, 2014), positing a social realm in which shoppers would wear expensive clothes to the supermarket but would not wear Chanel's more feminine footwear because it is not comfortable. Baudrillard (1993) stated that, "Under the sign of the commodity, all labour is exchanged and loses its specificity – under the sign of fashion, the signs of leisure and labour are exchanged" (p. 88). Thus, the presentation created a collision (a literal cornucopia) of cultural and brand referents that offered to Chanel customers a sense of 'slumming' in the supermarket while it simultaneously marked supermarket products as more luxurious. In the Chanel Supermarket, shopping for necessities became pleasurable: the comfortable shoes enhanced the recreational factor rather than speak to shopping as task, a transformation that recalls Chanel's introduction of women's leisurewear in the 1900s.

Chanel's simulation channeled the brand semiotics of Wal-Mart and other big-box discount stores and supermarkets but oriented their associations towards a more elevated class echelon. The environment was peppered with signage that read "20% PLUS" or "50% PLUS" ("20% MORE" or "50% MORE") in a semiotic inversion of the more common discount announcements in mass chain retailers. The presence of the phrase "PRÊT-À-PORTER" on Wal-Mart-esque signage functioned as a reminder that ready-to-wear fashion used to refer to the production of fashion for the mass market. The odd *reverse* class inversion exposed an apparent arbitrariness of fashion prices and the symbolic value associations at work in processes of commodity fetishism, turning necessities and household items into luxury commodities through the simple imposition of the Chanel label as brand referent. Nonetheless, the term still signified the elevated fashion collections produced for Paris Fashion Week and could even be considered a callback to Robert Altman's (1994) satirical film. The simulation's supposed effacement of high-end and low-end consumer culture was inspired by Warhol's postmodern pop art (see Bowles,

2014; Fox, 2014). Nonetheless, the simulation bombarded the audience with reminders of the Chanel brand *as itself a referent* in the form of material products as simulated commodities, that were not for sale in the space (but could be sold outside of it), juxtaposed with the fashion collection which was commodified and would in six months be available for sale in stores.

Each one of the products bore a reference to the brand or to Coco Chanel herself: the entire simulation was comprised of a series of in-jokes or references that one had to have fashion comprehension or *fashion capital* to understand, as well as a functional understanding of French. Quotidian products had been “re-coded into Chanspeak” (Blanks, 2014, para. 2). It is not possible to enumerate all of the product names, as reports indicated that there were up to 500 products (Bowles, 2014; Doré, 2014). However, fashion critics listed the notable contributions. In the category of double entendres fit boxes of nuts labeled *Les Noix de Coco*, which translates as “the nuts of Coco” or “coconuts”; cartons of eggs labeled “Le 9 de Chanel,” which translated as Chanel No. 9 (a perfume reference) since “neuf” is French for “nine” but also rhymes with “oeuf” meaning “egg”; and a “sac poubelle” or garbage bag re-branded as a *sac plus belle* or “most beautiful bag”. Among the references to the life and house of Chanel could be found: camembert cheese named Cambonay, a reference to the location of the Chanel atelier on the rue Cambon; ham titled “jambon Cambon” to similar effect; a box of handkerchiefs labeled *Les Chagrins de Gabrielle* (“the sorrows of Gabrielle”); cans of house paint in the colour *Gris Jersey* or grey jersey; bottles of iced tea labeled Tweed Tea; charcoal called *Coco Carbone*, in a use of alliteration; boxes of loose leaf tea marked Little Black Tea in reference to Chanel’s iconic little black dress; and a doormat labeled *Mademoiselle Privé* (a title written on Chanel’s studio door) and branded with the famous double-C logo. This last item became by all accounts the most desirable and provoked a physical altercation between editors. In other instances, a collision of

brand names and even fonts operated as status signifiers: Kellogg's CORN POPS cereal (the box resembled the box for that specific cereal) became Kellogg's COCO POPS, a name which also sounds like the cereal COCOA PUFFS. The supermarket also contained a hardware department that featured, among other products, a chainsaw made with a real Chanel purse chain. One model sported a shrink-wrapped Chanel quilted purse in maroon, encased in a Styrofoam container and wrapped in saran wrap, with stickers that labeled the contents "100% Agneau" or lamb (Figure 5). The packaging of the purse to resemble supermarket meat called attention to the fact that the bag was made of lambskin; the revelation of the lambskin in the purse, its material nature, reiterated that the meat and the skin are from the same animal. Nonetheless, the lamb in a Styrofoam package would cost much less despite the butcher's labour than would the quilted Chanel purse with its storied craftsmanship and luxury associations. The products took on an ambiguous status as both simulated and material. Press reports stressed that while the supermarket was not operational, all of the products on the shelves were *real*: for example, the boxes of Tweed Tea contained tea leaves, and the boxes of *COCO POPS* cereal contained cereal. The hardware items were functional hardware items that contained use value as such. These were not, of course, products that one would purchase in a standard Chanel store but were still branded with the name Chanel. Each item was contained in exquisite, "sublime" on-brand packaging designed for the simulation (Doré, 2014). An intercom voiceover ran throughout the fashion show, calling attention to the products (and the puns contained in their names) in the manner that a supermarket loudspeaker would announce the deals of the day (Doré, 2014). This audio element reinforced some of the in-jokes that attendees might not have noticed and enhanced the technical, atmospheric features of a chain retailer (turned into a retailer of chainsaws and chain-strapped purses).

Figure 5. Lambskin purse at the Chanel Shopping Center, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Garance Doré (Doré, 2014). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://www.ateliordore.com/photos/chanel-shopping-center/>

The *real* moment of consumerist spectacle was, however, manifested at the end of the show, when Lagerfeld announced over the intercom that attendees were free to take perishable food items with them, but that the non-perishable food items would be donated to food banks and charities. *The Guardian*'s Imogen Fox recounts that, "sensing that the audience might lose their cool when faced with such unique items, the voice of the supermarket manager – Lagerfeld – announced that his '*valued customers*' were free to take the sweets and vegetables from the aisles" (para. 12, my emphasis). However, the editors wanted to take home the non-perishable products and moved towards the shelves in order to obtain them. Pandemonium ensued. Critics described the scene that followed in terms such as a "scrum," a "melee," a "ransacking," a "riot" and a "locust horde". This frenzied enactment was not live streamed but was disseminated in the form of written observations and handheld video clips (see susiebubble, 2014). Garance Doré's (2014) minute-by-minute first-person account indicates that she did not hear the announcement but rather joined in on the action she witnessed. The fashion editors' split-second, spontaneous decision to take as many branded products as possible created a moment that blurred the distinctions between *aesthetic simming* and Baudrillard's simulation, in which spectators started to behave as if the supermarket was a actual place of commerce, which in some respects it was, as all of these goods could theoretically be purchased outside the walls. Magelssen (2014) observes that the productive aspect of *simming* resides in the fact that certain formats "can enable outcomes unanticipated by the producers" (p. 7). However, attendees' overt manifestation of consumer desire was in this instance *produced*. Lagerfeld hailed the attendees as "customers" (accounts suggest that the voiceover was read in English) in accordance with their role in the

simulation and in possible (calculated) anticipation of their actions as such. The moment in which attendees were told that the products were prohibited became a verbal prompt for attendees to compete for luxury products rather than act as cultural intermediaries. The editors' embodied response here could indeed have led to possible bodily injuries. This condition recalls Baudrillard's caution of the physical, hazardous effects of simulation in his illustration of the bank robbery scenario in which one potential outcome is that "a client of the bank will faint and die of a heart attack" (1994, p. 21). For Baudrillard, the social danger of the simulation resided in its capacity to reveal that "law and order themselves might be nothing but simulation" (1994, p. 21). *Real* security guards stood at the supermarket 'check out' to prevent attendees from taking the non-perishable items out of the Grand Palais. Attendees exhibited emotional reactions when told to relinquish their possessions. Doré commented that, "there should be a shrink right there [at the checkout] people are so sad" (2014, n.p.). Chanel, having predicted attendees' devastation, offered "free candies" as a reward for handing over the merchandise, positioning attendees as spoiled children.

Despite the elaborate artistic construction of the branded environment, the resultant chaos revealed the intermediaries' innate condition as *consumers* prone to the whims of commercial culture. Lagerfeld, complicit in the construct, knew that any product could be branded with the name Chanel and rendered more desirable – this process of fetishism is precisely what occurred. Fox (2014) observed that, "The designer understands that branded goods which will never be available to buy on the open market [at least in Chanel stores] are the absolute pinnacle of desire in a materialistic world. His silent statement [was] brand anything with the Chanel stamp and they will want it" (para. 13). From a material culture perspective, the Chanel Supermarket commodities cannot be considered commodities because, despite their *realness*, no price was

assigned to them, and there was no point of exchange or purchase within the performance space: the commodities' *social life* (see Appadurai, 1988) was supposed to be limited to the simulation. However, this containment, combined with their branded status as Chanel, conferred on the products the combined status of Chanel commodities and artifacts of an exclusive event. The products' existence at the fashion show as ephemeral event lent them an *aura* both as a souvenir of the simulation *and* as material evidence that attendees had attended the Chanel fashion show. The commodities' condition as not-quite-real-but-still-*real* commodities therefore imbued them with a fetishized, luxury value in the event that those commodities were removed from the space and thus entered the broader market (perhaps as marked-up items on eBay). These were Chanel-branded products that few other consumers possessed and that could *only* have been obtained (first) at the fashion show.^{lxxvi} If Chanel did deliver the non-perishable food items to a food bank, these luxury commodities would then have taken on the status of charitable donations, offered to impoverished citizens for their use value as food items or household products. Some attendees still managed to sneak out or 'shoplift' non-perishables: these took on an additional condition as loot or contraband. Certain items left in the installation's wreckage – the chainsaw for example, "spilled" on the floor (Fox, 2014) – assumed a condition of performance *remains* (Schneider, 2011), the left-behind evidence and material waste of the simulation and the embodied actions of the riot afterwards, or in this case now just a chainsaw. Shannon Jackson comments that within the realm of art, foodstuffs are malleable forms that contain a potent semiotics:

... [F]oodstuffs lie at the center of poverty discourse; a recognition of the inelucability of hunger might question the utility of sitting food inside an art project. Food is also one of the few everyday materials that travel betwixt and between humans and their exterior world. (2011, 140).

Lagerfeld had stated that he wanted to meditate on the condition of both fashion and food as necessities, or perhaps as products consumed based on instinctual drives: "We need fashion as

we need food – and nobody wants to eat the same food all the time” (as cited in Browne, 2016, p. 214). The foodstuffs that could be donated to the food bank, as necessities, became the most fashionable products. The perishable foodstuffs, however, held an ambiguous status as not branded and thus not desirable: while meats, cheeses and boxed items were branded, there was also an entire section of produce that served a more decorative function within the simulation (every market needs a produce section). The perishable foodstuffs, stuck in their representational condition as themselves, sat unwanted in the Grand Palais and unusable for food banks. It is in their remainder in the space post-riot, or their condition as what Schneider (2011) would term a *performance remain*, that the Chanel Supermarket was transformed into a more tone-deaf class performance of conspicuous waste, despite or perhaps because of its stated charitable intentions.

Wickstrom’s (2006) *brandscape* provides a further explanation of attendees’ unscripted (but anticipated) response upon the ‘checkout’ from the simulation. Wickstrom outlines how the purported mimetic potential of the brand acts on bodies, describing her experience at the NikeTown flagship store as a moment of possible rebirth: “I’m unsettled into a delicious indeterminacy, simultaneously bodily and immaterial” (2006, p. 20). Wickstrom (2006) moreover observes that brands’ transformative promise to consumers is instilled in childhood. Doré describes the attendees’ pleasure at beholding and *holding* the products in terms of an uninhibited, innocent consumerism: “We all look like kids on Christmas morning, eyes wide open and pink cheeks” (2014, n.p.). Blanks (2014) employs a more obvious metaphor, describing “the fashion world’s great and good transformed into kids in a candy store by Lagerfeld’s spectacle” (para. 3). At the end of the fashion show, the intermediaries needed to procure the commodities as proof not just of their presence but as evidence that the simulation had existed or been ‘real’ at all. Brennan’s (2004) *transmission of affect* model accounts for the manner in

which one member's consumer desire became another's in a process of entrainment. Garance Doré's chronicle documents this embodied, cellular transmission in action:

11.17: ... Everybody wants a piece of the decor. Me too !!! ...

11.20: Wow, some are getting REALLY excited over this and are loading themselves with products.

11.21: Some stands collapse. ... [Y]ou don't really know if it's funny, desperate or if it's art, but I'm happy to report that the atmosphere is great.

11.21: People are starting to go way overboard. Security guards ask (nicely) for people to stop dismantling [sic] the decor, but kindness seems to have no effect on what's starting to feel like hysteria.

11.21: Three fashion editors are climbing the shelves to get their hands on the "Mademoiselle" doormat. One of them trips and falls down. (2014, n.p.)

Attendees interacted with the Chanel brand both at the level of the product (and its packaging) and at the level of the logo, which in its omnipresence instantiated a pervasive simulation. The offer of the brand became the catalyst for a surge and expression of affective consumer desire.

The manifestation of consumerism can also be attributed to the fact that attendees had the privilege of touring the set beforehand and were invited to touch the merchandise, and so could immerse themselves in the simulation and interact with the commodities and the brand at a material and affective level (Figure 6).^{lxxvii} Retail anthropologist and specialist Paco Underhill (2009) stresses that to cater to the sense of touch is essential to establishing a pleasurable consumer experience: to touch merchandise both prompts impulse purchasing and offers the consumer a sense of a product's material feel and properties to a degree that e-commerce cannot replicate (p. 168) – much as the live stream of Chanel's fashion show could not materialize the products for the online spectator. Underhill observes that children, or the proverbial "kids in the candy store" are the most likely to touch products, in particular foodstuffs: "If adults are highly tactile shoppers, kids are uninhibitedly so" (2009, p. 158). Magelssen states that, "aesthetic simmings emphasize the enjoyment and gratification of the immediate encounter" (2014, p. 17). Adults, according to Underhill, assume that to touch is forbidden and need to be given explicit

permission to touch products in-store (2009, p. 192), making that access more satisfying, especially since standard Chanel stores would not want customers to paw at the merchandise. Attendees' *tactile* interactions with the products adhered to a phenomenon that Christina Harold (2009) terms *aesthetic capitalism*, in which mass market companies brand quotidian, household products in terms of their design and surface qualities (p. 611). Harold combines Massumi's affect as *intensities* with Benjamin's notion of aura as produced through ritual to describe a mode of use that unites aesthetic and tactile pleasure and instills affect in bodies (2009, p. 612). Celia Lury (2004) asserts that the *logo* as brand signifier functions as the site of consumers' "interface" with brands, a relation also characterized in terms of a Massumian affect that opens up potentialities (pp. 39-41). The quotidian foodstuffs, necessities and household goods placed around the Grand Palais were rendered more valuable and pleasurable both in their aesthetics and via the insertion of the Chanel brand as referent. Items that tend to be purchased more for their use value than for their value as home décor or luxurious commodities, such as the aforementioned doormat, took on the aura of a Chanel tweed jacket or quilted purse. Debord (1967) stated that, "the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (Part 4). In the Chanel Supermarket, the appearance of the brand as image was repetitious, complete and inescapable and thus mediated consumers' interactions and embodied responses. Furthermore, it turned those consumers into immaterial labourers, as Chanel hardly had to release its own promotional photographs or product shots of the branded items since the attendees performed the task for them to circulate their cultural capital and for their own material enjoyment. Doré observed that the number of tweets and Instagram posts related to the fashion show went "literally [sic] crazy" and dubbed the event "Chanel Explosion N°. 128616," concocting a fragrance name to describe the sheer number of media impressions

(2014, n.p.). In this scenario, records became commodified as such. Under the spectacle, the live and the virtual audience members' social and proximal relation to each other and to the commodities was *mediated* and *mediatized*. Art historian Juliet Koss reads Theodor Adorno's dismissal of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as predicated on the total work of art placing spectators "into dumbfounded passivity by a sinister and powerful creative force" (2010, xii, as cited in C. K. Lau, 2016, p. 198). However, fashion scholar Charlene K. Lau, writing on the fashion shows and exhibitions of Bernard Willhelm as a total work of art (what she terms a *total work of fashion*), asserts that the *Gesamtkunstwerk* demands "critical and active" spectator engagement to realize its "revolutionary aims of social transformation" (2016, p. 198). While Adorno might have interpreted the consumerist riot at the Chanel Supermarket fashion show as the result of mindless, passive consumption on the part of the culture industries and its denizens, I posit here that attendees' actions arose from a more immersive, intimate level of involvement in the simulated realm, albeit one constructed in the service of commercial culture rather than a political intent.

Figure 6. Fashion editors photograph the merchandise at the Chanel Shopping Center, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Garance Doré (Doré, 2014). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:
<http://www.ateliordore.com/photos/chanel-shopping-center/>

Fashion editors' acts of dismantling merchandise and shelves and even stealing forbidden items (from people that needed them) undermined traditional assumptions of luxury consumers' behaviour under 'normal' social conditions, as media depictions of upper-class consumers reinforce that one behaves (or should behave) in a refined manner inside high-end retail environments.^{lxxviii} Lagerfeld's use of the term "customers" to address his audience can also be read as a prompt to the attendees to comport themselves in the refined manner of a Chanel customer – instead, it invoked behaviour more commonly associated with stores such as Wal-Mart and even with disaster situations. Critics compared both the simulation and the craziness

that broke out afterwards to the 1980s and 1990s North American game show *Supermarket Sweep* in which working- and middle-class Americans literally raced through a supermarket set to win products, often pushing their teammates in shopping carts. The citation was made more explicit in a set of photographs from the event that captured model Joan Smalls wheeling Rihanna and fellow model Cara Delevingne around the set in one of the shopping carts. Using a more ominous tone, critics observed that the space started to look like a supermarket being looted in a disaster zone: Garance Doré, then living in New York, called the scene reminiscent of supermarkets after Hurricane Sandy (2014, n.p., see also Duggan, L., 2014). Video records of the Chanel Supermarket riot invoke online videos of customer hordes at discount retailers in the United States on Black Friday, often circulated to permit spectators to lament the horrors of capitalism and/or mock the middle or lower classes. The competition to procure the branded products and the photographs of models pushing shopping carts also recall the snaking lineups and the riots that have broken out at the public launches of designer collaborations at fast fashion retailers such as H&M or Target, after which pieces are often sold at an atrocious markup on eBay. The riot also has a historical precedent in the melee of middle-class female attendees that broke out after a 1908 performance of the operetta *The Merry Widow* that promised each attendee a free hat like that featured in the production, the style of which had become a popular trend. The women's behaviour troubled social distinctions of theatre audiences, as it was considered more 'expected' in department stores (specifically in their bargain basements) rather than in classier establishments (Schweitzer, M., 2009a, 2009b). The feature film *Confessions of a Shopaholic* (2009), based on Sophie Kinsella's popular novel series, contains a scene in which the titular heroine incites a riot at a designer sample sale when she battles another woman for a pair of boots, adding to a list of real-life and fictional representations that illustrate the base

behaviour of consumers that succumb to their desire for fetishized commodities, especially those offered for free or at a discount.^{lxxix} Depictions of such materialistic shoppers often foreground women, targeted as consumers with purchasing power but also portrayed as more prone to consumer desire and the irrational actions it evokes, than male shoppers, especially within ‘theatrical’ or affectively charged environments (see Schweitzer, M., 2009b). In her memoir, Lucile declared, “It is impossible ... to over-estimate the effect of environment on a woman, for women are infinitely more adaptable than men, they become part of their surroundings” and all of the processes of identification and desire production therein (as cited in Rappaport, 2001, p. 188). Her statement indeed paralleled press discourses on female consumerism in Britain in the early 20th century (Rappaport, 2001, p. 188).^{lxxx} Nonetheless, Doré commented that her date for the Chanel Supermarket fashion show had stolen a bottle of ketchup, a hint that the thief was her then partner, *The Sartorialist*’s Scott Schuman (2014, n.p.). In Chanel’s simulation, the class-based and gendered nature and presumptions of appropriate, situational consumer comportment – not to mention industry standards of professionalism – were further called into question.

Attendees were positioned as an elite set that can afford the products, but in this moment the crowd behaved in a more crass and perhaps even desperate manner as if the normal rules and protocols of shopping or even fashion shows no longer applied. Magelssen, citing Auslander, recalls that “embodiment can offer a kind of participatory [Brechtian] *gestus* that can aid in identifying with the social and political status of a body by taking on its postures and gestures, which are determined by social relations,” a process Auslander terms *muscular alienation* (2014, p. 8). From a more Bourdieusian, class-based perspective, the simulation perhaps created social conditions in which attendees acted on a measure of consumer want associated in media representations with the middle and lower classes. Still, one can also form a reverse

interpretation that attendees performed a greed associated with the upper classes, as the scene that broke out also recalled filmic portrayals of catty and competitive fashion editors as well as reality television series such as the *Real Housewives* franchise that feature wealthy women engaging in catfights at locations such as New York Fashion Week venues. Attendees' actions can also be read as a materialization of the machinations of the international 1% that normally occur at the level of finance.^{lxxxii} The individual, embodied social competition that arose at the end of the simulation, for its material commodities, resulted too from, as performance scholar Jen Harvie describes, methods through which “immersive theatre works to individualize everyone’s experience, socially isolating them, as well as in [their] practices of deeply seducing audiences into apparently rich worlds, only to abandon them at the show’s end” (2013, p. 53-54).^{lxxxiii} Such modes of social isolation often function in tandem with discourses of public, democratic participation in artworlds under a neoliberal ethos (Harvie, 2013, pp. 50-55). The multiple possible readings of the Chanel Supermarket riot nonetheless reveal here an ambivalent class politics whose representations fashion ultimately seeks to control. The riot, however, occurred after the live broadcast had ended and attendees were no longer *as* conscious of the presence of cameras, or were too focused on their quest for souvenirs to notice. Still, that the hysteria was reported on in detail and recorded on smartphones rendered the field of fashion’s members visible in a manner beyond their control and comfort, outward from the Grand Palais to the (rest of the) consumer public via media.

KANYE WEST - YEEZY SEASON 3, FALL/WINTER 2016

On February 11, 2016, I paid \$85.00 USD to attend the release of hip-hop superstar and wannabe fashion impresario Kanye West’s third fashion collection, Yeezy Season 3, at Madison Square Garden. West combined his collection launch with a “listening party” for his latest album, *The*

Life of Pablo, which he had been promoting via social media teasers in the weeks prior. The fashion press and social media promised that this fashion show would become the most talked-about event of New York Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2016. For the fashion show component, West collaborated with performance artist Vanessa Beecroft, who had also coordinated his two previous presentations and would later coordinate his fourth (Horyn, 2015a, n.p.).^{lxxxiii} Beecroft is renowned for performance pieces that explore human endurance, and her performances for West before and since have situated numerous bodies in one space for a set temporal period. The pair recruited 1,200 male and female models of colour, both professional and amateur, to stand on the arena floor in a performance of stillness; the amateur models were selected from a public casting call. The affair was live streamed on Tidal (a platform owned by Jay Z), but the actual fashion show was not broadcast. Instead, the live stream focused on West's 'DJ' performance in the space, while the online audience saw the fashion show through the plethora of brand, press and audience photographs that circulated afterwards.^{lxxxiv} The live stream reached 20 million views, a level that led to technical difficulties for online spectators (Cox, 2016), reminiscent of Lady Gaga's performance at McQueen's 2009 Plato's Atlantis presentation and further indicative of the incredible exposure that pop music celebrities can offer to fashion ventures. Yeezy Season 3 was but one component of a broader, even more media-saturated event that was intended to promote West as multimedia artist and brand. However, I attended the *live* presentation and can comment first-hand on the spectacle as it was received within the space – a spectacle of which the fashion show was the most remarkable component. West's live presentation must be read as a total spectacle that united music, fashion and celebrity while it enacted class- and race-based cultural tensions within its competing representations. To this end, I analyze West's album performance, the fashion-show-cum-performance-art-piece, the presence

of the Kardashian and Jenner families (West's in-laws) as token celebrities, and even a preview of a videogame that West had developed. West intended for these components to refer back to each other to produce a cultural moment and complete sensory experience for the live audience. Indeed, Barthes's (1990) total referent of *(F)ashion* must be placed upon the entire performance to render its elements concordant. I interpret West's presentation through what Baudrillard terms the "aesthetic perspective that allows us to assimilate fashion to the ceremonial" (1993, p. 90). While the Chanel Supermarket had installed a full-scale material simulation via fabricated commodities with which attendees could engage in ritualized interactions, West's fashion show consisted of multifarious aesthetic elements that demanded a commercial reverence and adherence to the worship of celebrities. Still, the 'real' asserted itself, as the presence and action (and inaction) of hundreds of performer bodies created political utterances that arose out of the simulation but also defied the intended production of a total simulacrum.

As of the Fall/Winter 2016 season, West had debuted two prior collections at New York Fashion Week and had drawn the ire of lesser-known designers for showing outside of the schedule mandated by the CFDA. West chooses to show his collections at times opportune to him, as he knows that the fashion and mainstream press will flock to the event no matter what. In fact, designers slated to show opposite him on the official calendar have had to reschedule *their* shows. Like a standard fashion show, the presentation started almost half an hour after its scheduled 4:00 PM start time: during this intervening period, the audience stared at a parachute material tent inflated on the arena floor (Figure 7). Even as West attempts to establish himself as a fashion insider during NYFW, he still operates as a rebel outsider that refuses to adhere to the 'official' schedule, and he can do so because his level of fame transcends the field of fashion and troubles its dimensions; indeed, West's outsider status lends *further* media attention to his

collections. Baudrillard (1993) describes the fashion show as the ritual festival through which fashion legitimates itself as construct (p. 90). Tseelon (2015) emphasizes that the fashion show fulfills and consecrates the ritual function of fashion in a commercial sense (p 228). West staged his combined fashion and music spectacle as a business ritual, but because he did so off of the official calendar, his event eclipsed the actual Fashion Week festival even as it was covered as part of it, provoking questions as to the ‘real’ structure of Fashion Week.^{lxxxv} However, West *needed* to hone the associations and mechanisms of Fashion Week as an institution in order to legitimate his collection and ensure its coverage: rather, even though West showed ‘off’ the official schedule, the press was nonetheless primed for the event as were interested fashionistas. Even the fact that West was rebelling against Fashion Week became a useful headline. Moreover, West has to incorporate the cachet of the referent (*F*)*ashion* to position his clothing line as a competitive enterprise. West moreover utilized (and depended on) fashion’s intersections with hip-hop culture and celebrity culture to produce the mediatized affair, and his audience was excited for him to do so. In fact, it was West’s clout as a hip-hop impresario that permitted him to enter and possess influence in the realm of fashion. While West invited the most prominent members of the fashion press, he also released tickets to the public at price points ranging from \$50.00 to \$135.00 USD. This decision rendered the event less exclusive than other New York Fashion Week shows for which tickets were not sold. However, it was difficult to discern, at least in the 200-level upper balcony where I was seated, which attendees were present for the fashion show and which were hip-hop fans more interested in hearing *The Life of Pablo* and seeing West in person (most of the attendees seated in the nosebleed section appeared to be hip-hop aficionados based on their dress and on their knowledge of West’s music). West proclaimed to the press and to the audience that he had sold out the arena’s almost 20,000 seats, but there

were numerous empty seats visible in the higher-priced middle sections. While it is possible that these tickets were purchased and scalped on resale websites, audience members could perceive an obvious discrepancy between West's claims and the attendance numbers.^{lxxxvi}



Figure 7. Madison Square Garden prior to Yeezy Season 3 fashion show, Fall/Winter 2016. Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

West's presentation can be considered an attempt to entrench the man as a brand, or even as a brandscape, or rather to extend his brand across multiple artistic and media platforms. While the fashion collection was presented on the floor of the arena, visible to all, it was not even the most accessible West-branded product. A separate line of *Life of Pablo* album merchandise was available for sale at booths on all levels of the arena: the t-shirts, sweatshirts and baseball caps were produced in the same brown, red and golden hues as the Yeezy collection but more vibrant. The merchandise was not cheap – a hooded sweatshirt cost approximately \$100.00 USD – but

lineups to purchase it stretched around the concourses, and the fashion show's late start time facilitated sales. Fans tended to wear the clothes that they had just purchased, expanding West's seasonal colour palette throughout the arena. West's decision to wear one of the merchandise hoodies on his own torso offered a visual unification between hip-hop music and fashion. West's red sweatshirt, emblazoned with the statement "I FEEL LIKE PABLO," promoted branded his own embodied form, the artist as billboard, and ensured that he remained visible at all times. However, it also advertised and prioritized the album rather than the fashion collection. The merchandise also assumed a special status as the sole commodities through which paid attendees could interact with the spectacle in a material sense, as unlike the Chanel Supermarket fashion show, there was no chance for us to tour or touch the space beforehand.

As both a researcher/observer and a consumer/hip-hop fan, I experienced a moment of disconnect between the constructed and the real as West entered the space, as I had not understood that the 'album release' that Ticketmaster had advertised was not a *live* concert. West entered with little advance notice or fanfare: he did not appear from under the parachute tent but rather strolled into the arena from a side entrance underneath the bleachers. His entrance was broadcast on the enormous Jumbotron and on additional screens throughout the various levels of the arena. The crowd erupted, the houselights *then* lowered, and a spotlight followed West as he walked to the far end of the arena floor. Holding a microphone, West welcomed the crowd in an off-the-cuff manner. He then plugged in a MacBook, which produced a metallic *thud* that reverberated throughout the arena. West pressed some buttons and proceeded to play the recorded tracks from *The Life of Pablo* on the laptop, over the arena speakers. Surrounded by an entourage of lesser-known hip-hop artists, West moved to the music and basked in fans' adulation throughout the album's duration, the spotlight focused on him the entire time. West's

live-but-not-actual or live-but-still-mediatised performance formed a profound example of the various modes and degrees of mediation possible within Auslander's (2008a, 2008b) matrix of *liveness*. The audience shared space with one of the most famous musical performers on the planet: he was *co-present* with us. Still, West's musical performance was electronic. At no point did he rap *live*. West, the composer and performer of the recorded tracks, stood several meters from me, while his performance consisted of playing a digital recording of his album on a laptop and making occasional conversation with the audience, while 20 million Internet users tried to watch the event via a live stream that was continuously interrupted. One could interpret his performance as reminiscent of the performance experiments of digital pioneers such as John Cage (see Gere, 2008, pp. 81-86). In fact, this simplistic performance construct made glaringly clear the extent to which all concerts are to some extent mediatised (Auslander, 2008a, 2008b). Was this performance 'real'? Yes. Was it *live*? Yes (for the arena audience). Did it feel *immediate*? Not in the 200-level seats. Indeed one of my seatmates arrived after the performance had started and asked me to confirm West's location. The sheer scale of the event, the blaring, bass-heavy music and the presence of multiple bodies rendered the event more in tune with the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, considered to be another precursor to "multimedia" practices in performance (Gere, 2008, p. 86).^{lxxxvii} *The New York Times*'s Cathy Horyn felt that West "managed to make things *seem* intimate" (my emphasis) as his addresses were improvised, and as he stood within a (preselected) crowd of fellow hip-hop artists (2016a, n.p.). She, however, was seated with the fashion press in a lower-level section, closer to West and still chose to read the presentation as an overall "event" (Horyn, 2016a, n.p.). West in fact bore a dual presence, his embodied voice broadcast over the microphone and understood to be *live* even as we perceived him from a distance, and his recorded voice on the album tracks as disembodied as that of Karl Lagerfeld's

Supermarket voiceovers at Chanel (before the man himself made his finale entrance). Observing from the nosebleed section let me appreciate the extent to which West wanted each element to read as one component of a total, expansive, mediatized production.

The presentation's most profound, unsettling moment came at the end of the first album track, as the parachute tent was ripped back to reveal the crowd of 1, 200 male and female models, standing stone-faced and still, some on tarp-covered platforms and most on the floor, wearing streetwear in earth tones punctuated by flashes of neon orange and yellow. The scale of the assembled bodies and the coordination of each person's outfit were breathtaking (Figure 8). However, as audience members watched the performance unfold, it became possible to discern aesthetic differences in bodies and clothes. An interview conducted with an amateur model after the show revealed that the models on the platform were the professionals, whose outfits came from the collection, while the models on the floor were amateurs sporting thrifted clothes that had been dyed to match (Anonymous, 2016, para. 9). Models had been told to channel persons at a Rwandan refugee camp, and a real photograph of Rwandan refugees was placed on the press invitation, rendering the show a reanimation of the past (Contributor, 2016; Givhan, 2016). In 1995, British photographer Paul Lowe captured the image of thousands of Hutus that had survived a massacre at the Kibeho refugee camp: these people "penned themselves" into a section of the compound and "refused to leave," and their presence is therefore an incidence of rebellion (Moakley & Laurent, 2016). At the fashion show, the presence of the mainly Black bodies crowded onto the arena floor "washed in a haze of smoke machines and spotlights" (Moakley & Laurent, 2016), standing and sometimes seated on earth-toned tarps and platforms, created a tableau that bears an eerie resemblance to Lowe's photograph when juxtaposed with it (see Fig. 4). The piece became in part a *simming of witness*, conducted "to express empathy or

solidarity with the victims of a present or a past injustice of trauma” (Magelssen, 2014, p. 14). Here, West’s intention can be read as a double reinvocation of the mid-1990s Rwandan genocide and a show of support for racialized movements in North America such as #BlackLivesMatter. In her examination of *live* enactments that cite historical events or prior performances, Rebecca Schneider states that the reenactment of a photograph folds the past time of its creation into the present moment (2011, pp. 138-168).^{lxxxviii} Writing on the actions or inactions of models’ bodies, performance scholar Franziska Bork Petersen similarly remarks that the pose “is necessarily a citational act; a form of control that demands iconographic awareness and discipline” (2013, p. 168). Both the experienced and amateur models therefore stood as icons intended to call forth not just real-life war survivors but also prior fashion poses. Columnist Robin Givhan appreciated the Rwanda reference: “In this moment of debate about Syrian refugees, immigration reform and nationalistic political rhetoric, the scene packed a significant cultural punch” (2016, para. 7). However, as a paid audience member, I could not read the Rwanda reference without the aid of the invitation, which offered crucial contextual information (see Clark, 2001) and did not know about the citation until afterwards, when press outlets published the same photograph (Figure 9).

As a fashion show, the enactment remained too an *aesthetic simming* that at all times threatened to sublimate the real, politicized referents and bodies to *(F)ashion*’s seasonal streetwear and athleisure trends. The real Rwandans (then survivors) in the photograph were called forth in the arena via the bodies of the models over twenty years after the Rwandan genocide and their powerful immobility re-enacted (Figure 10). Nonetheless, there remains a representational difference between the real, embodied subjects of the photograph and the image itself. As an element (or aesthetic/political referent) within West’s presentation, the image was further co-opted within the mediatized fashion spectacle. Although the spectacle created a

circular process in which the press then ‘unearthed’ the photograph for the public’s educational benefit, the image was used to enhance West’s statement of a Black endurance as universal.^{lxxxix}



Figure 8. Models are revealed at the Yeezy Season 3 fashion show, Fall/Winter 2016. Photo: Rebecca Halliday.



Figure 9. Kibeho refugee camp, Rwanda, April 1995. Photo: Paul Lowe. Used with permission.

Figure 10. Yeezy Season 3 fashion show, February 2016. Photo: PIXEL-FORMULA/SIPA. (Moakley & Laurent, 2016). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://time.com/4219645/kanye-yeezy-season-3-photo-rwanda/>

The creation of the racialized political statement took a physical and emotional toll on the models in both the preparation and enactment phases. Attention paid to the labour demanded both before and in the durational performance fits within Shannon Jackson's call to consider "the material relations that support the de-materialized act": the human expenditures and "aesthetic infrastructures" that undergird performances with a *social bent*, or *social works* (2011, p. 39). Jackson finds that such works nonetheless draw on and sometimes exploit an intersectional *performative labour*, even under the intention of criticizing similar institutional practices (2011, pp. 106-116, 144-163), and of course with less commercial intent than that which was made explicit at New York Fashion Week. West's collaborators bused the models from Manhattan to a warehouse in New Jersey for their fittings, and the amateur model noted that the experience of being transported on a bus "like cattle" to an unknown location made her feel "like I was being herded into a concentration camp" (Anonymous, 2016, para. 24). This comparison indicates that the models' labour conditions approximated or produced at least a sensation of the real environment depicted in the real Rwanda photograph. The models were exhausted even prior to their arrival at Madison Square Garden, after which they were required to remain standing under the tent while audience members arrived, and for another 30 minutes after the scheduled start time. Once the models were revealed to the arena audience, they had to remain in place for the full 90 minutes of the album presentation. Models were issued a detailed list of instructions to be as motionless and *emotionless* as possible, but were permitted to sit if needed; a few of the (taller and thinner) models on the platform did sit, but most remained standing. This stillness became a performance of the limits of human physicality that transfixed the audience, especially since the

female models on the platform wore heels. Harvey Young (2010) analyzes stillness in relation to Black bodies as a historical condition dating back to the slave ships and the auction blocks, historical incidences of the enforced transportation of masses of Black people. Performances of stillness thus call forth a host of embodied cultural memories and illuminate the manner in which Black bodies are scrutinized, as well as instances in which the return of the Colonial gaze and control of representation are possible (Young, 2010). However, the performance of stillness that the real Rwandan camp survivors enacted had itself been an act of survival. On the floor of Madison Square Garden, the Black models were both looked *at* and stoically resistant. The amateur model describes her embodied experience on a spectrum of sensations from “surreal” excitement to “dizziness” and fear that she might have a “panic attack” – at the end, her “whole body was stiff” (Anonymous, 2016). Models sporadically performed Black power salutes: apparently unscripted actions that arose from the embodied practice of simming that the models were ordered to undertake. These ran the risk of constituting “some sort of blactivist moment,” without a ‘real’ referent and thus dismissable (Anonymous, 2016, para. 15). Nonetheless, the statements appeared spontaneous and comprised a series of Brechtian gestures that wrote racial politics through bodies in a process of Auslander’s muscular alienation (as cited in Magelssen, 2014, p. 8). Givhan (2016) read the gestures as affective utterances performed in resistance to imposed immobilities both actual and symbolic:

[The models] would periodically act out – as if they simply couldn’t take the stillness any longer. Some of the models threw up the middle finger in response to a West-encouraged, vulgar tirade against Nike. ... They raised their fist in a [B]lack power salute. They were silent and they were political. And that was potent. (para. 10)

I interpreted the Black power salute instead much like moments in which models chose to sit (another action that pulled focus to their bodies out of the mass): as an instance in which, as Shannon Jackson articulates in reference to an installation from the Black performance artist

William Pope.L, the work's "material encumbrances ... had, like any endurance performance, exhausted the capacities of the performers who supported it" (2011, p. 143). After West left the arena floor, some models began to move about to hip-hop music pumped through the speakers, including Beyoncé's controversial track *Formation*, which had been released in recent weeks. This dance too arose organically as models had not been instructed on what to do at the end of the show aside from a directive to walk off the floor at an unspecified time (Anonymous, 2016, para. 22).^{xc} This scene of bodies that had stood still for 90 minutes now writhing in the space created a palpable sense of both physical and political liberation – a communion that the audience could not share in but to which we nonetheless bore witness.

Still, to demand that amateur models perform the affective, physical and *unpaid* labour of channeling refugees in the service of promoting athleisure wear represents a metaphor of physical endurance taken to its extreme, and smacked of some racial tokenism, on the part of, pace Jackson, both Beecroft as performance artist, West as fashion and hip-hop impresario, and the cultural institutions that facilitated their collaboration. It is crucial too to consider the gendered nature of the models' presentation, as Clare Johnson (2013) observes that Beecroft's work tends to explore endurance in *female* bodies, pinpointing a tension between "femininity as spectacle" and the "slip" of real bodies underneath the "façade it creates" (p. 52-53). Baudrillard (1993) wrote that, under fashion, the female form as referent was rendered naked, called out as "hidden sex" and desexualized because its nudity was no longer political: simultaneously, however, the female mannequin becomes sexualized as object, commodified *as feminine* (96). The professional female models' slicked back hair, earth-tone bodysuits and hoods rendered them somewhat asexual, but the fact that their outfits were skin-tight meant that their bodies were nevertheless sexualized, a form that was then replicated and blown up on the Jumbotron.

One of the political concerns that this production raised in fact was the exploitation of models' labour for the purposes of a fashion-as-performance-art, since West casts amateur models that will perform for little to no compensation just to participate in the spectacle.^{xci}

Despite the politics enacted in the fashion show component, critics and participants still interpreted the 1, 200 Black models on the arena floor as but one component of a broader cultural work. The amateur model observes that the labour she undertook undermined the supposed glamour of participating in a Kanye West event, but later noted that she could appreciate the performance's *total* effect: "This was a great example of the fashion industry *as a whole*, that from an outsider's perspective it looks so glamorous" (Anonymous, 2016, para. 23, my emphasis). Her quotation reiterated fashion's need to maintain its opulent façade despite the actual human labour and endurance that maintains the pervasive simulacrum even as its reality undermines it. Givhan (2016) asserts that the sustained performance of endurance contributed to an overall statement that fashion does not just offer "a tool" to represent or to "communicate" culture, but rather that "Fashion *is* culture – sweeping, mass and powerful" (para. 11). The event therefore emblemized fashion as a form of "mass entertainment," reinforced in the number of spectators that had "*paid* to watch" the fashion "extravaganza" (cum listening party) or tried to access it online (Givhan, 2016, para. 4-6), much in the manner of the paid sporting events typically held at and broadcast from Madison Square Garden. However, the undeniable fact of the performers' physical presence, their enforced stillness and the symbolic force of their movements instilled an articulation of the 'real' that productively destabilized West's construction of the fashion spectacle as entertainment.

The presence of the Kardashians and Jenners, albeit in the audience, must be considered a component of the total spectacle, since they were the most anticipated celebrities aside from

West. Kim Kardashian West has been present at all of West's fashion shows since the pair married, and West called out to her numerous times. The families' entrance preceded West's: members walked out of the same side doors in a procession and took their seats in the 100-level section far below me. This entrance was broadcast on the Jumbotron and other screens to the excitement of the crowd, who cheered and whipped out their smartphones to capture photographs. A young woman behind me shrieked, "I have to see the Kardashians! I have to see the Kardashians!" Writing on fashion shows as a mode of spectacular performance, critic Alix Browne also reads the families' "dramatic, spot-lit entrance" as "part of the performance," intended for social media circulation (2016, p. 8). Seated in the same 100-level section were other fashion-connected celebrities, hip-hop artists and Hollywood actors, what Tseelon (2015), writing on Baudrillard, describes as the "idols of consumption" (p. 224). These celebrities included models-of-the-moment Karlie Kloss and the Hadid sisters; Balmain Creative Director and social media persona Olivier Rousteing; rappers 50 Cent and 'Lil Kim; film actress Melanie Griffith; and NBA star Lamar Odom, former partner of Khloé Kardashian. Anna Wintour and Carine Roitfeld, with whom West and Kardashian West have collaborated, were seated near the Kardashians rather than with the rest of the fashion press, a conspicuous seating choice that indicated West's increased influence over fashion's hierarchies. Horyn scoffed that "[Wintour] needed to be seated with her own people, where her power is clear and separate. Instead, she looked diminished, like a Kardashian accessory" (2016a, n.p.). Wintour and Roitfeld's placement further blurred the distinctions between the fashion show proper and the entire pop culture affair.

The Kardashians and Jenners were dressed in Balmain outfits that had been custom made for the event, and West offered a public shout out to Rousteing for creating the outfits. The pale pink and cream-coloured Balmain ensembles represented the pinnacle of spectacular fashion's

“pleasure from excess” (Tseëlon, 2015, p. 224): opulent, decadent, embellished, trimmed and in some cases distressed. Kim (whose hair had been bleached blonde), Khloe and Kris Jenner all wore elaborate fur coats, Catelyst and Kendall Jenner wore matching, white mini-dresses, and Kylie Jenner donned a massive stole, drawing numerous online comparisons to a Yeti. The Kardashians and Jenners offer a well-publicized example of what Chris Rojek terms the *celetoid*: media sensations rendered ubiquitous in a short period of time, often due to scandal (2001, pp. 20-22). Within a media climate that Rojek characterizes as simulacral, celetoids operate as “the accessories,” as product and ambassador, “of cultures organized around mass communications and staged authenticity” (2001, pp. 20-21). However, while celetoids are meant to “disappear from public consciousness” in an equally quick fashion (Rojek, 2001, p. 21), the Kardashians and Jenners have harnessed media and drawn on connections to the fields of fashion and popular culture to sustain their fame and thus have realized the status of bonafide *celebrities* whose profiles are more “durable” (Rojek, 2001, p. 20).^{xcii} Graeme Turner, for that matter, notes that the allocation of fame tends to happen within entrenched media circles and their prescribed machinations; rather, “the ‘ordinariness’” of unknowns “is at least debatable” (2010, pp. 17-20). The Kardashians and Jenners were far from ‘ordinary’ citizens in the first place: rather, the sisters are the beneficiaries of the wealth and fame of the late Robert Kardashian (defense attorney to O. J. Simpson) and Olympic athlete Bruce (now Caitlyn) Jenner. At Yeezy Season 3, the clan appeared as the representatives of celebrity culture, while their Balmain ensembles fused associations of the current era’s more sexualized glamour (Church Gibson, 2012; Gundle, 2008) with Parisian high fashion. Watching from a distance, the audience read the 1, 200 models’ bodies on the arena floor as juxtaposed with these mediatized celebrities and their Balmain outfits. Tseëlon observes that Baudrillard’s postmodernism “makes the social order irrelevant” (p.

225). The media and capitalist spectacle that West sought to establish was one that effaced class distinctions under (*F*)*ashion*, much as the Chanel models wore comfortable shoes for their supermarket stroll. Still, under Baudrillard's model of fashion, in which "all cultures come to play ... fashion's reference is the dominant cultural class" (1993, p. 100). The combination of the streetwear collection and thrifted clothes with the ostentatious Balmain ensembles instantiated a pronounced class-based "contrast between the models' refugee look and the rich-bitch clothes" (Horyn, 2016a, n.p.) that privileged the high fashion aesthetic to the detriment of the Yeezy collection. *WWD* wrote, "The women were decked in egregiously tacky pink and ivory furs and blingy embroidered dresses ... It was a vexing, tone-deaf contrast to the statement West seemed desperate to make with his Beecroft performance art" (Iredale, 2016, n.p.). While the Balmain ensembles bore the referent of high fashion, West's athleisure wear, still expensive but not nearly as luxurious as Balmain, assumed a referent of lower-end fashion in contrast, more "wearable" (Givhan, 2016, para. 3), but also more 'street' or 'urban'. The stark discordance in dress was reminiscent of Suzanne Collins's dystopian *Hunger Games* trilogy, specifically, the difference between the muted, simple fabrics of the impoverished District residents and the decadent ensembles of the inhabitants of the Capitol (see Geczy & Karaminas, 2016, pp. 50-62; Sullivan, 2014). This visual reference was made more resonant by shots of the Kardashian and Jenner families broadcast on the Jumbotron above the models: an echo of the numerous screens that appear in the *Hunger Games* films, reflective of the reality- television-obsessed culture the films depict, one not so far removed from our own proclivities, as the crowd's reaction to the Kardashians and Jenners demonstrated. High fashion was also invoked in the form of Black supermodels Naomi Campbell, Veronica Webb, Liya Kebede and Alek Wek, who stepped up to one of the platforms during the fourth track and paraded among the models in black leotards and

fur coats, causing the crowd to applaud their cameo appearance, also broadcast on the Jumbotron.^{xciii} Their cameo worked for a brief moment to unite the semiotics of the fashion-show-cum-performance-art piece and the Kardashians' and Jenners' presence, as these were powerful Black bodies in black fur coats. Still, the models also inserted an element of supermodel-era glamour into the politicized performance.

The last element that bears examination bore no obvious thematic relation to West's Yeezy Season 3 fashion show but merits inclusion as part of the complete multimedia spectacle and can be read in terms of its various layers of simulation. After West had finished playing the *Life of Pablo* album on the MacBook, he decided to show the audience the preview for *Only One*, a videogame that he had developed in tribute to his late mother, Donda West, who died in 2007 due to complications following cosmetic surgery. The preview depicts Donda West rendered as an avatar, wearing white pajamas, riding to heaven on a white horse with a set of enormous white wings. She finds the strength to use her own wings and launches herself through a cloud tunnel with a host of other angels, all of whom appear to be Black, rising up to meet a celestial orb. The preview offered a multiple reinvocation of the deceased Donda West, whose embodied form was absent from the space, and also of the moment of her death (as rebirth). *Only One* is the title of a 2015 track in which West reflects that he hears his mother's voice as he falls asleep and then sings the message of hope that she offers to him and to his daughter North West (who was in the audience), the grandchild that Donda West never met. *Only One* also refers to the fact that Kanye West was his mother's sole child and that each of us has 'only one' life, and the name Kanye also means "Only One" in Swahili (Rubin, 2015). In the preview, the audience sees Donda West reincarnated, and the other angels can be read as multiple copies of her. The dramatic score is an adaptation of the chorus to the track *Only One*, which, for those members of

the audience that were familiar with the first recording, could produce an emotional stir even as the visual content appeared to be pixilated and cliché. The audience had little idea, however, of how to read the preview in the context of the rest of the *mise-en-scène* and even as a media product. Our hesitant applause displeased our host, who insisted that we did not appreciate the work he puts into his artistic endeavours. He claimed that the videogame developers that he had approached to make *Only One* called his idea “bullshit,” but he had persisted in the realization of his personal vision (see Hernandez, 2016). West demanded that the technicians roll the clip once more. In this second preview performance, the audience not only saw the reincarnated avatar of Donda West but also (again) witnessed her death and ascent or rebirth to heaven. The numerous reminders that West offered of his personal life, including the presence of his wife and child and his candour about his mother’s death, functioned as what P. David Marshall terms “extra-textual elements” that almost closed the “representational gap” between persona and man (2006, p. 640). West’s rant was an unmediated reaction to our ambivalence, which he took as a personal attack (about a work that memorialized his deceased mother no less). Nonetheless, it adhered to his practiced self-performance as hip-hop superstar, one that is based on unpredictable and often controversial utterances on social media, as it treads an indefinable line between the fashioned and authentic self.

At this moment, I felt as if the audience was placating ’Ye, stroking his massive but clearly fragile ego, afraid to tell him that despite the spectacle that he had produced, his musical talents and obvious penchant for showmanship, his products might not measure up to industry or audience standards. West has faced similar criticism from prominent fashion journalists. In her review of Yeezy Season 2, Horyn had earned West’s scorn in invoking the old tale *The Emperor’s New Clothes* to describe the fashion industry response to West and to his collections:

[H]is second round of drab, broken-down basics proved [West] can't be taken seriously as a designer, but nevertheless many people in fashion *do* seem to take West seriously — they keep showing up expectantly for his performances — and that makes them fools. Because they wouldn't bother with this stuff if it were offered by an unknown, and if it's the spectacle they seek, it changes as little as the clothes. (2015b, para. 3)^{xciiv}

Despite the fact that West's fashion collections bore the referent of (*F*)*ashion*, veteran fashion critics noticed little seasonal aesthetic or commercial innovation in their design. West's interpretation of what is fashionable remained personal and consistent, but at the same time a 'real' substance or statement behind the clothes remained inscrutable. Instead, the clothes enhanced West's multi-media brand as simulacrum. Horyn's observation that audiences were drawn to West's presentations for their element of "spectacle" predicted the fan and consumer interest the show, entertainment *par excellence* from one of hip-hop's most influential artists. Nevertheless, the ambivalent and even antagonistic critical response to the collections, as well as the *live* audience's uncertain reception of his videogame preview, illuminated a chasm between the man's perception of his creative skill and his actual skill in the mediums (besides music) that he has attempted to conquer. Furthermore, West requires teams of creatives in all sectors to help him realize his visions; he credited the design teams with whom he had worked, but these people were working in the service of his ideals. The presentation ultimately reflected the constructed and branded persona that is West himself, even as the real man stood exposed, under the spotlight. After watching the "event," Horyn reflected that, "West wears everything on his sleeve, his ego as well as his innocence" (2016a, n.p.). Sporting his *Life of Pablo* sweatshirt, West in fact wore a self-referential fashion item, the product of his own commodification.

CONCLUSION

Events such as West's Yeezy Season 3 presentation provoke the question of what in fact constitutes an actual Fashion Week event in the Internet era, both due to their combination of

media within the space and their defiance of the mandated Fashion Week schedule. For his part, Karl Lagerfeld has continued to produce elaborate installations for Chanel's fashion shows, several of which blur the lines between the real, the represented and the simulated. He has also produced fashion shows in international, renowned *outdoor* locations whose cultural semiotics provide their own sometimes politically contentious backdrop. In 2007, Lagerfeld held a Fendi presentation "at sunset" on the Great Wall of China to the tune of 10 million dollars and after a lengthy wait to receive a permit from the Chinese government (Dhillon, 2017, n.p.). In 2016, Chanel held its 2016-17 resort fashion show in the streets of Havana, Cuba, making it the first fashion company to do business in Cuba since it opened its borders to political relations with the US. Dior, Gucci and Louis Vuitton have since produced similar shows in other unexpected cities, such as Rio de Janeiro (see Mower, 2016). As more and more events are held off of official calendars and outside of the fashion capitals but nonetheless receive coverage, fashion insiders have become concerned that the official Fashion Week calendars are outmoded (BoF Team, 2017a). While these cases represent a miniscule fraction of the fashion shows presented on- and off-calendar at all of the Fashion Weeks in this decade, the fashion shows nonetheless reveal the extent to which fashion's mediatization and its content remains predicated on the constructs and relations established within the performance space. The representations utilized can be traced to a documented, extensive record of fashion presentation that traces its historical roots back to mid-1800s Paris and forward to new cities as Fashion Weeks proliferate to international destinations. The two brands' decision to locate the fashion shows as mediatized entertainment validates Turner's assertion that media have prioritized the creation of and become a vehicle for entertainment (2010, p. 7), and illuminate fashion's collaboration in this development.^{xcv} The chapters in Part Two turn their attention from the *live* performance to the fashion show's forms

and processes of mediatization, first situating the fashion show live stream within fashion show transmissions and footage in cinema and television, and later examining how the fashion show live stream and related content has itself remediated more cinematic techniques in order to convey the movement of the clothes and build consumer desire. Furthermore, I examine the use of handheld streaming apps such as Facebook Live and Periscope that permit individual users to stream content from their embodied positions within the space in a more proximal manner. In all of the cases that I document, I problematize fashion companies' and media developers' claims to 'immediate' and 'real time' transmissions.

Chapter 4: Fashion Show Footage: From Newsreel to Live Stream

Since the first experiments with the ‘real time’ online transmission of fashion shows at the end of the 2000s, the live stream has become a standard medium of direct-to-consumer fashion show communication. Fashion shows on the ready-to-wear Fashion Month circuit are now routinely live streamed on brand websites, on fashion media and digital fashion film sites, and on host sites such as *Fashion Week Online*, dedicated to streaming the latest presentations. The fashion show live stream can be situated within an extensive history of fashion show footage mediated to audiences since the popularization of cinema at the beginning of the 20th century, as well as photographic content and textual accounts in print publications. This chapter provides an overview of historical uses of print and electronic media to disseminate fashion shows and related content as prerecorded or ‘real time’ broadcasts or as still photographs to contextualize contemporary consumer interactions with fashion shows via media interfaces. I locate the fashion show live stream as a *remediation* of film and television aesthetics (Bolter & Grusin, 2000), describing specific cinematic and commercial techniques and demonstrating how these media have offered (or denied) a measure of democratic access to fashion. The widespread industry use of the fashion show live stream adheres to a condition that Uhlirova describes as “the new ubiquity of fashion as moving image” thanks to electronic and digital media affordances (2013, p. 153). A focus on the mediatization of fashion *shows* rather than images broadly speaking positions live streams as a representative example of the industry’s multifarious uses of electronic and digital media in this decade. The live stream offers consumers an unprecedented measure of temporal access to fashion shows; furthermore, online media afford brands, intermediaries and consumers tools to transmit, share and access that content across multiple platforms and mobile devices. However, the degree to which the experience of online

spectatorship can or should be deemed immediate depends on one's position in relation to the interface, and that of the camera(s) in relation to the runway performance. Sarah Bay-Cheng observes that the conditions of reception of digital performances or records fluctuate depending on new affordances:

The digital ... is always in tension between its fixed and fluid qualities. In part because new modes of technology are always developing, our sense of a particular digital interaction necessarily changes over time even as some of the formal devices ... remain the same. The device, game or software that appears so new may, in only a few years, feel sluggish, outmoded, obsolete. While this planned obsolescence of new technology fits perfectly into capitalist business models, such shifts in our participation with the digital record also affect our relation to the digital experience itself. (2010, p. 131)

The live stream as a medium has remained somewhat static – a means to transmit content from the performance space to a spectatorship that watches it over a screen-based interface in as instantaneous a timeframe as bandwidths will permit. Fashion companies have capitalized on the creation of new (and portable) devices, applications and features to facilitate more innovative and interactive brand communications. Still, I observe here that the fashion show live stream has evolved into a more cinematic viewing experience rather than a more transparent one, and even more transparent technologies now use filters and other editing features to maintain fashion's allure. Recent fashion show transmissions have utilized techniques, shots and aesthetics that cinema and television made possible, invoking the modes of spectatorship that these media formats established. Still, while each media is derived from its predecessors, "each demands a different way of attending to the event" (Wissinger, 2013, p. 134). The popularized use of applications such as Twitter's Periscope and Facebook Live permits brands and intermediaries moreover to stream footage from fashion shows via handheld devices. Despite the presence of cameras, the use of handheld devices to stream content does create a vicarious embodiment between spectator and camera-holder that instantiates what I term a more immediate *handheld*

perspective or *handheld front row perspective*. Nonetheless, online spectators' sense of presence depends on the device-holder's location in the performance space.

This chapter first outlines media, film and performance-based theories of spectatorship and user positionalities to explore the manner in which electronic media facilitate interaction, and to trouble the notion that 'real time' transmission can be described as such. Next, an historical genealogy of fashion shows' dissemination across print, film, television and online media demonstrates, firstly, that fashion show content explicated fashion trends to consumers several decades before online media's temporal democratization of fashion, and, secondly, that scholars have traditionally read fashion show footage in terms of its manipulation of processes of gazing, often harnessed in the service of consumer desire. The remainder of the chapter interrogates the technical and aesthetic qualities of fashion show live streams. I describe the nature of the camera positions and shots and make reference to specific events that have showcased innovation in the streaming practices in both cinematic techniques and the use of the *handheld perspective*.

FASHION SHOWS AND PRINT MEDIA

Since the industrial modern period, fashion shows and Fashion Week series have maintained a symbiotic relationship with print media, functioning as the informational conduit via which members of the press are able to witness and report on collections. Both Rocamora (2017) and Auslander (2009b) omit print media from their respective studies of fashion's mediatization and mediatization's relation to *liveness* for reasons of scope: Rocamora to focus on digital media and Auslander on electronic media. Rocamora notes however that if one were to include print media in studies of fashion's mediatization the first "fashion media" would be the Parisian magazine *Le Mercure Galant* circa 1672, while fashion's mediatization would include innovations in fashion

media “in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (2017, p. 509). Into the 20th century, fashion houses relied on coverage from fashion magazines and international press outlets (Evans, 2013, p. 254). Writing on Jeanne Paquin’s US tour, Evans describes that, “In 1914, like today, fashion magazines were integral to an industry which is made of up not only designers but also – of equal weight – manufacturers, buyers, journalists, publicity and sales departments working in tandem like a single organism” (2013, p. 72). The earliest fashion show content to appear in print magazines took the form of professional illustrations sketched from the *mannequin parades* and circulated as trend information in the major fashion print magazines such as *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*.^{xvii} The first actual fashion photograph feature is considered to be a series of images that Edward Steichen captured of couture gowns for Paul Poiret in 1911, published in April 1911 in the magazine *L’Art et Decoration* (Niven, 1997, p. 352), while fashion magazines continued to integrate photography into their pages into the subsequent decades.

Print media’s communicative processes prior to and into the Internet era have remained centered on the medium of the fashion show and the immediate conditions of its reception. Case studies of print publications and their fashion show reportage demonstrate how the press articulates philosophies and ideals – what Brian Moeran terms a “discourse of taste” (2004, p. 53) – that are locatable across national scenes or historical periods but remain centered around class constructs (see also Borelli, 1997; König, 2006; Rocamora, 2001, 2006a, 2006b, 2009). Print media operate within a state of tension between editorial and commercial dictates and the influence of advertisers, as well as between national and global interests (Moeran, 2006a). Studies detail editors’ reliance on presentation schedules for material and demonstrate that in certain magazines fashion show reports have come to constitute the most “influential” pieces (König, 2006, p. 216; Moeran, 2006b). The focus of fashion show reports, whether on the

collections or the celebrities that attended, determines how publics perceive collections, fashion houses or even national industries. Angela McRobbie, with reference to Bourdieu's (1984, 1993) demarcation between high and popular culture, blames the British press for fashion's "trivialised status" in the post-Thatcher era due to its consecration of certain (male) designers as celebrities (1998, p. 15). Rocamora (2001, 2002) also draws on Bourdieu to compare the concurrent discursive production of fashion in issues of the French newspaper *Le Monde* and the British newspaper *The Guardian* from 1996. Rocamora (2001) observes that *Le Monde* attaches high cultural values to fashion and positions designers in an authorial role, while *The Guardian* foregrounds celebrities' presence at Fashion Week and describes collections using competition metaphors. In both instances, the content is intended to arouse public interest in the fashion show as event (Rocamora, 2001, p. 126). Likewise, Anna König (2006) finds that, in the 1990s, British *Vogue's* reportage descends into the realm of popular culture with pieces oriented around fashion shows. Fashion's mediatization has both blurred and exacerbated tensions between high and popular culture, while coverage and criticism have proliferated into multiple discursive registers. Still, as I will demonstrate, media representations of fashion shows and Fashion Week events are intended to position high fashion and its brands in an elite sociocultural arena.

In addition to textual reportage and commentaries on fashion shows, informational look photographs taken at fashion shows have been essential to print magazines' trend forecasting and overall informational value. Stationed in a section termed the "media pit" are those professional photographers contracted to snap the frontal "unobstructed head-to-toe shots" of the models in their individual 'looks' disseminated in press outlets (Browne, 2016, p. 7). These photographers are installed on risers set up at the end of the runway that the live stream audience does not see as the photograph flashes could present a distraction, and as it offers a reminder of the labour that

creates the fashion image. Within the space, however, these workers are recognizable for their uses of expensive telephoto lenses (see Schuman, 2013). Franziska Bork Petersen (2013) outlines that the location of the media pit and the conventions of the frontal photograph dictate the models' stance and frontal, neutral expression (p. 155). The presence of these photographers thus "determines how the vast majority of fashion consumers see models on the catwalk: directing an indifferent stare at the spectator and strutting propulsively towards her" (Bork Petersen, 2013, p. 155). The press also uses fashion shows to find the garments that will be used for their editorial features, which combine and transform pieces from various collections into an additional series of conceptual photographic statements. The aesthetic trend information contained in these spreads is derived from fashion shows, but the editorial photograph differs from the more factual look photograph in its intention to manifest a more ethereal, idealized world (Geczy & Karaminas, 2016, p. 16).

Online media has since the late-1990s and 2000s transformed the economies of fashion journalism and the materialities of consumer interaction with fashion content in several respects. The advent of the fashion blogosphere and independent fashion media sites "decentered" fashion magazines' industrial primacy both through the sudden influence of non-accredited voices and the hypertextual nature of the Internet itself, which permits for clicking on multiple possible sites rather than the more linear turning of pages (Rocamora, 2012, pp. 98-99). Citing Bolter's observation that the Internet "is the remediation of print," (2001, p. 42), Rocamora reads online fashion websites and blogs as a remediation of print journalism and interfaces, not least because producers tend to 'borrow' content from established magazine websites and press outlets to share on their own sites (2012, p. 101). Print magazines for their part, however, "have also remediated fashion blogs by incorporating the latter's visuals and take on fashion in their own pages,"

lending some credence to new media content and practice and facilitating new multi-media and multi-directional movements of fashion content (Rocamora, 2012, p. 103): a phase in fashion's mediatization that has exploded into a myriad of transmissions and content forms with the increased use of social media.^{xcvii} The most fundamental transformation in fashion (and fashion show) reportage arose, however, with the adoption of the fashion show live stream and the increased circulation of online look photographs, which, as stated, irrevocably sped up the timeframe of consumer access to looks from six months to a fraction of a second (see also Rocamora, 2012, p. 97). A brand associate I interviewed for this research describes our consumption of fashion content as more constant and pervasive but more passive than a period even ten years ago in which consumers had to locate images in physical print magazines (often requiring a trip to the store) and maintain a tactile engagement with media content.^{xcviii} Nonetheless, industry sites have continued to remediate elements of print formats. *SHOWstudio* has dabbled in a form of fashion show illustration, hiring illustrators to contribute their own creative renderings of runway collections for the site and even live streaming the process (Judah, 2017). *Vogue's* RUNWAY app lets users swipe through reams of frontal look photographs, read collection reviews published within hours after the presentation and watch archived video clips and animations. I would posit that an app such as RUNWAY still demands a material interaction as users swipe through the look photographs in a linear manner that 'feels' reminiscent of the turning of a page, even as the content has been posted within hours of the fashion show, assisting in users' more active consumption of content that is nonetheless delivered at their convenience.

INTERNET SPECTATORSHIP AND 'REAL TIME'

Digital technologies and live streaming in particular operate within a history of media formats that altered and resituated modes of spectatorship, access and embodied and temporal interaction.

Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's concept of *remediation* outlines that new media formats "refashion" their predecessors, appropriating elements, interfaces and techniques of earlier media while facilitating new modes of inscription and reception (2000, p. 15). The Internet remediates and combines textual and visual elements of print media as well as the electronic media of film and television (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 15). Like online media, film and television too rendered informational fashion content more accessible to consumers than ever before but still emphasized fashion's elitist social constructs to commercial ends.

Online fashion show content privileges attendees' spatial presence as a measure of social and industrial influence and advertises a virtual sense of this inclusion to the spectator as a novel means of brand interaction. The fashion show as an invited event presents a potent demonstration of Auslander's (2008a) model of matrices of *spatial* and *temporal co-presence* between performer and audience, as such an event elucidates how a mediatized culture holds up the combination of both forms as the most *immediate*. Indeed, mediatized fashion show footage reveals the extent to which media companies and content producers seek to (or purport to) achieve the same experiential effect. For Bolter and Grusin, one's experience of *immediacy* in media use results from the collusion of numerous interfaces: users' perception of a mediatized or virtual environment as real or seamless is the product of multiple, simultaneous processes that media technologies attempt to efface (2000, p. 9). The use of *hypermedia* aims to instill a sense of the 'real' through a confluence of visible media that, when combined, "create a feeling of fullness, a satiety of experience, which can be taken as reality" (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 53), in a manner that recalls the multisensory operation of Wickstrom's brandscape. *Transparent media* work towards the same experience of realness but attempt to negate users' awareness of technical processes (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 53). Electronic media developers equate users' perception

of the ‘real’ “in terms of ... authentic experience; it is that which would evoke an immediate (and therefore authentic) emotional response” (Bolter & Grusin, 2000, p. 53). Fashion show live streams, broadcast via websites and social media, with a combination of continuous tracking and multi-perspectival shots, operate under the condition of hypermediacy, which, as Bolter & Grusin articulate, “acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible ... representation is conceived of not as a window onto the world, but rather as ‘windowed’ itself” (2000, p. 34). Users often watch live streams via interfaces that place other representations within the frame, or, as I will elaborate in the next two chapters, are invited to comment on the fashion shows and/or the collections, necessitating the concurrent opening of other windows or applications. Bay-Cheng (2010) asserts that digital and virtual environments can instill a sense of presence and even interaction with a work: “[P]resence is defined not by physical touch but through avenues of participation. In a digitally connected and networked world, participation creates presence. In a digital context, people do not participate by being there; people are ‘there’ by participating” (p. 130). To consider digital transmissions and records as elements of *live* performance is to locate “multiple forms of presence, all of which offers us a diversity of knowledges and perspectives that may extend our sense of being there” (Bay-Cheng, 2010, p. 134). Indeed, this approach expands our capacities to examine the interactive and material properties of mediatized fashion show content. The fashion industry capitalizes on this same ideal of virtual presence, promoting consumer access to live streams in terms that indicate that users should feel an absence of interfaces and perceive the event as if seated in the front row.

Crucial to fashion’s discourses of presence and liveness is the use of the term ‘real time’ to describe the speed of transmission, the rate of spectator reception or access, and the overall sense that consumers can watch the fashion show *as it happens*. In fashion, the idea of ‘real time’

and its immediate sensation is not simply a fabrication but one sold to spectators as the latest (democratized) invention in the transmission of fashion content. However, even within the immediate venue, fashion's performance and broadcast schedules remain always already in flux. Drawing from film scholar Mary Ann Doane, Rebecca Schneider problematizes notions of 'real time' transmission as "a manufactured instantaneity and immediacy" (2011, p. 93). The notion of the 'real' presupposes a historical time that existed prior to mediatization, and effects a "denial" of its processes (Schneider, 2011, p. 93). The real must be read not as an uncontaminated state but as a construct produced via its opposite, in this case the mediatized (Schneider, 2011, p. 93; see also Auslander, 2008b). The fashion industry presents consumers' temporal co-presence at fashion shows as a value-added offer that establishes what Auslander describes as "the sense of a continuous perceptual experience unfolding in real time" (2008b, p. 19). Rocamora differentiates between two connotations of Tomlinson's cultural condition of *immediacy*:

[B]oth in the sense that content should reach media users rapidly and in the sense that it should be delivered to them in a seemingly 'live' manner, as if media users were really experiencing the event shown to them, as if they were really t/here and now. (2012, p. 65)

Her use of the slash points to the distance and distinction between online spectators' location and the exclusive elsewhere of the fashion show, as well as to the continued tension between these positionalities.^{xcix} Brand discourses around fashion shows and purported attempts to replicate the *live* audience experience over virtual or screen-based interfaces persist despite discrepancies between scheduled and actual start times and potential and often real technical pitfalls.

Numerous phenomena combine in performance environments and in screen-based interfaces to undermine live streams' claims to 'real time' transmission and moreover the idea that there exists a singular, proper temporality at all. Fashion shows are notorious for starting late, often due to packed Fashion Week schedules that require attendees' rapid travel within

metropolises, and to the late arrivals of important persons, from featured celebrities to top editors without whom the show will not happen (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, 2011). Companies instruct spectators to tune in to live streams at a show's scheduled start time, but spectators often have to watch footage of attendees' arrivals for several minutes prior to the start of the show proper, much like red carpet preshows for Hollywood awards ceremonies. Furthermore, spectators have to calculate the time zone differences between their location and that of the fashion show so as to tune in at the correct time. Spectators' perception of 'real time' interaction is further dependent on the reliability and speed of Internet connections. Referencing film studies' focus on the linearity of spectatorship, Michele White states that moments of technical "failure" or "interface breakdown" ruin one's sense of engagement with online content (2006, p. 85). In the case of the fashion show live stream, temporal lags or crashed feeds interrupt processes of vicarious identification with attendees and the manufacture of desire for the commodities shown. Therefore, not only is the concept of 'real time' a misnomer, but human and technical deficiencies reinforce discrepancies between actual and scheduled start times, and between the time of the *live* performance and online spectators' reception of it.

While this chapter focuses on consumers' interactions with the live streams as they are broadcast, or as close to instantaneity as Fashion Week schedules and Internet connections will permit, fashion companies, media outlets and intermediaries also film the content with the intent that consumers can watch it over and over again, access it at a time of their convenience, and/or pause or take screen shots of individual looks. It is common for an archived video file of a fashion show to appear on a brand's website or YouTube channel within seconds of the end of the live stream; other websites such as *Fashion Week Online* run looped footage of previous fashion shows if none are currently taking place. Periscope and Facebook Live video clips can

also be archived in news feeds for users to access and share. On Facebook, a caption will indicate that the user “is live” if the transmission is happening at that moment, and that the user “was live” if the transmission has been completed. The latter phrase addresses the fact of the *live* transmission and invokes a sense of the presence that the camera holder could have felt in the space, but notes that the conditions of temporal *liveness* happened in the past. Still, Facebook can run the videos as users scroll past them on their news feeds, so the ‘live’ footage can be reanimated at the swipe of a finger. Indeed, if one has not paid precise attention to Fashion Week calendars, it can be difficult to discern whether or not the footage is a direct transmission without the confirmation that the user “is” or “was” live. The fact that live stream broadcasts or short videos can now be archived further undermines the ontological status of the fashion show as the sole, ephemeral event at which the collection could be seen. It is no coincidence therefore that brands hail consumers to watch their live streams at the ‘real time’ moment of their transmission and even build calls to concurrent social media interactions to increase audience size.^c

While it is not a live stream host per se, the website *NOWFASHION* is pertinent to this discussion as it purports to erase the time between the fashion show and the publication of frontal look photographs. The website bills itself as an “online magazine” that posts fashion show photos in ‘real time’ during the live streams for Fashion Month shows as well as for Couture Fashion Week.^{ci} Media outlets can now post frontal photographs of each individual look within minutes of the presentation. *NOWFASHION*’s use of the term ‘real time’ implies, however, that the photographs should materialize at the precise fraction of a second that the model is captured within the camera frame when such a technical achievement remains (for now) impossible. When one juxtaposes a fashion show live stream window with a *NOWFASHION* window, it becomes clear that there is a time lapse of several seconds between the moment that each look is

photographed and the photograph's appearance on the site. *NOWFASHION* can be considered one of the first websites to post each look photograph in sequence during the presentation, in contrast to other media sites' practice of posting entire sets of collection photographs en masse in the hours afterwards. Nonetheless, the final looks from each show appear on *NOWFASHION*, one at a time, up to 40 minutes after the show has ended. Schneider posits that the photograph as record bears an element of temporal duration – a predicted incidence of the seer's future corporeal interaction with the moment of its capture and the presence of the photographer (2011, p. 128). Despite the inevitable lag between photograph capture and transmission, online spectators' use of social media can still be said to create the illusion of instant transmission, reinforced in terms such as 'live' and the 'Insta-' prefix of Instagram. While the above-mentioned phenomena concern the 'real time' condition of the fashion show live stream, this privileging of immediacy as experiential should be read as part of the fashion industry's overall obsession with instant consumer access and its overhaul of production, communication and retail schedules. The following section demonstrates how the fashion show's imbrication with electronic media dates back to the introduction of cinema, and later to television – and how each medium shifted the measure of consumer access to visual and informational fashion content.^{cii}

FASHION SHOWS ON FILM

Film offers a recorded, edited document of the fashion show as a live performance. However, as a medium, it permitted an unprecedented number of consumers in a multitude of economic echelons to witness collection presentations on a cinema screen in a manner that emphasized clothing movement and detail. Film erased the theatre's cultural dominance and popularity, firstly due to its technical capabilities, in particular the use of the close-up shot and slow motion effects, and, secondly, because of the capacities to duplicate film for spectatorship in cinemas

across nations and the comparative inexpensiveness of cinema attendance (Auslander, 2008b; Schweitzer, M., 2009b). Erika Rappaport observes that, “Film ‘inherited’ the relationship between consumption and theater, but presented it to an even broader audience” (2001, p. 190). Uhlirova demonstrates that fashion’s communication in film over the past century reflects a societal fascination with “temporal experience and greater mobility” that has existed since modern industrialism (2013a, p. 138).^{ciii} Film became an appropriate medium to “promote fashion” as it could “recast consumption as seductive visual entertainment” (Uhlirova, 2013, p. 140). Cinemas’ mass dissemination of fashion content constituted but one facet of an overall democratization of communication and production technologies in the modern industrial period (Schorman, 2003). In the 1910s, cinema audiences in “Europe and the United States” watched newsreels of Parisian fashion presentations and would later watch reels of fashion shows from New York (Evans, 2001, p. 285). While the films offered a record of a fashion show that had happened in the past, the footage bore the simultaneous function of permitting cinema-goers a peek at the world of high fashion and stoking their desire for the looks, copied versions of which could be purchased at various price points (S. Berry, 2000; Marcketti & Parsons, 2016; Schweitzer, 2009). In 1911, Paul Poiret made films of his mannequin parades to use as a promotional tool for a US tour, while similar films were produced for a 1915 US tour for Charles Worth and Jeanne Paquin (Evans, 2001, p. 285). Evans remarks that film reels “brought the image of haute couture to a wider audience through the very process of promulgating its mystique and aura of exclusivity” (2001, p. 285). In addition to newsreels, film producer Pathé-Frères later created “*Florence Rose Fashions*, a series of thirty-one short films produced between 1916 and 1917, which were tied into leading newspapers and stores with articles describing the clothes printed twelve days before the films appeared” (S. Berry, 2000, p. 55). Confluences

between cinema and fashion retail, or the “commercial use of the cinematic fashion show,” continued into the 1930s, when consumers could watch “a series of short films sponsored by *Vogue* magazine that were released every two weeks” (S. Berry, 2000, p. 55). Fashion-themed cinema thus took the form first of informational and aspirational newsreels, followed over the next decades by more overt commercial films dedicated to fashion, in collaboration with department stores and print publications.

A subset of 1930s films set in a fashion house or retail environment incorporated fashion show scenes as a central element of the fictional narrative to showcase the latest trends.^{civ} Sarah Berry, chronicling fashion’s connections to North American cinema, outlines that these films sold a fantasy of the realm of fashion via the sensuous cinematic presentation of clothes: “[T]he fashion show’s glamour, music, mise-en-scène, and descriptive commentary were elements in a performance of fashion-as-spectacle” (2000, p. 56). Charlotte Herzog (1990) terms this type of film the “fashion show film” and describes its commercial method as “powder puff” or “soft promotion,” that couched “subtle, illusive” advertisements in a cinematic feature (p. 136). These films utilized a distinctive series of “long, lingering, scrutinizing” shots through which the camera replicated the on-screen audience’s view of the procession: these shots permitted the cinema audience to discern clothing details while creating a doubled process of identification with both the models and the high-class attendees of the fictional event (Herzog, 1990, pp. 154-159). In Berlin, a film genre called the *Konfektionskömodie* (“fashion farce”) also became popular in this same period (Ganeva, 2008, p. 122). These comedic films starred up-and-coming film actresses, often as fashion workers that were able to use fashion to increase their socioeconomic status, and thus hinted that cinema audiences could realize their own social aspirations through fashion while presenting images of “unattainable glamour” in the form of

beautiful clothes (Ganeva, 2008, pp. 113-117). More recent fashion show dramatizations include those found in the feature films mentioned in Chapter Two: Robert Altman's *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994); the walk-off competition and other over-the-top fashion show sequences in *Zoolander* (2001) and *Zoolander 2* (2016); and the Paris Fashion Week montage in *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006).^{cv} Raf Simons's beautiful first couture presentation for Christian Dior forms the climactic sequence of the documentary *Dior and I* (2014).^{cvi} Film remains a medium for the production of consumer fantasies and the revelation of fashion's behind-the-scenes work environments and influential persons, all of which contribute to a continued fascination with fashion as business and consumer spectacle and the fashion show as aspirational performance.

FASHION ON TELEVISION

Fashion-Themed Television

While television remediated film, its earliest incarnations functioned as an audiovisual transmission of live enactments for studio audiences, a novel format that was both recorded and temporally 'immediate' (Auslander, 2008b, pp. 12-13, 60). In the 1980s, broadcast television programs devoted to coverage of the international fashion scene transmitted prerecorded runway presentations into consumers' homes. Deborah Fulsang (2004) terms this format *fashion-themed television*, a term distinct from more "commercial" *fashion television* (Warner, 2014, p. 29), which I will describe below. North American-produced shows included CNN's *Style with Elsa Klensch* (1980 - 2001) and two Canadian programs, CityTV's (and later CTVglobalmedia's) *FashionTelevision* (1985 - 2012), hosted by effervescent Canadian television personality Jeanne Beker, and *Toronto Life Fashion Magazine* and CBC Newsworld's *Fashion File* (1989 - 2009), hosted by the sophisticated, London-born columnist Tim Blanks. The runway footage, still edited and broadcast after-the-fact, utilized familiar, continuous toe-to-head tracking shots of models

parading down the runway, sometimes in slow motion, that could be found in cinematic depictions, intercut with closer shots of models from the waist or chest up. Hosts' commentaries were dubbed over the footage, as was an up-tempo, electronic music soundtrack. Television's consumer reach and the shows' novel, stylized format combined to offer consumers a never before seen measure of exposure to stimulating and informational fashion content (Fulsang, 2004). Indeed, Alexandre de Bétak mentions the rise of television – or rather the broadcasting of fashion shows via the medium of television, as a prior shift in consumer access to fashion (from print media content) that necessitated new stagings and filming methods:

[Fashion shows] used to be mainly for journalists and photographers from monthlies that would come out a month later. Suddenly TV became more important and we started to cater more to that medium, which meant we had to create moments that, when isolated, would be great TV material. (as cited in Anaya, 2013, n.p.)

Fashion-themed television became a popular forum in tandem with the dawn of the supermodel era. While the shows benefited from constant footage of the world's most stunning women, television as a medium enhanced the public's familiarity with models' faces and bodies (Wissinger, 2014, p. 11). Fulsang states that *FashionTelevision* and its ilk “democratized fashion and broadened the appeal of fashion across genders as well as class and economic distinctions,” offering viewers an insider's look at the environments of Fashion Weeks in New York, London, Milan and Paris (2004, p. 315). The trusted hosts did not just report on fashion and design trends but interviewed designers in their workspaces (Fulsang, 2004, p. 325), at once demystifying fashion as a business and consecrating its practitioners as creators. The programs also revealed backstage environments, often filmed during their most chaotic, crowded moments, sparking a public interest in behind-the-scenes action that companies have continued to cater to and exploit in live-stream-related communications. At the time of its cancellation in 2012, *FashionTelevision* “was syndicated in 140 countries” (Chetty, 2012, para. 3). *The Business of Fashion's* Canadian

founder, Imran Amed, credits *Fashion File* with introducing him to the industry side of fashion and inspiring him to undertake trade journalism that “offers a perspective on the fashion business that goes beyond gossip and glamour” (2013, para. 9). Still, the hosts endeavoured to obtain the requisite soundbytes on the collections from celebrities, with the understanding that their appearances would maintain viewer interest and enhance the fashion shows’ cachet. This emphasis on celebrities located the reportage within the echelon of popular culture, in Bourdieu’s formulation, even as it promoted fashion as glamorous (Rocamora, 2001). Still, these programs maintained the allure of fashion *abroad*, a fact that has led critics to contend that Canadian consumers’ increased interest in international brands proved detrimental to domestic lines (Lockhart, as cited in Fulsang, 2004, pp. 324-325).

The frenetic pace of fashion television reportage further influenced practices of print fashion journalism – practices that both remediated television reportage and led to its obsolescence. The format took inspiration from music videos, not just in the use of beautiful bodies and lots of skin but also in the short duration of individual stories (Fulsang, 2004, pp. 317-318). Fulsang suggests that the short-form pace of fashion television reportage ushered in a ‘lite’ form of print journalism: “Sidebars, snippets of text, and often point-form notation represented the tendency of simplifying information for a public inundated with an ever-increasing volume of information presented at an increasing speed for those with an ever-decreasing amount of free time” (2004, p. 323). This format can also be considered a predecessor to characteristics of online and social media: the so-called instantaneity of fashion show live streams, the disappearance of Snapchat posts, the six-second duration of Vine clips, and the 140-character limit of tweets.^{cvi} Examining reciprocal processes of remediation in the fashion press, Rocamora (2012) documents that print media publications that want to remain relevant in the

Internet era have re-envisioned their output to acclimatize to the speed and format of online fashion reportage and the blogosphere. Indeed, Condé Nast Media's former *Style.com* operated in part as a hub for live streams. The press attributed *FashionTelevision*'s cancellation to the live stream and other technologies and practices that rendered content accessible in an immediate timeframe: "A changing media landscape has meant stiff competition from fashion websites that livestream runway shows, and bloggers who provide to-the-minute fashion coverage" (Chetty, 2012, p. A3). In the late-2000s, *FashionTelevision* also released a cable-access offshoot series entitled *RAW*, which consisted of prerecorded but unedited runway footage using the same familiar tracking camera mechanisms but without slow motion shots or close-ups. The picture quality was comparatively grainy, like that of a VHS video, and there was no attempt to overdub the fashion shows' bass-laden music, which meant that the broadcast had a tinned sound. In fact, the uncut footage that *RAW* broadcast can be read as a *premediation* of the live stream, as it predicted its features and created the conditions for its adoption and reception (Grusin, 2010).

Fashion-Themed Television in Film

Just as Robert Altman's film *Prêt-à-Porter (Ready to Wear)* (1994) holds an ambivalent spot in the history of fashion film (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 85), so too does a discussion of the film as a series of fashion show scenes not fit neatly into a genealogy of fashion and media, as it illustrates fashion shows on both thematic and mediatized levels. Nonetheless, the film deserves special mention since it probes the fashion industry of the 1990s in a manner that illustrates the still pervasive mediatization of fashion in the pre-Internet era and in fact *remediates* fashion-themed television reportage. Indeed, the film, in its nature as such and in its depiction of the making and broadcast of fashion-themed television, reveals that any historical break between fashion shows' mediatization in film and in television is undefined. As I discussed in Chapter Two, several top

fashion designers, supermodels and international celebrities made cameo appearances in backstage and interview scenes (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 83). Others are seen arriving at events as the paparazzi cameras flash. Altman filmed several real-life shows at Paris Fashion Week, in which the supermodels of the period walked, and interspersed this footage with scenes in which the real-life designers appeared in showrooms or in front of the press (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 83). Altman does not just aim his cameras at the model procession in beautiful tracking shots but cuts both to real and fictional audience members' reactions. In one sequence, the camera reveals a breathtaking shot of the hundreds of cameras in an actual media pit at the end of the runway – a crowd of press photographers that, as I will describe from New York Fashion Week, tend to remain unseen and who here remain in shadow, their telephoto lenses obscuring their faces. The film's credits too are an extended and intoxicating sequence of Altman's Paris Fashion Week runway footage that permits the spectator to revel in the fantastical but nonetheless real world of Parisian fashion. Altman's production team also constructs the fashion shows of the three fictional fashion houses; these feature a combination of real-life models and actors-as-models.

Prêt-à-Porter furthers its narrative through a series of scenes that represent and indeed remediate the broadcast of a fictional fashion-themed television show. The program provides fashion information to other characters in the film in both 'live' and mediatized formats and thus reveals crucial plot details to the cinema audience. One of the film's lead characters is the American fashion reporter Kitty Potter (Kim Basinger), the host of *Kitty Potter On the Scene*: she is introduced via a shot of her 'realistic' opening sequence, with a suitably synth-heavy theme song, broadcast on a television in an armoire. Potter's Southern accent and terrible French pronunciation become a running joke to a fashion-aware cinema audience and to the characters that she interviews, while her painful attempts to maintain an upbeat demeanour as she

interviews often snobbish characters recall the real-life affective labour of Jeanne Beker, in particular a now-obsolete online video archive of moments in which celebrities snubbed her.^{cviii} The trope of the television as mediator of Fashion Week news runs throughout the film. The television reportage is often seen in the background or in rooms that are empty, suggesting that fashion's mediatization is inescapable or perhaps just noise. Two American journalists spend the film holed up in their hotel room in a spontaneous affair; the pair obtains all of their information from the television and passes it off as their own press reports. The televisions also broadcast a combination of fictionalized and real fashion show footage that includes local news reports in which a fictional reporter interviews a model portrayed by the real-life supermodel Helena Christensen, and Kitty Potter's interviews with both characters and real-life designers such as Jean-Paul Gaultier, Thierry Mugler, Sonia Rykiel and Gianfranco Ferré, as well as Cher, as herself. Television screens also show real opening credits and scenes from *CNN's Style with Elsa Klensch*, and Klensch appears as herself as one of Kitty Potter's interviewees, with Potter attempting to glean information on upcoming trends from a woman that would be her character's competition were this real life. The film therefore functions as a bridge between fashion-themed film and fashion-themed television: it demonstrates all of the opulence and awkwardness of television as a mode of fashion show broadcast via film as artistic medium.

Fashion Shows in Television Series (or Fashion Television)

Despite the broad market for more informational *fashion-themed television* from the 1980s onward, Helen Warner observes that collaborations between the industry and "commercial" television did not occur in earnest until the late-1990s (2014, p. 29). She characterizes a bonafide *fashion television* as fictional or reality-format television series in which fashion assumes a prominent role and brands are often called out (2014, p. 29). HBO's *Sex and the City* (1998-

2004) offers the first example (and the most enduring) of this synergistic relationship (Warner, 2014, p. 33; see also Church Gibson, 2012).^{cix} Television's retail benefits to high fashion are evident, as its distribution schedules better coincide with fashion seasons than do those of film (Warner, 2014, p. 31). Warner finds however that both the fashion industry and the entertainment trade press were unsure that television could provide an appropriate medium to represent high fashion as it was deemed *too* accessible compared to cinema and associated, like fashion, with the realm of the feminine; the press therefore framed fashion and television confluences within discourses of cinema stardom and glamour (2014, pp. 29-40). Nonetheless, the success of *SATC* and later fashion *television* series in the almost two decades since has demonstrated that the inclusion of real-life brand content, industry depictions, period costume and/or beautiful models can elicit extreme cultural interest. To enhance and even sometimes to critique fashion's classist allure, these series often include scenes of exclusive fashion shows in both documented and fictional forms, both nonetheless *produced* for television.

Fashion shows in recorded form have also come to constitute an important and indeed climactic narrative component of fashion-themed reality television series. Wissinger (2013) observes that in a mediatized era the fashion show has become much more edited and frenetic on television than it is *live* (p. 134). In the finale of each season of the modeling competition series *America's Next Top Model* (2003 to present), created and (until recently) hosted by supermodel Tyra Banks, the two finalists walk in a fashion show for a reputable designer in the international destination that the producers have chosen for that season. The footage is edited to illustrate the excitement of marching down a *real* runway in front of an audience and the palpable stress as models attempt to change outfits backstage in time for their appearances. Each episode of *Project Runway* (2004 to present), a search for undiscovered fashion design talent hosted by

supermodel Heidi Klum, culminates in an in-studio fashion show during which aspiring models wear the looks that the contestants have created for that week's challenge, while the three seasonal finalists showcase full collections at New York Fashion Week. These two paradigmatic fashion-themed reality television series were launched in a period just after the 1990s theatrical spectacles and before the dawn of the fashion show live stream, in which consumers still watched fashion-themed television reportage. They also capitalized on the reality television competition boom of the early 2000s that featured civilians or undiscovered talent, such as the *Survivor* and *American Idol* franchises. *America's Next Top Model* and *Project Runway* have continued production into the current decade, not replaced but rather aided by constant media representations of the fashion industry and interest in "behind-the-scenes" antics. Wissinger further links the shows' success to their dramatization of the competitive nature of fashion labour and notes that these shows instill the aspiration to model in young women from around the world (2013, p. 135). The Internet's perpetuation of the belief that anyone can become an influencer in the digital age helps to maintain these programs' appeal. Both series spawned international spinoffs, some of which are still in production but none of which have had the longevity of the American originals.

Fashion shows have also appeared in pivotal scenes for television dramas, albeit to a lesser extent than in film. In 2009, the *CW* launched *The Beautiful Life: TBL*, a short-lived, overhyped soap opera that followed a retinue of models sharing an apartment complex in New York, and co-starred real-life supermodel Elle Macpherson. The tone of the show is reminiscent of Aaron Spelling's primetime soap opera, *Models, Inc.* (1994-1995), a spinoff of *Melrose Place* that lasted one season. The pilot's cold open depicts the final minutes of a fictional Zac Posen show at New York Fashion Week in a sensational manner that pulls out all the stops in its over-

use of cinematic edits and thumping bass that is slowed down at appropriate, dramatic moments. When a troubled, pill-popping star model (Mischa Barton) shows up late to the show and cannot fit into her dress, Posen hand-selects an untested model (Sara Paxton) to walk in her place. As our unknown protagonist hits her mark at the end of the runway, the audience leaps to its feet as confetti falls from the ceiling, marking her sudden ascendance as fashion's newest face. The runway sequences are shot in a blinding array of strobe-effect camera flashes, lens flares, tracking shots cut with audience reactions, and a 90-degree perspective that depicts the models in profile exiting from the runway to the backstage area. The climactic walk starts with a close-up of the model's face and continues in extreme slow motion, then switches to an aerial shot as she raises her hands in the air. The runway action is punctuated with scenes in the luxurious backstage environs complete with couches and food spreads, and other external locations in which televisions run an entertainment news show that reveals that the veteran model has been missing in action for months (it is later revealed that she had a child in secret). The entire sequence is reminiscent of *Prêt-à-Porter* but much more melodramatic in its intent. Since this is 2009, televisions and print publications remain fashion's chief information sources, and the characters interact with these media formats non-stop.^{cx}

Fashion Shows and/as Sporting Events

The capabilities to broadcast fashion shows in 'real time' have existed, it must be noted, since television itself was invented. Sporting events – another event that caters to a public fascination with idealized, linear and even extreme bodies – were televised as early as 1936 at the Berlin Olympics.^{cx} While haute couture and ready-to-wear fashion have not been televised *live*, the lingerie brand Victoria's Secret has since 2001 produced a star-studded, annual runway spectacle, currently hosted on the CBS network. The legendary retinue of Victoria's Secret Angels includes

the world's highest-paid supermodels (including Banks, Klum and Macpherson), and the ensembles and production values have become more elaborate with each season (see Willett, 2015). In the manner of a broadcast sporting event, the fashion show is produced *for* and coordinated around the technical requirements of a television broadcast. In this case, the fashion show takes on the characteristics of more large-scale, participatory *media rituals* of the nature that Nick Couldry identifies, such as voter-based reality television series and championship sporting events (2012, p. 66-68). That said, recent broadcasts have not in fact been broadcast *live* but were taped the week before and then aired to massive public fanfare and a host of accessible online content. The 2016 iteration was produced in Paris on November 30, and photographs were then circulated online to build anticipation for the televised event. The 2014 fashion show pulled in 9.1 million viewers, while the 2015 and 2016 fashion shows drew 6.6 million and 6.65 million viewers.^{cxiii} The viewership of the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show still does not come close to that of televised media rituals such as the Superbowl, whose 2017 incarnation drew 111.3 million televised viewers and prompted 190.8 million social media interactions (Nielsen, 2017). Nonetheless its ratings have historically been comparable to episodes of popular reality television series. The Victoria's Secret Fashion show offers for Wissinger the most spectacular example of televised fashion shows' stylization: "shaped by a breathless pace of quick cuts and wild camera angles, [it] is paced so fast it is sometimes hard to know where to look. It organizes bodies in space and time very differently than the fashion show's traditional form" (2013, p. 134). The brand associate I interviewed observes that Victoria's Secret uses skillful post-production editing to create the illusion that the models are rushed or to manufacture other tense scenarios:

[I]n post-production they add in someone [a voiceover] who makes it sound like it's live, but it's fake, and it's dramatized, so [it seems] like, 'Oh my gosh! This isn't fitting! This isn't fitting!' They make it seem like it's rushed, they make it seem like it's go, go, go,

but that's [done in] post-production. (2017, n.p.)

In 2009, the producers aired a reality competition, the Victoria's Secret Model Search, in which unknown beauties auditioned to become the next Victoria's Secret angel. In the manner of the *media ritual*, in particular the *American Idol* model (see Couldry, 2012, pp. 141-142), viewers across the United States phoned in to vote for the winner. The two finalists were dressed up for their runway debut, and the winner performed her walk seconds after the live announcement, while the runner-up had to turn around and walk to the dressing area in her costume. Consumers were thus invited not just to watch the 'live' broadcast but also to decide which model's dream of fashion stardom came true: or, rather, to mix some metaphors, which angel received her wings, and which angel had to remain waiting in another set of wings.

The fact that television has not often broadcast fashion shows *live* can be attributed to their late start times and brief durations, which do not fit within a network schedule, or perhaps the difficulties of tailoring technical elements to make the presentation read across the screen – a concern still prevalent in live streams. Furthermore, even while it relies on the participation of fashion's highest-earning supermodels, the Victoria's Secret brand bears (bares?) more middle-class associations than the comparatively monied ideals of haute couture and even ready-to-wear fashion. It is thus positioned as popular culture, as evidenced by the musical acts that perform at the event, such as Bruno Mars, Kanye West, Lady Gaga, Rihanna and The Weeknd (Bruno Mars and Lady Gaga have also performed at recent Superbowl halftime shows).^{cxiii} Fashion companies' decision to live stream fashion shows on the Internet rather than broadcast them on television also permits companies to utilize the rhetoric of consumer-driven content and access but also protect the brand's and the events' elite cultural status from the sensationalism and commercialism that surrounds the Victoria's Secret fashion show and similar media rituals. The

Victoria's Secret Fashion Show is also streamed on the brand website, where visitors can later watch the archived video and access reams of behind-the-scenes photographs and clips.

FASHION IN THE LIVE STREAM

Historical representations of fashion shows have mediated consumers' expectations and perceptions of live streams and provided numerous precursors not just for present-day fashion show interactions but also for the modes of reportage and transmission of textual content. All audiences regardless of position or location read the live via the mediated (Auslander, 2008b, p. 39): therefore, even persons seated in the back row at a fashion show would perceive the clothes in relation to prior, familiar media representations. However, user reception of live streams remains akin to and informed by the embodied practice of watching live television events, or what Turner (2010) describes as "the reality effect of television's 'liveness' ... as in what we are watching is happening right now!" (p. 2), that has undergirded the appeal of television in its various degrees of temporal immediacy for decades. Turner identifies the consumption of live and prerecorded content on *YouTube* as an "experience of co-presence (the imagined presence of a wider community watching with you simultaneously)" but notes that this sensation is derived from the communal watching of "broadcast television" (2010, pp. 93-94). *YouTube* instead offers "an analogous co-presence, not necessarily simultaneous, but framed by transnational taste niches or by social networks rather than by citizenship or geography" (Turner, 2010, p. 94). While the live stream or its archived videos instills an awareness that others are watching the content at the same time somewhere else, the online spectator still sees those bodies that are co-present in the performance space proper, as if watching a live sporting event, but with the audience often rendered more visible. To incite consumer desire, the mediatized fashion show manifests (indeed *must* communicate) high fashion as an exclusive social realm, and refocuses

attention onto the live event and its attendees. The fashion industry also bills live streaming as a novel experience, and indeed for stakeholders and consumers, the notion of temporal co-presence as a standard feature has overturned production and retail schedules (Rocamora, 2012, p. 97). Bolter and Grusin (2000) describe that the *newness* of new media, or remediated media, is often a selling feature, even as the new media bear trace features of their predecessors (p. 46). Therefore, the temporal co-presence of the live stream has revolutionized consumer access to fashion content, even as the content itself remains familiar. Tomlinson states that the material nature and increased speed of our interactions with devices conditions us to expect instant content, response and feedback (2007, pp. 131-133). The spectator's experience of the live stream as immediate depends thus upon a perceptual media seamlessness.

The effect of seamlessness is the end result of elaborate technical production that both creates the virtual illusion of presence but also establishes cinematic moments that remind the spectator that he or she is not *there*. Several sophisticated cameras are installed in the show space: attached to tracks above the runway and to cranes and dollies in strategic locations at the corners – this in addition to the media pit. Franziska Bork Petersen claims that the same view is offered in both look photographs and “the fashion show videos that fashion houses often release on their websites” (2013, p. 155). However, while live streams do incorporate frontal shots, video cameras also capture models on diagonal, from toe-to-head, or even from an aerial perspective; in all cases, the models stare straight ahead and remain detached from the online spectator. Live streams utilize continuous model shots similar to those of film and television, calculated to produce consumer desire and vicarious identification; still, the camera can cut to alternate perspectives in a fraction of a second. In one sense, the online spectator possesses a superior view to that of an audience member, as the spectator sees multiple perspectives, while

the audience member sees but one. However, whereas spatial co-presence permits audience members to “direct their own vision,” cameras determine the online spectator’s focus (Auslander, 2008b, p. 19). The cameras tend to operate in a pattern, consisting of a long, continuous, toe-to-head and/or frontal shot of the model as she starts her march, and then a closer shot of the upper torso, followed by a more full-body shot of the model as she (or he) turns. The model’s walk is perceived as continuous, even as the interstitial shots offer a closer look at her (or his) ensemble and facial expression. Occasional extreme close-up shots permit the spectator to see details of a garment that are not discernible from the back risers, and aerial shots offer spectators an omniscient, totalizing view that is impossible to achieve in the performance space. Technical and aesthetic similarities between live streams and film, however, remind spectators of their position in front of a screen and their lack of spatial presence beside fashion’s elites. The cameras moreover call increased attention to the presence of the elites themselves. Fashion show live streams filmed for high-profile companies such as Burberry, Tom Ford and Topshop zoom in on celebrities as they arrive and take their seats, or ensure that the cameras capture celebrities’ reactions to particular looks as the models walk past. At minimum, a camera will be strategically placed so that models are seen from a diagonal or even profile perspective with the featured celebrities in behind. This continued pointing to celebrities enhances the glamour of the live event and reminds the spectator that he or she must watch the action from a social distance.

The First Fashion Show Live Streams

While scholars date the first fashion show live streams to the late-2000s, Victoria’s Secret claims to have produced one of the first live stream fashion shows as early as 1999, prior to its move to television, in partnership with *Broadcast.com* and IBM. The event was advertised via a commercial that aired during the 1999 Superbowl, which piqued so much interest that “more

than a million people immediately logged online after seeing the ad to look for the show – which wasn't airing for another week” (Storey, 2016, n.p.). Ed Razak, Chief Marketing Officer of parent company Limited Brands, admits that the interface “left a lot to be desired: it was about the size of two postage stamps in the middle of your computer screen” (as cited in Storey, 2016, n.p.). Nonetheless, “Steve Jobs called it one of the 10 seminal events in the history of the Internet” (Razak, as cited in Storey, 2016, n.p.). Victoria's Secret streamed its 2000 show, from the Cannes Film Festival, where it was held in conjunction with the festival as an online fundraiser for Cinema Against AIDS; the event aired during the daytime in the US and sparked concerns around lost work hours (Storey, 2016, n.p.). The show was produced by none other than Alexandre de Bétak and was so ‘successful’ that users crashed the brand's website (Anaya, 2013, n.p.), in the same ‘fashion’ as McQueen's Plato's Atlantis presentation on *SHOWstudio*. The establishment of a televised fashion show in 2001 solved the brand's concerns around scheduling for a mass audience, at least in the US. It is also probable that the live stream was not intended to sell lingerie to female consumers so much as to appeal to the Internet's usefulness as a medium for more heteronormative, scopophilic modes of individual spectatorship (see M. White, 2006).

The end of the 2000s therefore witnessed fashion houses' first *concerted* attempts to live stream fashion shows – an initiative combined with e-commerce ventures that would permit consumers to purchase collection pieces online after their runway debut. Alexander McQueen's 2009 attempt to live stream the “Plato's Atlantis” presentation on *SHOWstudio* was short lived due to a volume of web traffic that the site could not handle; nonetheless, McQueen expressed a hope, in the future, “to create special capsule collections for the public to buy immediately after seeing his collection” (Uhlirva, 2013, p. 152). For Autumn/Winter 2010, Burberry became the first brand to fuse the live stream and e-commerce (Uhlirva, 2013, p. 152): it streamed the

fashion show for its ready-to-wear line Burberry Prorsum on its website and on Twitter and connected online spectators to the brand website to purchase collection items for a limited time, six months prior to their arrival in stores. Burberry estimated that “more than 100 million users” witnessed this event (Amed, 2010, para. 1). The press heralded the initiative as the future of fashion communication, and observed that the ‘buy it now’ e-commerce feature would offer the company invaluable “consumer data” to inform deliveries of its merchandise to stores come Autumn (Amed, 2010, para. 12). Burberry went on to win the Digital Innovation award at the 2010 British Fashion Awards.

However, this broadcast, like that of “Plato’s Atlantis,” was not without its documented hiccups. Imran Amed (2010) reviewed the live stream, which he watched on a computer at the Regent Street Apple Store in London (para. 2). The broadcast included a pre-recorded statement from Bailey and live interviews with then-CEO Angela Ahrendts, models and attendees (Amed, 2010, para. 3). Cathy Horyn live-tweeted the preshow, complaining, “Want the show to start. It’s like watching paint dry” (as cited in Amed, 2010, para. 3). Partway through the stream, Amed’s feed crashed (2010, para. 8-9). A crashed feed renders the spectator jarringly distanced from all sense of immediacy, or, rather, one’s desire for even temporal presence, like consumer desire, remains unfulfilled. Amed saw similar complaints from other Twitter users, but Burberry inserted “100% positive or neutral” tweets below the stream, those that expressed either positive sentiment or neutral sentiment, hinting that brand personnel had curated the discourse, and thus tarnished the “authenticity of the experience” (2010, para. 8-9, 13). Uhlirva (2013b) hints that experimental film has usurped the fashion show’s capacities to render aesthetic and even political statements, locating the fashion show’s potency in a pre-digital past: “Just as twentieth-century fashion lent itself to powerful mediation by photography and the fashion show, 21st-

century brands now keenly embrace fashion film's re-aestheticizations" (p. 118). While the fashion show was once a tool for the mediation of ideas and concepts, despite companies' capital investments, it is harder to mediatize a spectacular performance meant for a *live* audience – rather the performance must be pervasive or not mediatized at all. In terms of depicting the clothes, fashion show live streams read as more informational in content rather than more performative or aesthetic. Companies and individual intermediaries have responded to this conundrum with the implementation either of more intimate, embodied perspectives or a return to cinematic effects for the benefit of online spectators. Furthermore, brands have combined live streams with calls to consumers' social media interaction: analysis of these initiatives in the next chapters finds that while interface seamlessness has improved, spectators' experience of the events as 'immediate' or 'real time' remains prone to uncontrollable variables at both ends.

The Handheld Live Stream

The total mediatization of the fashion show environment has taken the form of fashion show attendees' practice of photographing and even filming sections of the live performance, or the entire live performance, from their seats, with the use of handheld devices. While intermediaries' compulsion to post photographs from the event on Twitter (launched in 2006) and Instagram (launched in 2010) dates back to the turn of the decade, the release of video clips and the practice of handheld streaming from the first and second rows is a newer phenomenon, made possible through the release of newer video applications and narrative-making tools. Newer applications such as Twitter's Periscope and Facebook Live allow companies' representatives and individual audience members to transit 'real time' footage via their personal handheld devices.

In 2015, Ralph Lauren announced itself as the first brand to use Periscope to stream its Spring/Summer 2016 presentation at New York Fashion Week. The company's pioneering use

of Periscope (which was publicized as such) constituted a watershed moment for the practice of live streaming due to the application's capacities to replicate, insofar as possible, the device-holder's immediate spatial position. Ralph Lauren's production team made a brilliant decision to situate the device-holder front row centre. As the transmission started, before the presentation, the device holder stood on the runway in the middle of the crowd, with attendees walking past the screen in close proximity – often blurred – producing the effect of standing on the crowded floor runway floor while others push past. The A-list celebrities present included actresses Julianne Moore and Jessica Chastain, and actor Alec Baldwin and his wife Hilaria Baldwin. The device-holder was situated across from these celebrities so that their bodies would be visible to the online spectator for the duration of the stream. Before the presentation started, these celebrities appeared in the corner of the screen as if by chance, flanked by their publicists and assistants. The spectator noticed their presence without extreme fanfare, in a similar manner to an attendee's experience of noticing a famous person's arrival within the space thanks to a sudden flurry of camera flashes (see Isherwood, 2010).^{cxiv} Photographers could be seen rushing from the corners of the screen to photograph the celebrities at this moment.

The stream's effectiveness resided in the fact that spectators could obtain the camera-holder's perspective via their own handheld devices; the fact that the camera-holder remained anonymous and never indicated or revealed him or herself augmented the odd sense that the spectator could inhabit his or her embodied position. I watched the stream on my smartphone while walking down the street in west Toronto, and so did not feel as if I was in fact co-present at or immersed in the fashion show environment if I looked up or around. When I looked at the screen, however, I felt the unexpected sensation that I was watching the presentation via the same screen *as if I was the camera-holder*. When one considers that fashion show attendees now

watch the proceedings as much through their *own* handheld screens as with their own eyes – that their spectatorship is also to a notable extent *mediatized* – the use of a handheld media device to stream the fashion show offered that front row attendee’s precise *screen* perspective of the event. In an odd manner, it felt as if the position of the handheld device had the potential to reproduce the embodied position of the device-holder: when I looked at the screen on my own handheld device, I felt as if I had assumed the device-holder’s position, as if his or her device was the same one that I held, even as I stood in the outdoor street – a palpable sense of vicarious embodiment as I held the material interface. The handheld camera functioned as a viewfinder in the manner the application name suggested, letting the online spectator see into a realm not physically present to us, but, unlike an actual periscope, the spectator took on the role of outsider, peering into an immersive, exclusive environment.

Nonetheless, the spectators’ sense of inclusion via Periscope and similar applications depends on the device-holder’s location: when the device-holder is positioned in the front row, the perspective is more perceptibly immediate, and the models walk past the screen in close proximity. I describe this effect as a *handheld front row perspective*. In an ironic sense, the online spectator’s interface with the fashion show via an audience member’s handheld device reproduces the perspective from the audience risers in a far more immediate fashion than does the use of sophisticated cameras on tracks and other apparatuses. Here, electronic media offers an interface between sender and receiver: the sender’s “embodied experiences recorded and transmitted in real time across space” so that the receiver feels a sense of virtual presence (Bay-Cheng, 2010, p. 134). However, when Ralph Lauren broadcast its fashion show via Periscope during the subsequent Fall/Winter 2016 Fashion Week season, the camera-holder was located in an upper riser, at the end of the narrow runway. While this position offered a deep perspectival

shot, via which spectators could see the models for the entire duration of their walk, a continuous, uninterrupted shot, I never felt the same sense of proximity to the environment.^{cxv}

Recent Fashion Month seasons have witnessed the increased use of Periscope, Facebook Live and other similar applications that offer the *handheld front row perspective*. Like the fashion show photograph before it (and still), social media-based live streams and short videos filmed on smartphones have become a popular tool for media outlets and intermediaries to capture fashion shows, or specific moments or looks. These applications capture the procession from an individual perspective that can be duplicated for the online spectator but never assumed. Periscope and Facebook Live also allow online spectators to participate in the live stream as members within what Jodi Dean (2010a, 2010b) characterizes as an affective consumer network. Users can select from a series of emojis – hearts are the most common – that float up onto the screen in a second stream of colourful utterances that overlay the footage; users can also write brief, often phatic comments about the collection, which appear in a feed that runs underneath the footage. While this additional user-produced content instills a sense of virtual communion, users can also opt to make the emoji and comment feeds disappear: or, rather, to eliminate the textual portions of the hypermedial interface from view and thus make it more transparent.

The Handheld Front Row Perspective as Animated Photograph

The impetus behind the *handheld front row perspective* can also be traced to the recent practice of photographing the fashion show from one's seat. While the practice of photo-taking at fashion shows was once left to the professionals in the media pit, the rise of social media and innovations in smartphone cameras prompted fashion intermediaries to attempt to capture their own images of models walking past.^{cxvi} These photographs served an informational function as some of the first peeks at a collection and communicated the sender's (often front row) position. However,

fashion insiders and consumers complained that the photographs were often blurred, as smartphone cameras were not equipped to capture bodies in motion: “[T]he iPhone camera, good as it is, still can't compete with a Canon DSLR...” (Laneri, 2015, para. 3). Furthermore, as Garance Doré quipped, “the models walk too damn fast” (2012, n.p.). Intermediaries started to chastise each other for inundating social media with blurred model and finale shots, all of which were for the most part indiscernible, to document that the photo-taker had been *present* (Browne, 2016; Doré, 2012). The blurriness rendered these photographs an inferior record, or what those that privilege *live* performance would describe as an “obscured view of a moment passed” (Bay-Cheng, 2010, p. 128). Still, the photo’s element of enactment can lead the seer to receive it as a “durational event” (Scheider, 2011, p. 140). The blurriness that renders the photo ‘poor’ indicates bodies’ movement in space, in a constant present: the model is both still and in continuous motion. The blurred photograph’s material value resided in its transmission *from* the event. It has, however, become outmoded in more recent seasons, as editors in the front row developed more ‘discreet’ and less public tactics to record the looks (Laneri, 2015, n.p.). Rather than increase capabilities for sharper photographs, Instagram and Snapchat have instead promoted more editorial features that permit posters to add aesthetic or atmospheric filters, making fashion show photographs more fantastical or colourful, or to compile photographs into *stories* or narratives of experience – fashion intermediaries and brands have adopted the use of all features available.

During Fall/Winter 2017 New York Fashion Week, I witnessed the increased use of animated video clips on Instagram to document particular looks. I watched two clips of the same model walk from the Jonathan Simkhai show, which users had shot on smartphone cameras from the front row. By coincidence, these clips appeared one after the other in my feed, from two

different fashion media accounts that I followed, but a quick search yielded a handful of similar videos of the same look. The tall, blonde model walked past the camera wearing an opulent, white, beaded floor-length evening gown with an elaborate feather overlay from the knees down. Some clips had been edited so that her walk started and ended at a normal pace and then slowed down in the middle, emphasizing the hang of the dress on her form and the pendulum movement of the feathers in a striking moment of cinematic desire production. Others depicted the walk in slow motion for the duration of the clip, to similar effect. The slow motion edit has become a popular feature: while Instagram has not released an in-app slow motion feature, it does let users upload slow motion videos shot using their phone's video feature and then edited with a separate application. Instagram also offers its Boomerang tool, which runs a clip forward and backwards. This effect is often used to edit fashion show clips, though it is arguably more of a gimmick that shows off applications' technical features rather than one that illuminates clothes' movement and texture. As a media trend, the creation of these edited clips has, for now, usurped the blurred model shots or finale shot that became so ubiquitous in the first half of this decade, though video clips of finale parades are still abundant. Users that subscribe to the accounts of several different fashion intermediaries can see multiple perspectives of the same fashion show, and even the same moment, often posted within a similar timeframe and thus clustered on one's feed.

The Live Stream as Cinematic

The use of slow motion has infiltrated the full live stream broadcast, filmed with professional camera equipment, completing in a certain respect a circular process of remediation in which the live transmission assumes all of the technical capabilities that rendered film ideal to represent recorded fashion shows in the 1900s. The live stream for Raf Simons's debut for Calvin Klein Collection, at Fall/Winter 2017 New York Fashion Week, streamed on Facebook Live but filmed

with professional cameras, showed continuous shots (at disparate distances) of each model as he or she paraded down the first section of the two-aisle runway. As the next model turned towards the second aisle, however, the stream cut seamlessly to slow motion footage of the previous model's walk. The camera then reverted to the 'live' feed after a few seconds. The use of interspersed slow motion footage within the 'live' stream allowed for one's increased visual assessment of each look and enhanced the effect of models' hair blowing out behind them – a throwback to the glamorous 1990s supermodel era. The transitions in speed also belied all sense of 'real time' as the spectator became aware that the slow motion footage was repeating portions of the walk that we had witnessed seconds earlier, and that we were missing other moments that the actual audience could see. Its use further created a curious sensation that the models' walks – and indeed 'real time' itself – had been intentionally slowed down, which in effect it had. The most striking aspect of the slow motion effect was how *familiar* it seemed to the online spectator, conditioned to its reception from previous interactions with electronic media footage, and from our more recent access to edited video clips on social media applications. While the *handheld front row perspective* instills a sense of vicarious presence, companies' experimentation with cinematic techniques indicates that fashion show footage is nonetheless intended to perpetuate a cinematic allure of fashion and a focus on the garment in motion.

CONCLUSION

In this decade, the live stream has eclipsed film and television as the preeminent fashion show broadcast medium, for the primary reason that it lets consumers view the collections at the same time as the elite members seated in the actual presentation space. While fashion shows' 'real time' transmission represents a crucial shift in the timeframes of fashion commerce, the practice should be read rather as an advancement in mediatization processes of a series of prerecorded

fashion show scenes, both real and fictional, transmitted to spectators via screen interfaces. While this genealogy of fashion show transmission is divided up insofar as possible in order to elucidate media- and period-specific effects, it demonstrates too the manner in which all online and digital fashion show content remediates earlier formats. Indeed, in 2015, WME/IMG launched a fashion-themed channel, *Made 2 Measure (M2M)* with Apple TV, which contains not just fashion show videos but fashion films and fashion documentaries and features, all within a hypermedial online frame. To offer a historical context for the mediatization of the fashion show via film and television illuminates how both media access, as well as access to fashion as a social institution, has been democratized over an extended period of time, rather than in the past decade. Nonetheless, such an examination demonstrates that companies have continuously reinforced notions and fantasies of aspirational consumerism under the rubric of trend forecasts, press profiles and entertainment. The manner of the shows' transmission continues to evolve as additional affordances are developed and incorporated, and as devices permit individual intermediaries to stream short clips and/or entire shows concurrent with the event producers. Still, what has become evident in recent seasons is the adoption of cinematic techniques of fashion transmission for an online spectatorship, with an aim to showcase the clothes in as effective and enticing a manner as possible. The broadcast of the entire presentation, with members of the audience made visible due to the placement of multiple cameras, increases the focus to the fashion show itself as a performance. The live stream interface both invites spectatorship of the total event – albeit predetermined perspectives – and reminds spectators of their temporal but not spatial co-presence. In the end, the fashion show remains closed-off to all but a select few. In the next two chapters, I turn the focus to fashion companies' use of social media concurrent with live streams and unpack certain initiatives in which the indoor environments of Fashion Week and

media applications converge to create interactive brand experiences for the consumer. I determine here that the these social-media-meet-fashion-show campaigns demand from the consumer a measure of their own immaterial and affective labour in order to fulfill the consumer desire produced.

Chapter 5: Social Media Fashion Shows: Interactive and Exclusive

The dissemination of fashion show content, in particular live streaming, is billed as a tool to promote an increased level of consumer access to and productive interaction with fashion houses, brands and commodities. Since the introduction of live stream fashion shows at the end of the 2000s, numerous fashion companies have conducted fashion show-related campaigns, in conjunction with live streams, across social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Vine, Google+, YouTube, Snapchat, Line (a Japanese social media platform) and WeChat (a Chinese social media platform) (see Mortimer, 2015). These campaigns can also take the form of cross-promotions with these same platforms, or with media devices: Twitter often operates as a default, ‘host’ content platform for photographs, videos and even the streams themselves. This chapter interrogates the practice of transmitting fashion show streams and related content concurrent with brand inducements to consumer interaction via social media. I continue to define the audience-performer, or spectator-presentation, relationships that I have delineated thus far, but seek to incorporate here a reflection on the aims and purported consumer-driven ethos of fashion show live streams and social media campaigns, and, more crucially, the precise nature of the consumer-brand interactions involved. Based on content analysis of tweets and photographs, I locate specific moments in which live streams and related social media content re-assert the fashion show’s exclusivity, or fail, due to technical limitations, or temporal incongruities, to make the event as immediate or interactive as brands and the press might claim. These initiatives also focus attention on front row attendees to create for the online spectator (or user) a sense of spatial proximity, but such attention enhances attendees’ cultural capital and consumers’ desire for presence. Furthermore, as I will demonstrate, fashion show-concurrent social media campaigns expect users to perform a measure of immaterial labour on behalf of the fashion

companies, producing media impressions and creative content, and generating consumer data, which the companies can then use to their retail advantage. Indeed, spectators' virtual access to the live performance is *contingent* on our active social media use and textual and visual contributions, as opposed to a comparatively (assumed) passive viewing of the live stream. Fashion show-related social media initiatives make apparent that, within the condition of *communicative capitalism*, as Jodi Dean (2010a, 2010b) describes, our social media interactions take on a pleasurable dimension, akin to, and in the promotion of, consumption.

I first offer a brief theoretical overview to contextualize the manner in which fashion companies construct and market live stream-concurrent social media initiatives. I then trace the practice of these initiatives, since the first live stream experiments at the turn of this decade, and describe some well-documented examples. For the remainder of the chapter, I conduct a comparison of two prominent British fashion companies as case studies: luxury retailer Burberry (and its ready-to-wear line Burberry Prorsum) and high street (mass market) phenomenon Topshop (and its premium line Topshop Unique). Both of these companies are considered pioneers of digital and social media use in fashion communication and have undertaken innovative campaigns concurrent with their fashion shows, in addition to separate campaigns in between Fashion Month seasons.^{cxvii} While I document the companies' earliest and most innovative live stream-related campaigns, I focus the analysis on their Autumn/Winter 2015 fashion shows, held one day apart and covered in the fashion and social media press as a retail competition.^{cxviii} The associate that I interviewed was involved in and on-site during the Burberry Autumn/Winter 2015 fashion show.^{cxix}

Fashion Shows as Pleasurable Interaction and Experience

Since live streaming offers consumers an unprecedented measure of temporal or ‘real time’ access to fashion shows, fashion companies promote the interactive social media components built into/onto them as further offers of direct content, access and inclusion. Online spectators can comment on the show and/or the collection, make trend forecasts, retweet or respond to photographs of collection pieces, purchase select items online (ahead of other consumers), and even, in certain cases, customize and reshare screen shots of collection pieces. This interactive component positions the live stream within Pine and Gilmore’s (1998) *experience economy*, in which companies sell interesting experiences, including immersive retail environments and diverse brand-related interactive opportunities, in addition to material commodities, in order to permeate all facets of consumer life. Marketing scholars Glyn Atwal and Alistair Williams (2009) argue that Pine and Gilmore’s tactic of *experiential marketing*, which includes the creation of immersive retail environments and diverse interactive (and virtual) opportunities, is essential to luxury brand positioning in a postmodern, networked social climate. The effectiveness of such experiences is predicated on a co-production of meaning and value between brands and consumers (Atwal & Williams, 2009, pp. 341-342).^{cx} ‘Live’ access and ‘real time’ interaction is a supposed free offer from the brand to focus consumers’ attention onto the fashion show and build desire for the clothes. Auslander (2008) comments that, “To the extent that websites and other virtual entities respond to us in real time, they *feel* live to us, and this may be the kind of liveness we now value” (p. 112). It is this precise experience of liveness that fashion companies *want* or *instruct* consumers to value: the live stream does not just offer consumers a ‘real time’ virtual feed, but the concurrent social media interaction elicits instant, immediate response from brand interfaces and from other, affiliated users. Fashion companies’ calls to

consumer or fan interaction locate these initiatives within Couldry's model of the *media ritual*: collective participation concentrated on a mediated event that upholds media institutions' claims to social and corporate prominence (2012, pp. 67-68). Fashion show live streams cannot claim the scale and viewership of media rituals such as political events, athletic competitions and award ceremonies, even as the fashion press has called fashion show initiatives a "spectator sport" in the Internet era (Kansara, 2013, para. 1). Still, these initiatives prompt consumers to *use* media, not just to watch live streams but also to participate in social media conversations and purchase commodities via e-commerce sites. Fashion shows, as a live performance ritual, operate here as focal events that build and strengthen media-based consumer affiliations. While it is possible for consumers simply to watch live streams or access video archives, it is notable that certain companies make such concerted efforts to augment these viewing experiences *as such* through the implementation of technological gimmicks and/or prompts to social media participation.

Interaction with fashion companies via live streams is intended as an uncritical celebration of consumerism: campaigns function to enhance fashion companies' media and corporate profiles, to draw press and consumer attention to presentations amidst the crowded Fashion Week calendar, and to promote the use of the associated platforms.^{cxxi} Nonetheless, these companies' claims that digital and social media democratize fashion and facilitate a direct-to-consumer model recall Dean's observation that "enthusiasm over new gadgets and apps, communicative sites and practices – like Twitter, Facebook, and blogging – displaces critical attention from their setting in communicative capitalism" (2010b, p. 28). Still, companies' *actual* capacities to make consumers feel included in the event are often tenuous, while, in certain moments, such inclusion, or too much inclusion, runs counter to their commercial interests. Furthermore, live stream interactions assume a level of what Jan van Dijk terms *material access*

to a computer or handheld device (2011, p. 180), in addition to a decent Internet connection to watch the live stream and to switch between applications. To participate in the social media components, consumers also need a profile on the social media platform(s) utilized, as well as *usage access*: familiarity with the platform and its user processes and mechanisms (van Dijk, 2011, p. 182). Companies also hope that consumers possess a credit card account (and enough economic capital or credit) with which to make online purchases.

Immaterial Labour for Brands

The immaterial labour that consumers perform in order to participate aids fashion companies in the circulation of mentions, the maintenance of brand communities and the collection of information that can be accessed for future retail initiatives. Fashion-show related social media campaigns call forth and utilize both of the forms of labour that Lazzarato identifies: that of computational processes and that of the formation and maintenance of cultural influence (1996, p. 133). First, consumers are instructed to perform various computational actions, such as connection to the live streams (accounting for time zone differences and accessing the websites), responsive tweets, photograph circulation, clicks, likes, code scans and purchases via e-commerce platforms (though in-store purchases also produce consumer data). Second, as the Topshop case will illustrate, companies rely on cultural intermediaries already ensconced within the field of fashion to comment on collections and to forecast trends. Consumers' own efforts in the form of tweets and responses also builds cultural influence (aspiring fashion bloggers might tweet from their computers) but does so on behalf of the brands rather than the consumers per se. This labour thus adheres to Tiziana Terranova's concept of free labour, insofar as brands capitalize on consumers' engagement with their presentations and commodities (2000, p. 37).^{cxxii} Despite claims to democratic access to and even immersion into the fashion show performance,

or social media's capabilities to build conversations around collections and trends, companies' return on investment measures account for hits and for retail sales, rather than the social or qualitative aspects of the provocation, form or content of consumers' interaction. The cases that I examine demonstrate that companies have elected to assert a greater degree of control over the parameters of users' interactions and content, so as to curate positive mentions and to avoid criticism or other forms of embarrassment.

Live Stream-Related Social Media Use

Since the end of the 2000s, social media initiatives, connected to and built around fashion show live streams, have become a routine part of the Fashion Week calendar – and the overall fashion system – conceived by brands' media and public relations teams, commented on in the press and anticipated by consumers. While not all fashion companies undertake these initiatives (though fashion shows are still live streamed), those companies that do have embarked on too many individual projects to account for in one chapter. I offer here a list of pioneering and/or well-documented examples.^{cxxiii} Initiatives of the scale that I document require elaborate calculation and infrastructure, often in collaboration with external social media strategists and digital technicians. Therefore, it is no surprise that the brands best known for coordinating them are multi-billion-dollar earners that can afford the overhead. The fashion press and social media observers laud these companies – Burberry first and foremost – for implementing digital innovations, with brands that do not seem as antiquated outliers, and their comparative lack of financial success attributed to their self-exile from the infinite revenue possibilities of online media (Sedghi, 2013; Kansara, 2014).^{cxxiv} While one cannot ascertain whether McQueen's representatives *asked* Lady Gaga to tweet that she was performing at his Spring/Summer 2010 presentation (in the example that opened this dissertation), the fan response that her tweet

elicited can be viewed as one of the first convergences between a fashion show live stream and Twitter. In Autumn/Winter 2010, Burberry, under creative director Christopher Bailey (who has since earned the dual title of CEO) became the first brand to live stream its fashion show via its website, and to let consumers purchase collection pieces from its e-commerce site immediately after the presentation for a limited time (Uhlirova, 2013, p. 152). Consumers could tweet their reactions to the stream, and these ‘real time’ tweets were inserted below the feed (Amed, 2010).^{cxv} In addition to Burberry and later Topshop, brands that have demonstrated calculated use of Twitter in conjunction with their fashion shows include River Island, H&M, Matthew Williamson, Hunter Boots and Tommy Hilfiger. In Autumn/Winter 2013, in one of the more notorious experiments, New York-based Rebecca Minkoff incorporated a Twitter feed *into* her live fashion show. Users were invited to tweet to #RMFall, and the feed was displayed on a screen as attendees took their seats, and left visible behind the models once the show started. Minkoff’s team failed to account for a real-time Twitter feed’s unpredictable and “unfiltered” nature (Notopoulos, 2013, para. 2). Internet prankster collective “Weird Twitter” trolled the feed with scatological humour, call-outs to models, satirical fashion- and politics-related comments, and alerts that attendees’ cars were to be towed, and, once the hashtag trended, the feed was spammed with pornographic images (Notopoulos, 2013, para. 8). This (comparatively low-budget) initiative demonstrated that it remains in brands’ interests to maintain some control over the content of media impressions. That same season, Diane von Furstenburg streamed her show on Google+ and outfitted her models with Google Glass headpieces to communicate the feel of walking the runway (rather than visuals of the clothes). Several companies have experimented with innovative uses of Instagram and Vine. Michael Kors is considered a pioneer in using Instagram to disseminate front row and backstage photographs. For Autumn/Winter 2014,

British designer Giles had model-of-the-moment and social media star Cara Delevingne film herself on a smartphone as she marched down his runway and post the videos to her personal Instagram account, reaching her *millions* of followers.^{cxxvi} More recently, Burberry, Rebecca Minkoff and others have posted fashion show photographs to Snapchat. The application deletes content after a preset time period, and thus renders it ‘exclusive’ insofar as it becomes more ephemeral than the show, which continues to circulate in digital forms after its finale.

BURBERRY AND TOPSHOP – DIGITAL COMPETITORS

Given the wealth of campaigns to draw from, this chapter focuses on two comparative case studies from Autumn/Winter 2015 London Fashion Week: Burberry Prorsum’s #TweetCam Twitter campaign, and Topshop Unique’s #livetrends Twitter campaign. Both companies are noted innovators in the use of digital and social media to create online experiences or content around their fashion shows, in order to garner consumer attention amidst the Fashion Week spectacle. I first compare the companies’ live streaming practices to assess whether these brands do foster social media access and conversation or merely facilitate the production of mentions and impressions. Examining two campaigns that occurred within the same season, and with the same media capabilities, permits me to compare better the purported intentions of interactive campaigns across different market positions, aside from the obvious goal of retail sales. In essence, I can outline what brands claim to do in offering these opportunities for consumer interaction, and assess the ultimate forms that such interaction takes. Press outlets and social media watchers have also compared these companies, in Autumn/Winter 2015 and in prior seasons, since both are British and both utilize social media as a central component of communication and marketing, particularly during London Fashion Week (see Baldwin, 2015; Hall, 2015; Macmillan, 2015; Moth, 2014; Quin, 2015). While the companies’ intentions behind

the use of social media differ, the outcomes of the Twitter campaigns, in terms of the measure of inclusion (or lack thereof) offered to customers, are similar.

Before commencing with discussion of the Autumn/Winter 2015 campaigns, I provide a brief overview of each brand's history and market placement, and a chronicle of its notable fashion show-related social media initiatives to date. Despite their disparate market positions, both brands undertook strategic rebranding initiatives, at the turn of the millennium, in order to reestablish cultural and commercial relevance. Several of the brands' digital and social media campaigns can be attributed to *one source*, marketing strategist Justin Cooke. Cooke worked at Burberry from 2006 to 2012, where he attained the position of worldwide VP-PR/VIP/events and was instrumental in that brand's overhaul and implementation of digital communication (Diaz, 2013b, p. 18). Topshop headhunted Cooke as its Chief Marketing Officer in 2012 for the explicit purpose of rehashing *its* brand and augmenting its digital and social media presence via the same means (Diaz, 2013a, para. 1).^{cxxvii} Though Cooke oversaw Topshop's first fashion show-related campaigns, he departed the company late in 2013 to launch a media startup; he has since founded the social media application Tunepic and is now CMO at the technology firm Kinetic. He was succeeded by Sheena Sauvaire, now titled Director of Global Marketing and Communications, who acted as overseer of and mouthpiece for the Autumn/Winter 2015 #livetrends social media campaign. Cooke also spearheaded, for both brands, the construction of virtual environments and interactive social media presentations for consumers watching the live streams at the brands' flagship stores.^{cxxviii} While the in-store, live stream installations could be analyzed in the same detail, as a distinct set of constructed interfaces between consumers and the live performance, it is difficult to describe these installations without having witnessed or participated in them. Such installations privilege those consumers that live near or can travel to a flagship store, much as the

first public department store fashion shows were still the domain of consumers in cities. It is mind-boggling to consider the expense of these installations as opposed to the lesser cost of opening a fashion show to the public (albeit still in London). The creation of these installations indicates that the actual fashion shows' exclusivity must not just be preserved but can be used as a marketing tactic. Furthermore, the installations do not simply illustrate that these fashion companies are digital innovators but promote the use of media for its own sake.

Burberry and Topshop – British Brands

Comparative brand histories reveal the extent to which both of these companies rely on a similar, constructed emphasis of Britishness, in their promotional materials and in their collections. As outlined below, Burberry earned its reputation as the maker of the special trench coat worn by British officers in World War I; the trenchcoat has since become an icon of British fashion. Even as Burberry updated its image in the late-1990s, it did so “while retaining distinctly British themes as the content of [its] advertisements” and featuring prominent British models such as Kate Moss in its campaigns (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 414). In interviews conducted for Topshop Unique's Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow, which I describe in more detail in the next chapter, held at the Tate Britain art museum, brand personnel describe the collection's aesthetic and cultural references in terms and tropes that recall a conservative British heritage, in a similar manner to Burberry's nationalist invocations (Topshop, 2015c). Creative director Kate Phelan explains that the collection was based on “great British classics ... Fashion has always embraced our style heritage, so we've focused on those real classics like tweeds and big chunky knits and lovely florals. ... It all comes together to build on this ancestral ... fashion idea.” Host Laura Jackson notes twice that the fashion show is happening in an “iconic” British historical location. Phelan adds that the museum is a “landmark in London ... [that] resonates with the idea of the

collection, and [bears a] slightly heritage feeling ... that real establishment type of environment.” Casting Director Rosie Vogel echoes this British-focused sentiment when informing us that model selection was based on the keywords “heritage,” “breeding” and “posh.” Her statement that the girls should look “expensive and well-bred ... like they come out of expensive boarding schools” places the models within an aristocratic, imperialist ideal. Head make-up artist Hannah Murray refers to the models, with their “windswept” hair and skin, as “thoroughbreds” or “blue bloods.” Head hairstylist Anthony Turner elaborates, “The idea is that she started in the highlands, but she’s gone to London, but she’s still got this kind of mad, windswept hair, but she’s dressing just a little bit cooler than she did before.” The fact that these fashion shows are happening in Britain also becomes an incidental aspect of conversation in the host’s conversations with celebrities, who comment on the perpetual rain that has pelted London Fashion Week, prompting remarks about British stoicism and cheer. One attendee jokes that she hopes to see raincoats on the catwalk, an unintentional invocation of Burberry’s outerwear. Despite their different market positions, it is evident that both Burberry and Topshop Unique utilize references to a notion of British-ness that has become a historicized simulacrum: Burberry relies on its foundations as a late-1800s manufacturer to cement its iconic, desirable status, while Topshop appeals to its more youthful market base by tapping into aristocratic, upper-class imaginaries. While the buzzwords used to describe the brands’ British heritage (Topshop’s in particular) are almost amusing in their antiquatedness, after Brexit, these terms take on a more ominous political tone that hints at a xenophobic nationalism. *The Guardian*’s Carole Cadwalladr (2012) excoriates Burberry for touting its Britishness while it shuttered its local factories and moved its manufacture to China. Jo Ellison (2015b) of the *Financial Times* also comments that most of Topshop’s manufacturing is outsourced to China, though its parent

Arcadia Group does use some British factories (para. 3). In terms of their production sites, neither brand can trade on more *distinct* British connections.^{cxxix}

In both cases, the brands' Autumn/Winter 2015 collections' historicized semiotics conflict in an ironic manner with the companies' desire to position themselves at the forefront of technological adoption in fashion production, marketing and e-commerce. Reviewers observed that Burberry's creative director Christopher Bailey had created a "conflict in aesthetics" between the "folksiness" of his 1970s, folk-inspired collection, entitled Patchwork, Patterns & Print, and the brand's technical innovations (Ellison, 2015a, para. 6; see also Cartner-Morley, 2015, para. 10). Despite the fact that "print" refers to the collection's vibrant fabrics, the term can be read as antithetical to digital, online communication forms. Bailey reframed this discordance as a dialectical balance between the craftsmanship of (heritage) luxury and digital (direct-to-consumer) communication: "I wanted to celebrate things that go slowly, things that still take time, because much as I love the speed of the digital world I value those things as well. Quick and slow – we need both" (as cited in Cartner-Morley, 2015, para. 10; see also Ellison, 2015a, para. 4). Ellison (2015a) comments that the Topshop Unique "collection was infused with the sort of quintessential Britishness one might associate with [sculptor] Barbara Hepworth or a wild weekend at Balmoral ... All the tropes of British sartorial heritage were here..." (para. 1-2). Press materials emphasized that Topshop conferred "the sensation of luxury to everyday pieces" and combined "couture-like detail" with urban fashion (as cited in Ellison, 2015b, para. 3), which, Ellison notes, is an unrealistic achievement for a high street brand with factories in China.

Burberry and Topshop – Social Media Use

A comparison of the companies' social media interactions in the months prior to Autumn/Winter 2015 London Fashion Week contextualizes each brand's online reach; the ethos, or purpose, via

which each brand utilized social media; and how often each brand interacted with its followers outside of fashion show-related initiatives (Quin, 2015). Social network observers measure user interaction based on *indegree*, the number of followers attached to an account, and *outdegree*, the number of accounts that user reaches out or reciprocates to. Twitter interactions are measured in numbers of retweets, mentions, favourites (similar to Facebook ‘likes’) or replies. A helpful table that compares both brands’ Twitter interactions (Quin, 2015) reveals that Burberry, at 3.6 million followers, has a much higher indegree than Topshop, at 1.1 million, and had gained 77,108 more followers than Topshop in the previous month (Table 1). Nonetheless, Topshop followed several thousand more accounts, and had sent out four times the number of tweets, indicating more frequent and multi-directional interaction (Table 1). *Kred outreach* is a social analytic measurement of a user’s outward Twitter interactions (with linked Facebook use accounted for also), listed as a cumulative score out of 10 (Kred, 2016). Kred also has a separate score for online influence that, recorded beside the outreach score, quantifies the strength of the user’s online relationships (Kred, 2016). While Burberry had more than three times the follower count, Topshop’s Kred outreach score was higher, due, one can conclude, to its higher number of tweets and overall interactions. Burberry’s more unidirectional communication approach is consistent with its higher market status and a business model that prioritizes delivery of content direct-to-consumer but does not promote a social conversation per se. Topshop, on the other hand, claims to celebrate social media’s capabilities for creating and capturing conversations: this approach can be said to reflect its more democratic status as a mass market brand.

Battle Of The Fashion Brands	
Twitter account	
@Topshop	@Burberry
Total followers	
1,100,000	3,600,000
Following	
9,028	232
Increase in followers in the last 30 days	
21,049	98,157
Total Tweets sent	
37,431	7,360
Kred Outreach	
8	6

Data Monitored by SocialBro.com

SocialBro

Table 1. Comparison of Burberry’s and Topshop’s social media reach (Quin, 2015).

BURBERRY – DIGITAL INTERACTION IN THE LUXURY MARKET

Founded by Thomas Burberry in 1856, in Basingstoke, UK, Burberry (then Burberry’s) made its name in men’s outerwear. As mentioned, the retailer rose to prominence in the early 1900s when it was asked to design a raincoat for British military officers: the result became a staple of the officer’s uniform and was updated for wear in the trenches during World War I. Burberry became associated with its “trench coat” and perfected its appearance through the creation of a signature check pattern for the lining (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 413). Various stylistic incarnations of the now iconic trench coat still form the foundation of Burberry’s collections. The company opened its first London store in 1891, and the 1900s witnessed numerous

international wholesale and licensing initiatives, and distribution to East Asian markets (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 413). The Burberry Prorsum line was introduced in 1998 as one part of a comprehensive initiative that aimed to “re-position the Burberry’s brand as a distinctive luxury brand with a clear design, merchandising, marketing and distribution strategy, which would be appealing to new, younger, fashion-forward customers, while still retaining the traditional customer base” (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 414).^{cxxx} The line was launched under the design direction of Bailey, who was named creative director in 2001. Bailey has been heralded as the visionary that ushered Burberry into the new millennium: in 2014, he was named CEO and Chief Creative Officer.^{cxxxi} Burberry Prorsum was planned as the key to the luxury market takeover:

Burberry Prorsum is the couture/high fashion range that serves as the focus for fashion shows and editorial interest/coverage. [It is] produced in limited quantities in order to satisfy the demand for exclusivity among affluent consumers ... [and] provides creative direction for all of the [additional] Burberry brands. (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 415)

Moore and Birtwistle’s (2004) profile of Burberry’s strategic overhaul labels Burberry Prorsum “couture” while the second-tier Burberry London line is marked as “ready-to-wear” (p. 417).

While Burberry is not a couture house, the Burberry Prorsum line functions in a similar manner to couture: it offers exclusive pieces for those that can afford it but, more importantly, increases consumer demand for the brand’s lesser-priced lines and more ‘affordable’ licensed accessories and cosmetics (see Taylor, 2000). Burberry’s marketing communication operations, run out of London, are predicated on three “core strands”: advertising, fashion shows, and editorial placement (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 420). Fashion shows “underline the luxury status of the brand ... [and] establish and reinforce ... credibility ... and generate international press coverage” (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 420). Until 2009, Burberry Prorsum was shown at Milan Fashion Week, and Burberry London at London Fashion Week (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 420). For Spring/Summer 2010, Burberry Prorsum moved to London Fashion Week, where it closed the

event's 25th anniversary and was live-streamed on a screen at the London flagship store (Mower, 2009, para. 3). *Style.com*'s Sarah Mower (2009) read the collection as a "relevant" update of the brand's iconic British looks, fused with the "international" sensibilities that it had assumed via its presentations in Milan (para. 2). The associate that I interviewed consulted with the brand on this campaign and recalls that Burberry wanted to demonstrate diversity in casting to reflect Britain's "multiculturalism" and communicate that multiculturalism to international markets. This mandate included casting models from British locations that housed the shipping ports from which Burberry used to import materials, such as the wax used in its coats (2017, n.p.).

Despite or perhaps to overcome its more outdated associations, Burberry has operated at the forefront of digital and online communication initiatives. It streams all of its womenswear and menswear shows, transmitting content not just online but also to outdoor screens in metropolitan capitals and across a plethora of international social networks and applications – this in addition to other social media campaigns in the off-seasons. The brand's digital initiatives function as an extension of its consumer-oriented business model, in which instant, relevant content is central. Bailey has told the press, "We are now as much a media-content company as we are a design company, because it's all part of the overall *experience*..." (Alexander, 2010, para. 5, my emphasis; see also Uhlirova, 2013a, p. 152). Burberry estimated that "more than 100 million users" witnessed its first international live stream event, for Autumn/Winter 2010, held on its website in tandem with a Twitter feed (Amed, 2010, para. 1). The press heralded the event as the future of fashion communication, and observed that the 'buy it now' e-commerce feature would offer the company invaluable "consumer data" to inform the deliveries of its merchandise to stores come Autumn (Amed, 2010, para. 12). Despite the stream's technical difficulties, described in Chapter Four, Burberry won the Digital Innovation award at the 2010 British

Fashion Awards. Since 2009, the brand's fashion show-related social media initiatives have become more technical and more ambitious, integrated not just more fully with the brand's e-commerce operations, but as collaborations with other media companies. Notable examples include #Tweetwalk, held in Spring/Summer 2012, in which Burberry tweeted backstage photographs of pieces even before the fashion show had started (Rocamora, 2013, p. 74). The Twitter account @Burberry earned 50,000 views within 30 minutes of the show (*NewsCred*, 2015, n.p.). For Autumn/Winter 2013, Burberry debuted a "made-to-order 'smart personalisation' service" that permitted customers to order select collection items from their website with additional "bespoke" elements (Karmali, 2013, para. 1). Users that ordered handbags or trench coats could have their names "engraved into a metal coat tag or on the bag plate" (Karmali, 2013, para. 1). Users could also purchase a microchip, sewn into the label, that included *personal digital content*: a video about the coat's production that the user could activate via smartphone and that would appear on mirrors that turned into video screens if the user entered select Burberry retail stores with the item (Karmali, 2013, para. 2).^{cxxxii}

Burberry produced its Spring/Summer 2014 fashion show live stream in collaboration with Apple. The fashion show was filmed using iPhone 5s cameras as a cross-promotion for the device, which was to be released later that week.^{cxxxiii} Footage was captured using 14 devices in total: "nine iPhone 5s phones on the runway taking shots, three [mounted] on a moving rail cam following the models, one on the roof getting all the action, and a further iPhone 5s on a jimmy rig outside for celeb shots" (Miles, 2013b, para. 5). The use of the iPhone5s camera was intended to create a more immediate sense of spectatorship: the online spectator could watch the 'live' presentation via a handheld screen (a gimmick that reveals the degree to which even attendees' interaction with the live presentation is mediated). However, when one watches the archived

video, it is immediately noticeable that the cuts are choppy than in previous footage, and therefore the spectator experience of the live stream would have been less seamless. Furthermore, the phone cameras did not replicate the audience member position but rather were installed in place of the standard cameras installed in the space and on tracks. Apple released its own behind-the-scenes video to demonstrate the professional video capture possible with the device: its revelation of the camera apparatuses undercut any sense of embodied presence that the phone camera perspective could have created. The associate notes that at this fashion show, professional photographers pressed the buttons to take photographs on a set of iPhone5s devices set up on a “panel” in the media pit (2017, n.p.). The use of the iPhone5s was also intended to create the impression that the consumer at home could film fashion content to the same effect:

[T]he image was captured by people in a way that you and I, using a cell phone right now, we could capture images using the same capacity. The flip side of that is that you’d have to get a ticket to get to that show ... but the *idea* and the concept of the way it’s captured is democratic. (Associate, 2017, n.p.)

To communicate to consumer audiences that one could photograph fashion as if one was present at a fashion show also functioned as subtle product placement for the iPhone5s device itself just as the photographs that it captured advertised the fashion collection.

Burberry Prorsum, Autumn/Winter 2015 – #TweetCam

The presentation of the Burberry Prorsum Autumn/Winter 2015 collection, which took place on February 23, 2015, at London’s Kensington Gardens, can be analyzed in the context of all of the brand’s fashion show-related digital and social media campaigns that preceded it. To add an interactive social media component, Burberry instructed its then 3.6 million Twitter followers to tweet to @Burberry using the hashtag #TweetCam. Each tweet would trigger a camera positioned in the space to take a photograph from the best perspective at that moment; Burberry then tweeted the photograph to the user accompanied by an individual textual hail. Based on

manual content analysis that I conducted, Burberry's Twitter account sent 721 tweets from the start to the end of #TweetCam: the total number of #Tweetcam photographs disseminated numbered 686, and a further 35 (professional) promotional photographs were transmitted during and after the stream. 511 of the #TweetCam photographs sent out were taken in the runway space. Examination of the photographs' time stamps reveals that between 1:02 PM (when the first #TweetCam photographs were sent out) and 1:30 PM (when the last photographs were sent out), the cameras captured 82 individual, distinct photographs. Based on the angles of the photographs, one can deduce that there were three cameras dedicated to #TweetCam: one aerial camera – slightly angled (15 photographs); one camera positioned upstage house left (28 photographs); and one frontal camera (38 photographs). The aerial camera offered a partial view of the runway in addition to a section of the audience risers on each side, and created an omniscient perspective that the in-person audience could not access. However, the field of view was limited (photographs were landscape and thus captured just a small section of the runway, and for most of the show, the risers were not lit), and the shots tended to capture the tops of models' and attendees' heads and little else. The upstage house left camera captured the spill of the runway lights on the celebrities seated in the front row, and documented their reactions. The third, frontal camera replicated the perspective from the press photographer pit and offered the most detailed shots of models and clothes. Nonetheless, this camera took landscape shots rather than the full-body portrait shots seen on news sites and in print. Few of the photographs from the performance space offered much textural detail at all.

Celebrities visible in the #TweetCam photographs include actors Paloma Faith, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Kim Min-hee and Clemence Poesy; recording artist Sam Smith; photographer Mario Testino; current models Cara Delevingne, Lily Donaldson and Jourdan Dunn; and supermodels

Naomi Campbell and Kate Moss. Campbell arrived ten minutes late and can be seen in the stream footage sneaking onto the front row bench, conspicuous in a white fur bomber jacket, a moment which caused laughter amongst the celebrities that moved over to accommodate her, and left the rest of the audience awestruck (Cartner-Morley, 2015, para. 8). *The Guardian* observed that Campbell's "old school supermodel bad behaviour" provided a human interruption to the "relentless efficiency of the digital world" and stood as a metaphor for tensions between the more nostalgic collection and the current era's technological demands (Cartner-Morley, 2015, para. 9). Whether an intentional ploy to earn press attention or the (likelier) result of attitude or circumstance, Campbell's late entrance is visible on the screen but did not pull users' focus. She became present in the #TweetCam photographs as if she had simply materialized in her seat.^{cxxxiv}

The tweets' visual (photographic) and textual (message) content must be considered within the context not just of a luxury market ethos but also of Burberry's made-to-order e-commerce capabilities. Each #TweetCam photograph was stamped, or "embossed" (Sillitoe, 2015, para. 3), with the user's Twitter handle and the date and time that the photograph had been taken. Each tweet read, "[Twitter handle] Your personalised moment from the Autumn/Winter 2015 show, live from the @Burberry #Tweetcam." Okonkwo (2007) outlines that a *personal selling* model founded on "specialized information and one-to-one interaction" is one of the core strategies of the luxury sector (p. 153). Each #TweetCam tweet can also be considered a form of personal digital content in the same manner as the trenchcoat microchip. In the same vein, *Retail Week* described the hashtag #TweetCam as "bespoke," referencing the fact that it was created for this event (Baldwin, 2015, para. 1). Each #TweetCam tweet therefore hailed the online consumer, offering a token representation of the event in return for immaterial labour. Turner (2010) recalls that the media also exploit consumers' sense of personalised access for economic benefit: "... the

personalisation of one's interaction with the media is ... fundamental to the marketing strategies of the corporation" (p. 97). The beneficiaries of the personalised tweets were therefore not the users but the brand itself and Twitter as the event 'host' site. The virtuality of the representations reflects Tomlinson's *culture of speed*, in which transactions are immaterial, labour is redefined and, as a result, material commodities are fetishized (2007, p. 133-137). The idea of the "personalised moment" illuminates the fashion show's ephemeral nature as a brief moment in time. Still, to time stamp the photograph reminds each user that he or she has participated for a fraction of the total performance duration. Moreover, there is an inevitable lag between image capture and dissemination. The only personalised content embedded in the tweet was the user's handle; the textual content was identical. Certain users tweeted multiple times and therefore received multiple "moments." This occurrence can be read as an incidence of repetitive labour, but also as a virtual haul of luxury-branded tweets.

Most counter to narratives of personalised, consumer-driven content, the camera apparatus sent out several identical photographs in succession, so multiple users received the exact same 'moment', while each seated audience member still had a unique perspective. Each of the 82 individual photographs was tweeted an average of 6.23 times, and the median number of tweets per photograph was 9. This statistic does not, however, reflect the *overall* sense of visual repetition that appeared when one scrolled through Burberry's Twitter feed; this more superficial sense of repetition can be attributed to the overall number of photographs, repetition of textual content, and consistent colour tones. However, the most tweeted photographs were repeated a staggering number of times, at maximum 109 repetitions. While there was no discernible pattern of repetitions from the start to the end of the presentation, I documented a much higher rate of repetition *at* the start and end times (Figure 11).

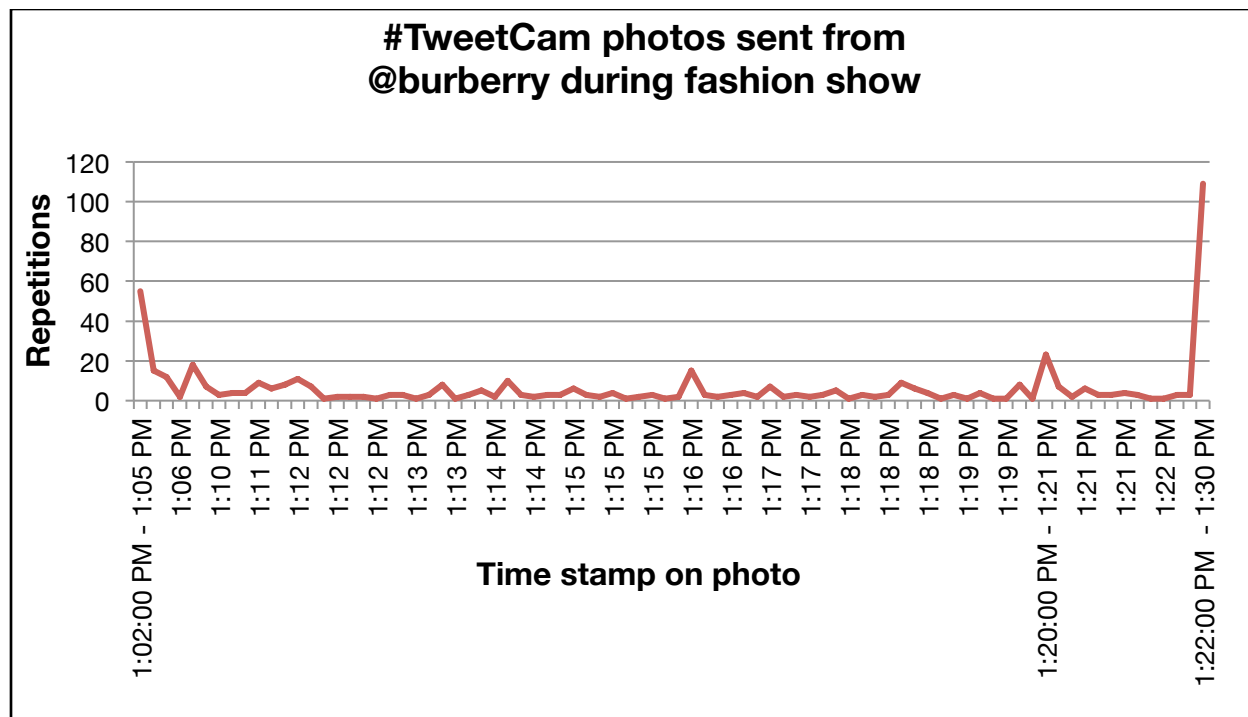


Figure 11. Repetition of #TweetCam photos over the duration of the fashion show.

These occurrences suggest a higher degree of user participation (and technical difficulties handling the volume of user tweets) at these moments. The volume is concordant with what one assumes is a desire to test out the mechanism as the show started and to capture a picture of the finale, a fashion show’s most shamelessly oft-photographed moment (Doré, 2012, para. 7), as the models parade en masse down the runway, showcasing multiple, if not all, looks from the collection at once. The second most repeated #TweetCam photograph, at 55 tweets, is the first photograph of the entire campaign, disseminated before the fashion show started (Figure 12). The show was scheduled to start at 1:00 PM GMT (though, of course, fashion shows never start on time).^{cxxxv} This photograph is time stamped at 1:02 PM, indicating that the mechanisms were timed for the scheduled start time rather than the *actual* start time. The photograph is an omniscient aerial shot, and its mood lighting and presence of shadow creates sense of atmosphere and builds anticipation for the online spectator. The spectator’s focus is drawn to the tiled pattern on the runway, still in shadow. The risers are filled with attendees (not celebrities)

who are lit, and can be seen waiting for the presentation to start. At the same time, the models and the collection pieces have yet to appear in the frame, and the one person on the runway is in shadow, half out of the frame, not noticeable but for a white piece of paper (an invitation perhaps). The repetition of a photograph that sets the mood, but lacks items from the collection, suggests that the #TweetCam mechanism had been activated but the camera-switching function had not. The *most* repeated #TweetCam photograph is the last finale shot, transmitted *109 times* in succession between 1:22 PM, when the show ended, and 1:30 PM (Figure 13). This image contains much more detail: it is an angled shot, documenting seven models parading past the front-row celebrities as confetti falls. The rest of the audience is in shadow, placing the focus on the models and the A-listers, whose faces and bodies are turned to follow the line of models.



Figure 12. Sample of first #TweetCam photograph. Repeated 55 times (Burberry, 2015b).



Figure 13. Sample of #TweetCam finale photograph. Repeated 109 times (Burberry, 2015e).

The succession of #TweetCam photographs, in particular the last finale shot, recalls Evans's (2013) statement that the line of uniform model bodies in the finale creates a linear, modernist form and reflects modern production processes and replicable mass-market commodities. It could be said that these repeated photographs – in particular the final photograph's repetition 109 times without the insert of other tweets – perpetuate an aesthetic of the mass market and thus reflect an ethos of fashion's online democratization. However, because each photograph is supposed to be "personalised," the mass repetition instead dilutes the exclusive status of the presentation and is rendered an inferior form of it. The brand sells the notion of each consumer as individual, when the consumer is one of 3.6 million followers, and purports to offer personalised content that is replicated hundreds of times. This repetition, and the calculation of the entire initiative, permitted Burberry to maintain almost total control of the

textual and visual impressions produced on Twitter that pertained to the collection. The number of impressions generated became precisely the point, rather than the creation of a conversation that had the potential to include critique. The often *identical* nature of these impressions, and the modernist replication of the model bodies, recalls Kracauer's modern-era concept of the *mass ornament*, the embodied linear aesthetic that created spectator "distraction," therein instilling a "rational mindset" of social life under capitalism, which renders the individual an "abstraction" (1995, pp. 75-83). This same condition of distraction exists in a more banal but also more networked, more pervasive form in Dean's and Terranova's examinations of late capitalist network(ed) culture. In the last finale #TweetCam photograph, while the models are more diverse in appearance than the women that Kracauer describes (and one is also male), their heights appear relatively uniform, and their bodies are equidistant in the line. The notion of the consumer as abstraction is visualized in the brand's use and prominent placement of followers' Twitter handles on the photographs themselves.

To respond to the additional user tweets sent after the finale, Burberry sent out a further 175 individual tweets. These consisted of five close-up photographs of collection pieces and fabrics, tweeted in random order, making the content slightly more unique for the user (with a one in five chance of receiving each photograph). The close-ups made the commodities and fabrics much more immediate, seductive and even tactile for the online spectator, but were professional photographs, taken, one reasons, prior to the show for the purposes of filling demanded user content and instilling further desire. The associate, who was involved in the production of the backstage images, confirms that these were "subtle product shots" that were composed in order to feature certain items in an aesthetic manner that reflected the brand's overall look, and involved focused collaboration and labour: "The product shots up close were

backstage but they were professionally focused. One person's holding a camera, one person's holding a lighting [apparatus], [and] everyone is making sure the photo is cropped as best as possible" (2017, n.p.). The text read, "#TweetCam live from the @Burberry show has finished. Here is a personalised piece of the collection." In altering the text from "moment" to "piece" and "show" to "collection," the communication here implied that the featured merchandise had been selected for the consumer and thus positioned the items as commodities that one might wish to purchase via the e-commerce site. The bodies in the photographs are partial, blurred and even hidden through intentional light reflection, making these photographs a peek at, or a tease of, the pieces (and the bodies that wear them) (Figure 14). The phrase "personalised *piece* of the collection" takes on a double, literalized meaning. In one such photograph, a suede, stiletto boot is discernible, a fetishization both of the item and the foot that it adorns (Figure 15). Indeed, one could purchase the item online provided one did the work of matching the partial items in the photographs to those on the e-commerce interface.



Figure 14. Promotional #TweetCam photograph sent after fashion show (Burberry, 2015d)



Figure 15. Promotional #TweetCam photograph sent after fashion show (Burberry, 2015f).

The last photographs tweeted were two different finale shots, which were far superior in quality, detail and colour to the automatic photographs. These photographs have obviously been shot at a closer distance (one assumes by a human, professional photographer) and it appears that the colours are enhanced. The tweet content still read, in part, “Here is a personalised piece *of the collection*,” indicating that the PR team had not updated the text to correspond to this new set of photographs (Figures 16 and 17, my emphasis). In both of the photographs, the audience (applauding and/or holding smartphones) is partially visible, if not in focus. The fact that all of the models are present, but not in a perfect line, lends a sense of spirited movement and immediacy to the image and enhances a spontaneous feel and celebratory atmosphere; models’ faces, however, remain detached, with at most a half-smile, not quite in the camera’s direction.

The Autumn/Winter 2015 collection incorporated more colour and prints than previous collections – a fact that the mediatized content was intended to highlight:

We had just started to introduce a lot more colour into the brand. 2013 had been very traditional and very much the khaki, the Mac jacket ... 2014 was actually when [we] said OK let's introduce this colour palette and bring in an animal-based print So you had that weave of ... hots and colds ... reds, oranges and pinks in some of the scarves and then you had the greens and blues in some of the other ones. (Associate, 2017, n.p.)

The professional photographs illuminate the collection's vibrant colour palette and work in accordance with the overall aesthetic aims of the entire production – indeed the first model (Malaika Firth) wears the hot-toned plaid scarf in the standard Burberry plaid, while the second model (Edie Campbell)'s blue-plaid scarf pops against her darker tunic. While some of the #TweetCam shots revealed dresses with pops of colour at a distance, the overall browned, muted effect undermined the emphasis on colour that the brand wanted to place – one can assume due to the cameras' technical capabilities (or lack thereof) or the lighting in the rest of the venue. No matter the reason, the professional photographs were far superior in aesthetic communication.



Figure 16. Promotional finale shot #1, sent at end of #TweetCam campaign (Burberry, 2015c).



Figure 17. Promotional finale shot #2, sent at end of #TweetCam campaign (Burberry, 2015a).

Analysis of the photographs that were disseminated during #TweetCam, and the clear discrepancy in quality between the photographs taken via the automatic camera mechanism and the more professional shots sent afterwards, reveals that the online spectator remains aesthetically distanced from the fashion show space and the commodities shown even as one participated in the virtual happening. The brand solicited consumers' tweets and returned a personalised hail, but nonetheless sent content to consumers *after* they had performed identical, en masse immaterial labour – as an exchange rather than as additional experiential value. Indeed, since the photograph-taking and the tweet dissemination were automatic, the tweets and the media impressions must be considered the product or result of consumers' immaterial labour as well as the reward for it (the personalised content delivered from the brand). Here, the total number of photographs – itself an almost uninterrupted stream or assembly line of like images –

emblemizes the “abundance of production” that Terranova identifies as the result of free labour (2013, p. 52). Despite the fact that the labour of users’ tweets, sometimes repetitive, was not monetarily compensated, these acts can nonetheless be described as pleasurable. Dean (2010a, 2010b) identifies *reflexivity* as a central aspect of the condition of communicative capitalism. Each person within the Internet’s circuit of relations communicates in the hope of response (Dean, 2010b, p. 48): looped actions that perpetuate the function of Lacanian drive, or the *desire to desire*, that cannot by its nature be satisfied, in the same manner that consumer fulfillment, as desire, can never be attained (Bauman, 2005, pp. 33-35). While the user is still distanced from the ‘real’ performance and the ‘real’ commodities in both the literal and Lacanian senses, the symbolic content of the image suffices to produce a measure of “satisfaction” (Dean, 2010b, p. 60) or “accrue an affective nugget” (p. 95). In the #TweetCam campaign, Burberry has infused the “nugget” with additional affect in the form of snapshots from the live presentation and references to the brand. Furthermore, networked communication, much like consumption, operates under an ethos of personalisation: “Communicative capitalism provides the form and vehicle for the individualized consumption, participation, and creative needs expression of subjects” (Dean, 2010b, p. 75). The automatic “personalised moment” sent in response to each tweet creates a measure of interaction with the brand, which, as Celia Lury notes, itself constitutes an *interface* of relations that operates at the level of affect (2004, pp. 41-17). At the same time, the ‘micro’ nature of micro-blogging sites such as Twitter and Facebook creates mechanisms for interaction that are “banal, repetitive and nonetheless connective and intimate” and instill a *sense* of communion among networked users (Dean, 2010b, p. 36): the formation of brand affiliations, and, in this scenario, brand audiences. The aesthetic of serial repetition can be said to create a flattened visual effect, or even a flattened *affect*. However, this repetition, the

result of users' production of content, stems from compulsion (Dean, 2010b, p. 40). The #TweetCam function demands the repetition of utterances and feedback into and from the network, and each utterance, as Dean describes, contains and builds affect (2010b, p. 48). These tweets do not offer a concrete message per se but rather function as "contribution" (Dean, 2010b, p. 100). Still, this affect, and the affective labour that circulates it, is *captured* under the rubric of capitalism at the moment of its production, absorbed into an economic logic that relies on drive and desire to render us distracted with the mundane and the personal, or the mundane *as* personal (or personalised) (Dean, 2010b, p. 119). The repetition of textual and photographic content functions in this scenario as *message force multipliers*: mechanisms and tools that enable "the force multiplication of messages or the multiplication of message forces" (Dean, 2010b, p. 99). The repetition of #TweetCam tweets functions as the former, a deluge of content that is, in this scenario, desired – a form of "spam by request" that instils "a concrete awareness of the affective dimension of media in communicative capitalism" (Dean, 2010b, pp. 99-100). Even the models' mere presence on social media, or their own social media use, is a call to our immaterial labour. Models' media interaction is incorporated into fashion's economies to "sell us a life engaged with technology that productively focuses our energy, where we freely give away our leisure time in a manner that can be measured and organized for profit" (Wissinger, 2013, p. 134). In these scenarios, the consumer embraces a media interaction that harnesses their devotion to the brand and even their biopower.

The number of users that tweeted to #TweetCam is a fraction of the total follower count of 3.6 million, so it is reasonable to conclude that the brand cared more about its followers seeing the content rather than producing it per se. Burberry elected not to show users' tweets in its feed, so while each user's tweet created a mention, and a moment of reflexivity for the user, it did not

create a conversation in a democratic sense, as users were focused on the live stream and on the photograph feed. The most popular photograph depicted Christopher Bailey flanked by celebrities after the presentation: this was favoured 1,310 times and retweeted 531 times (Link Humans, 2015, para. 14). This photograph is one of the professional shots tweeted during #TweetCam, but not part of the interactive component. The volume of media impressions, and the comparative lack of criticism and reflection, is, one can conclude, precisely what Burberry intended. Despite the promise of 'real time' personalised content, the Autumn/Winter 2015 Burberry Prorsum presentation and concurrent #TweetCam campaign co-opted user interaction into a social media spectacle, a continuous bombardment of flat, identical commercial content.

TOPSHOP – READY-TO-WEAR TAKES TO THE HIGH STREET

While Burberry maintains its luxury status, Topshop must stake its claim on the London Fashion Week calendar whilst directing content towards its more mass-market consumer fan base.

Topshop is one of Britain's most popular high street (mass market or fast fashion) brands, and it has garnered an international presence in the past decade, reaching approximately 500 brick-and-mortar and franchise locations (Reuters, 2014, para. 11). The company operates under the auspices of the parent corporation The Arcadia Group and its CEO, Sir Philip Green, who (with his wife Cristina) has a net worth of \$5.3 billion (Forbes). Topshop originated in the 1960s as an addition to the Peter Robinson womenswear department store, under control of the Burton Group; the first Topshop store (then called Top Shop) was located "in the basement of Peter Robinson at Oxford Circus" (Brewerton, 2011, para. 6). From the outset, the line was aimed at a young, sartorially adventurous market (Brewerton, 2011, para. 6). Top Shop experienced commercial success into the late-1970s, during which time Peter Robinson was profiled in *The Times* as one of Britain's more profitable retail operations, and Top Shop, at then 55 stores, one

of its chief assets, due to its “sharp definition of purpose” (Glynn, 1975, para. 1, 14, 16). Top Man (now Topman), the brand’s menswear division, launched in 1978 (Tisdall, 1978). Topshop has maintained a reputation as fashion-forward since its inception. Unlike Burberry, whose historical Britishness threatened to render the brand outdated and stale in the 1990s, Topshop can forever be located within the innovation of 1960s youth culture.

Nonetheless, Topshop also underwent a repositioning in the 1990s in order to retain its commercial relevance, and a direct involvement with London Fashion Week became central to this mission. Since the start of the millennium, Topshop has sponsored the British Fashion Council’s NewGen initiative, which supports emerging designers via financial capital and a special show at London Fashion Week, and Fashion East, “a not-for-profit initiative that acts as ... an unofficial feeder” between London’s fashion schools and NewGen (Gonsalves, 2014, para. 3-4). Topshop had thus connected itself to London Fashion Week by the time Topshop Unique was launched on that circuit in 2005 (Gonsalves, 2014, para. 1). Sheena Sauvaire, Director of Global Marketing and Communications, states that its involvement with London Fashion Week as a sponsor, especially one that develops new ready-to-wear talent, not only legitimates Topshop within the ready-to-wear market but reassures other presenters that fast fashion brands are not just creative leeches: the brand should be seen as “a credible force for good rather than a commercial interloper” (Gonsalves, 2014, para. 7). Creative Director Kate Phelan perceives Topshop’s expansion in retail and e-commerce as a parallel to London Fashion Week’s own transformation into an online event: as part and parcel of the “democratization of fashion” wave (Gonsalves, 2014, para. 10) that Topshop (as a fast fashion brand) has ridden and propelled to its financial benefit. While it is aimed at a style-savvy, youthful demographic, the Topshop high street division has become a multinational staple brand for a spectrum of consumers:

On paper, the chain is meant to target an early-20s customer on a budget, but those have visibly become empty words in these ageless, classless, hi-lo, international-fashion times. The snaking queues at the Oxford Circus checkouts ... are made up of fashion fiends aged ten to 45... (Mower, 2005, para. 2).

The brand is considered to be an edgier, more fashionable and better-constructed fast fashion brand than its contemporaries, as evidenced by the celebrities, such as “Kate Moss, Gwyneth Paltrow, Scarlett Johansson and Maria Sharapova,” that profess to wear it (Mower, 2005, para. 2-3; see also Reingold, 2008, para. 4).^{cxv} Topshop is also one of several fast fashion brands that take inspiration from high fashion but present their own fashion shows, or release higher-priced lines, to increase their cachet (Okonkwo, 2007, pp. 35-36).

Since 2012, when it hired digital media guru Justin Cooke, Topshop has coordinated elaborate social media campaigns to provoke excitement amongst its customers for the Topshop Unique fashion show. As is the case for Burberry, the show functions as a promotional tool for all of the brand’s commodities, though Topshop still remains a fast fashion brand in the public consciousness, and promotes itself in those same online communications as democratic. Social media, in its idealized form, fosters conversation around topics and phenomena and the maintenance of affective communities around interests, activities, events, artists or locations. Sauvaire notes during the Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow broadcast that Topshop uses Twitter to create online “conversation” with its consumers (Topshop, 2015c). For Dean (2010b), *conversation* has become a buzzword that capitalist institutions utilize to render profound what is in fact an inescapable circulation of minor affects: "Constant communication is an obligation. Every interaction, transaction, inaction, reaction is construed in terms of a conversation” (p. 110). Online access to fashion shows is framed as a continuance of Topshop’s affordable price points and wearable, fashion-forward clothes. For Autumn/Winter 2012, the brand, under Cooke’s vision, implemented the initiative “Shoot the Runway,” in partnership with Facebook, in which

users were invited to “customize the catwalk”: to take screen shots of the live stream and create and share mood boards via a customization tool, hosted on the brand’s Facebook page, that let them alter the colour and combination of the pieces (Diaz, 2013b, p. 8). Mood boards are thematic assortments or collages of images, texts, fabrics or materials used in the creative and retail industries as inspiration for design projects, trend forecasting or marketing plans (see Wyatt, 2017). Indeed, Alexandre de Bétak uses mood boards to conceptualize fashion shows (Anaya, 2013, n.p.). While the results can take either a material or immaterial (or rather digital) form, the composition of a mood board, as the name suggests, hones not just creative thinking but the modulation of one’s affective labour and consideration for spectators’ responses. Consumers thus were invited to act as *prosumers*, as both producers and consumers, on the brand’s behalf. *All* of the collection pieces, including the makeup, could be purchased after the fashion show on Topshop’s e-commerce site (Diaz, 2013b, p. 18). In this case, the prosumers could possess the results of their labour both in the existence of the mood board and in the material form of the clothes or the looks worn on their bodies. Within the context of “art and culture,” likewise enmeshed within a prosumer rhetoric, as Jen Harvie outlines, “patterns of increased audience engagement and participation propose the audience member can likewise be more self-directing and self-actualized, have more autonomy and be the artist-maker who creates the artwork and/or performance to her specifications and designs” (2013, p. 60). The neoliberal ideal that all of us can be artists is intended to build affiliations to combat the “social atomization” endemic to solo, individual creative endeavours as well as to networked interactions (see Harvie, 2013, p. 106). Of course, as Harvie explores, on the flip side of the coin is a dictate that all of us must therefore assume all possible roles in creative production, whether such work is volunteer or no, in the service of democratic, or democratized social participation (2013, pp. 30-44). The

notion of the prosumer as a participant in cultural production, here a member of a brand's creative network, of course raises pressing issues of creative labour under neoliberalism: here the brand relied on the fact that consumers' labour could be both *flexible*, in this instance done on consumers' own time and devices, and outsourced to workers not on a standard contract or paid at all (see Harvie, 2013, pp. 44-50). The mood board component of the social media campaign provokes questions of compensation for and ownership of the content produced, not to mention the occlusion of the material labour that produced the collection pieces in the first place. Topshop claimed that the event "drew 2.1 million viewers from 100 countries" but declined to release other return on investment statistics (Diaz, 2013b, p. 18). Nonetheless, one can reason that the brand benefited in both immaterial and monetary senses from the mood boards, through the circulation of additional creative content – the product of unpaid (or underpaid) labour – and through the retail sales that resulted from the multi-directional but nonetheless isolated consumer interactions with the online content.

For its Autumn/Winter 2013 collection, Topshop partnered with Google on an ambitious, "multiplatform experience" entitled "The Future of the Fashion Show" (Diaz, 2013b, p. 18). *The Business of Fashion* dubbed the event (beforehand) an "unprecedented, all-access entertainment experience" (Kansara, 2013, para. 2). First, Topshop set up a Google+ Hangout, to which fans could win 'virtual access,' so that other users could watch *them* watch the spectacle as it unfolded on their computer screens (I joined the Google+ Hangout but was not visible to others). This contest literalized Graeme Turner's notion of "co-presence" with the unseen online communal spectators of broadcast television and *YouTube* content (2010, p. 94) and rendered these spectators visible, much to what I perceived as their bewilderment and self-consciousness. Spectators were also privy to live, "red carpet" interviews with celebrities and could send

questions on Google+ (Diaz, 2013, p. 18). The live stream feed was broadcast via both the standard cameras and a second inset feed from “model cams” positioned in models’ handbags, providing a model’s perspective of the audience and media pit almost as exact as a Google Glass headset (the model cam feeds often failed, and users tweeted their frustrations). Users were instructed to live tweet their impressions of the collection using the #Topshop hashtag (standard practice) and, once again, to create and share mood boards, as an attempt to produce content that, Cooke proclaimed, could “live beyond the moment” (Kansara, 2013, para. 5). The mood boards thus constituted digital content that the consumers had personalised. The cosmetics were available for online purchase afterwards (though the collection was not) (Kansara, 2013, para. 4). Cooke claimed that the live fashion show stream had racked up 4,059,147 views across all of the available media platforms 24 hours after the live stream, and screen shots from the fashion show had been shared over 200,000 times within the “first five minutes” of the show alone (Mullany, 2013, para. 21). While Topshop continued to collaborate with Facebook, and accordingly titled its Spring/Summer 2015 presentation “the social catwalk,” (Cochrane, 2014, para. 5), there is little archived record of Google+ hangouts or preshows between Autumn/Winter 2013 and Autumn/Winter 2015, a fact that could be attributed to Cooke’s departure from Topshop in 2013.

Topshop Unique, Autumn/Winter 2015 - #livetrends

Topshop’s online London Fashion Week initiatives for Autumn/Winter 2015 consisted of a two-pronged approach: a Twitter hashtag campaign, #livetrends, which ran the duration of London Fashion Week, and a fashion show preshow that was live streamed via the brand website and via screens at certain stores (I describe the latter in detail in the next chapter). While #livetrends did not run in tandem with the fashion show, it capitalized on the information and consumer interest generated via social media during London Fashion Week. The preshow functioned in part as an

advertisement for #livetrends.^{cxxxvii} To implement #livetrends, Topshop collaborated with Twitter, with outdoor advertising firm Ocean Outdoor, and with Stackla, a “social content marketing platform” that purports to “put user-generated content at the heart of brand marketing [to] power authentic, memorable experiences ...” (2016b, para. 1). Stackla’s team aims to “curate and publish the best content from across the web” (2016b, para. 2), producing content derived from existing social media conversations and fan-produced or fan-shared materials. The company’s statement attributes content to the consumers or fans and credits them as persons of influence, much as 1990s advertisers sought out local tastemakers as *cool hunters* (see Klein, 2009), or the cultural industries have relied on reciprocal fan relationships in Jenkins’s (2006) *convergence culture* model. However, to curate consumer-produced social media content is to derive economic and corporate value from consumers’ immaterial labour (as a producer of big data), to the benefit of both the fashion brand Topshop and the social media platform (and brand) Twitter.

The premise behind #livetrends was twofold. First, Topshop (and Stackla) continuously aggregated insiders’ social media observations pertaining to all of the London Fashion Week collections and coalesced the conversation into a series of trends. Topshop’s team “tapped into the conversation among industry editors, stylists, and bloggers, then analysed the data to identify key catwalk and street style trends as they emerged – in real time” (Stackla, 2016a, para. 4). Second, Topshop posted the resultant trends on social media as separate hashtags (Figures 18 and 19).^{cxxxviii} The same trends were also posted to the Topshop website, mobile site and e-commerce platform; to the Topshop Showspace (the fashion show front-of-house space) at the Tate Britain; to the Oxford Circus store; and to six “live, shoppable digital billboards” installed within “10 minutes walking proximity” of Topshop stores in Birmingham, Glasgow, London, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester (Stackla, 2016a, para. 7-8). Customers that tweeted to

@Topshop, with the #livetrends hashtag that had just been posted, received a link to a shoppable album of items, from the brand's current online stock, which adhered to the trend, as well as a "prompt" to head to the nearest Topshop store based on their location (Stackla, 2016a, para. 8).



Figure 18. Sample Topshop #livetrends tweet. The photographs of Pixie Geldof and Cara Delevingne, left and center, were taken at the Topshop Unique fashion show (Topshop, 2015a).



Figure 19. Sample Topshop #livetrends tweet with street style photograph (Topshop, 2015b).

The #livetrends campaign worked on several levels: it generated informative, digestible social media content for consumers; it performed consumers' work of tracking insiders' trend observations and forecasts *for them*, much in the manner of traditional print media trend forecasts; it facilitated consumers' social media interaction with the brand; and it enticed consumers to purchase commodities and made the process 'instant'. #livetrends thus turned Fashion Week reportage and social media conversation into a mass market retail initiative in a manner heretofore unachieved. It communicated exclusive insider information from London Fashion Week to Topshop customers at the same time as it "aimed to satisfy consumer demand for fast fashion" and let consumers keep "ahead of the trend" via the current collection (Stackla, 2016a, para. 5). In essence, Topshop distilled observed runway trends into items that it already had in store and available for purchase *in the present*: not just Topshop Unique pieces (from the current season's collection) but also pieces from the mass-market line. It becomes clear that the brand did not just observe 'real time' trend forecasts but had also planned its own, current lines with those predicted trends in mind, at least one season ahead of so-called 'real time'.

#livetrends permitted the brand to exploit the conversations that occurred on social media via the editors, retailers, and other insiders and tastemakers that attended the fashion shows, often on behalf of press outlets or retailers; these insiders therefore performed, perhaps unwittingly, immaterial labour, or free labour, that Topshop mined for its own retail machinations. Sauvaire, in a promotional video, refers to Twitter's "listening power" (Stackla, 2016a). This can be interpreted as companies' capabilities to eavesdrop on social media conversations and determine the relevant talking points. In the interview conducted during the preshow, she discusses the #livetrends initiative in terms of consumer reach and inclusion:

Topshop's relationship with social media is ... about access. We've always had a mission to democratize the runway and democratize fashion, so social media is a perfect enabler

to do that. Twitter ... is about mining all of the conversation around Fashion Week, [what] the stylists and ... the buyers are talking about ... what they see on the runway, what they see people wearing, taking that data and then creating trends through that conversation. So those trends then become curated product items that our customers can then shop. ... (Topshop, 2015d, n.p.)

Sauvaire's statement reveals, however, that #livetrends consists of "mining" (data mining) and even poaching the content produced around Fashion Week via editors' and live audience members' immaterial labour. Furthermore, like Burberry's #TweetCam campaign, #livetrends instructed consumers to tweet to @Topshop and thus generated brand impressions each time a user did so. Terranova (2004) elucidates that in *network culture*, "cultural processes are ... increasingly grasped and conceived in terms of their informational dynamics" (p. 6). As information as a resource becomes ever more commodified and exploited, "anybody is always potentially an information-source..." on both intellectual and biopolitical levels (Terranova, 2004, p. 5). Her more recent considerations of free labour account for corporations' acquisition of consumer data, including "personal data," as "wealth generated through user interactions" for their profitable use (2013, p. 53).^{cxxxix} In the #livetrends scenario, both consecrated cultural intermediaries and consumers are perceived as information sources *and* content producers. In #TweetCam, Burberry did not care about the content of the users' tweets: instead, users were seen as automatic content producers, in an almost mechanical, repetitive form of computational processing. The informational component of the users' tweets was 'immaterial' to the campaign in a different sense. All parties create and circulate information (turned into data) via the labour of responding to collections presented in front of them (perhaps in an affective manner) or via hashtag conversations and e-commerce purchases. This labour generates a feedback mechanism for the company, which enables it not just to forecast trends, but also to determine which products from the current collection were the most popular, and plan its upcoming releases

accordingly. Topshop's #livetrends campaign was arguably more two-sided than Burberry's #TweetCam, though the brand produced much of the content to which its followers and customers responded, and therefore still imposed a degree of curatorial control. The impressions and data obtained from cultural intermediaries were the result of a specific "cultural labour," in accordance with a network culture model in which "music, fashion, and information are all produced collectively but are selectively compensated" (Terranova, 2004, pp. 83-84). Topshop did not compensate either the cultural intermediaries or the consumers, and the intermediaries only received compensation in their roles as personal brands, or as press or retail representatives.

The mood boards implemented in the previous campaigns can be seen as a precursor to the #livetrends data collection, as Cooke boasted of the data that the consumer-driven creative experimentation generated for the brand: not just information about what items consumers took the most interest in, but what colours consumers preferred (Kansara, 2013, para. 9-10). Parallels can be drawn here between consumers' creative license with the looks and online television fan boards that, as media scholar Mark Andrejevic (2008) explicates, allow television watchers to respond to episodes. In or on these forums, viewers' interactive criticism "*doubles* as a form of labour" that produces both pleasure for users and monetizable information for networks and marketers (Andrejevic, 2008, p. 43, author's emphasis; as cited in Turner, 2010, p. 97). The affective and immaterial labour expended in the creation of the mood boards functions as a reminder that, as Turner observes, "what is notable about user-generated content on social networking sites is the level of affective investment required" (p. 95). Social networking sites, for Turner, present "a highly developed technology of the self which enables a customized, endlessly iterative, performance of individual identity" (2010, p. 95). Consumers in this scenario did not just "customize" their identities but customized the fashion collection in accordance with

and as an expression of these identities. Turner calls on media scholars to consider Terranova's cautions about the realities of immaterial and free labour in relation to the construction and use of social networking sites, "where the development of the product [and in this case of products] is accomplished by its users, freely and for pleasure" (2010, p. 96). To create mood boards on Facebook, consumers acted as stylists and designers in addition to social intermediaries: the brand thus mobilized both consumers' talents and the affective resources of the social network. As Turner outlines, "not only does user-generated content enhance and enrich the site and the brand," in this case Facebook, "it also confirms a user's commitment to this particular site" (p. 96). The collaboration between Facebook and Topshop here reveals the numerous brands to which users might directly or indirectly pledge affiliation and for which users can produce revenue through routine media use and specialized creative or branded opportunities.

Stackla provides a useful overview of #livetrends as one of its case studies. In it, the company asserts that #livetrends was not just a pioneering online initiative but an unqualified retail success: #livetrends delivered an 11:1 ROI (return on investment) ratio, over 3.8 million customers used the #livetrends hashtag, and Topshop documented an "up to 75% sales uplift on featured products online during the campaign" (2016a, para. 10). Moreover, the campaign won two 2015 CLIO Image Awards in the Out of Home and Integrated Campaign categories and the award for Digital Marketing Campaign of the Year at the 2015 B&T Retail Week Tech & eComm Awards (Stackla, 2016a, para. 11). In terms of the campaign's relation to the Topshop Unique fashion show, the rhetoric used in Stackla's report focuses on the tension between London Fashion Week as a "prestigious, closed-door event" and Topshop's status as the "only high street brand to show at London Fashion Week," a fact repeated during the preshow broadcast, as I will describe in the next chapter. While presence at London Fashion Week

elevates Topshop's esteem, Topshop's capacity to operate between the exclusive and the mass market renders it "uniquely positioned to democratize fashion by inviting customers to access the insider's view and make Fashion Week relevant, accessible, and fun for consumers across the UK" (2016a, para. 2). Topshop's placement on the official calendar places it among the luxury fashion houses, but it can use this 'insider' position to deliver fashion content to its mass market audience, thereby maintaining public perception of the brand as 'accessible' – a label that it cannot afford to lose, even as it ventures into the ready-to-wear market. The brand still does not open the Topshop Unique fashion show to the public, though of all the companies on the London Fashion Week calendar it perhaps has the most operating capital to do so. Instead, Topshop upholds a distinction between *insider* and *customer* and promises consumers increased social media participation in a live event (or series of live events) that remains physically closed off.

CONCLUSION

Fashion companies' digital and social media initiatives, concurrent with fashion shows, and even entire Fashion Week circuits, demonstrate how the live stream's, and even social media's, supposed interactive nature relies on and appropriates spectators' immaterial labour on behalf of brands. Despite the online spectator's 'real time' access to fashion shows, production and technical elements, both in the literal performance space and in the function of the social media platform, combine to reinforce our sense of exclusion from the actual event, either through a privileging of the live performance that distances those not physically present, or in moments of failure. While fashion companies assert that the experience of online fashion show interaction increases consumer access, such experiences *require* consumers to participate actively in the presentation in order to feel a sense of inclusion. Unlike the members of the field of fashion in

the performance space, however, online spectators' immaterial labour remains uncompensated, and any pleasure we derive from interaction remains entrapped under capitalist logics.

A comparison of two companies that situate themselves in different markets – even as one attempts to infiltrate the luxury market via a more premium collection – reveals that social media campaigns are framed both in terms of consumer access and interaction, even as the ethos behind granting this access is different. While Burberry claims to deliver content (both fashion shows and the clothes presented) to its consumers, that transmission adheres to a luxury business model in which the wealthiest, elite consumers can afford to purchase the actual items *first*, and the most profitable companies can afford to produce the slickest campaigns and manufacture the pieces on a collapsed production calendar. Moreover, its #TweetCam campaign produces identical, poor-quality photographs that pale in comparison to its vibrant promotional materials. Topshop's #livetrends campaign flattens fashion's temporal cycle even further, collecting trend forecasts six months ahead from the literal risers of London Fashion Week and feeding consumers items from the current mass market collection, no doubt planned earlier with similar forecasts in mind. In this manner, #livetrends also delivers luxury fashion content to its mass market consumer base, much as Topshop's clothes are derived from ready-to-wear trends. In this scenario, however, direct communication and e-commerce facilitation are done under an ethos of democratization and a hail to consumers to participate in a conversation, even if that conversation consists of responsive tweets and online purchases. While such experiential initiatives are promoted in terms of inclusion, the companies' ultimate goal is to facilitate the purchase of commodities, via the creation of consumer desire and the facilitation of experiential, slick e-commerce mechanisms. Online spectators' performance of immaterial labour arises from our desire for this same inclusion, in fashion shows and in *fashion*. This labour, in turn, generates

the impressions that solidify the brand's position in the consumer consciousness, forming a digital feedback component to the production and consumption cycle, centered on a live performance. In the following chapter, I examine consumers' and presenters' affective responses and affective labour as produced (or absent) in the preshow to the Autumn/Winter 2015 Topshop Unique live stream. This chapter demonstrates the manner in which fashion shows' social media interaction becomes predicated not just on computational processes and transactions but on brands' insistence that consumers should *feel* a sense of presence inside the spectacle.

Chapter 6: Manufactured Affect in the Fashion Show Preshow

In this chapter, I examine online spectators' mediated and networked interactions with the Topshop Unique Autumn/Winter 2015 fashion show, held on February 22, 2015, at the Tate Britain art museum and live streamed on Topshop's website and in select stores. The actual runway show featured beautiful, opulent seasonal clothes; models were filmed with the standard foot to head tracking shots in a seamless manner; and the audience was treated to an accompaniment of familiar rock music (more current but still atmospheric music is dubbed over the archived video). That presentation, however, is not the focus of the discussion here. Instead, I perform close analysis of the 'live' preshow that Topshop also streamed, under the premise of offering consumers an all-access pass to areas of the venue and backstage preparations normally unseen and off-limits to all but select insiders, as well as the standard interviews with celebrities prior to the show. This preshow, now archived on Topshop's *YouTube* channel, runs at 25 minutes and 25 seconds, and is hosted by British television presenter Laura Jackson (Topshop, 2015c). I examine this presentation through theories of affect – in terms of its transmission within performance spaces and circulation in digital spaces – and of affective labour on the part of the individuals featured. I articulate how the live stream preshow (also, of course, a live stream) tries and fails to manufacture consumer affect, in response to the performance, manifested in textual utterances and other media interactions that indicate engagement, due to media limitations and to the structure of the fashion show as an industry event. This overall failure, or repeated incidences of smaller failures, demonstrates that companies are unable to transmit the particular affect of a live performance space to an online audience, at least not within current media capabilities. The fact that this broadcast falls short in its aim to instill a positive online spectator reaction (or a reaction at all) reveals that the social function of the

fashion show's mediation lies in the *attempt* to produce such an effect, or an affect. Companies must necessarily privilege the live performance in order to sustain consumer interest and to enhance the brand's aura in the consumer market, via the fashion show's own exclusivity. The affect the online spectator does instead feel, if at all, is the *networked affect* characteristic of *communicative capitalism* (Dean, 2010a, 2010b) – a desire for response that is here translated into not just the desire for commodities and their fulfillment but the desire for literal inclusion.

I commence the discussion of the Topshop Unique Autumn/Winter 2015 live stream preshow by framing the structure and intention of the preshow as a communicative format, and contextualizing the preshow within broadcast fashion television as a predecessor medium. I then describe the particular process of affect production and transmission that the broadcast tries to undertake. For the bulk of the chapter, I offer a detailed, moment-by-moment account of the preshow content and the interviews conducted, emphasizing the numerous instances in which the broadcast calls online spectators' attention to the atmosphere of the space, tries to invoke a measure of excitement, or produces an unintentional or counter-reactions. I examine the presenters' labour in the mediation of affect in the literal environment and in the communication of that environment to the spectator, observing that these performances, and their failures, recall the pitfalls and thrills of broadcast fashion television's unpredictable form of reportage. Furthermore, I offer a brief description of additional promotional video clips that Topshop created of filmed scenes from the Autumn/Winter 2015 presentation to illustrate the differences in reception between the unscripted preshow and more polished scenes edited and mediated after the fact. Finally, I observe the lack of affect circulated in social media reactions to the fashion show preshow and live stream, but note other forms of networked interaction.

(Re)Mediation as Increased Brand Access

The Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow repeatedly mentions the brand's use of social media and e-commerce as tools to render Topshop accessible to consumers, a feat also accomplished that season via the #livetrends initiative. It moreover promotes the live stream and the live preshow (repeated emphasis on the *live*) as another democratic mode of communication, insofar as consumers are supposedly able to see all of the different aspects of the fashion show's production. As described in the previous chapter, Topshop is considered to be, and advertises itself as, an accessible brand, as its mass market, high fashion-inspired collection is affordable in comparison to the price points of ready-to-wear fashion lines; its social media use functions as an extension of this brand persona. The performance that is live streamed is not the *actual* fashion show, with its revelation of that season's collection pieces, the accompaniment of bass-laden music and brief shots of celebrities, but rather the preparations and social interactions that occur prior to the actual fashion show, which are billed as exciting in their own right, since these machinations constitute a part of the presentation that the consumer is not often permitted to see. The preshow offers us a glimpse behind the literal and proverbial curtains – a revelation of the coordination of the fashion show as performance. The preshow, like the #livetrends initiative, offers a value-added experience that is intended to turn the entire production into a total, interactive, 'all-access' affair. Nonetheless, it is clear, not just in the obvious term "preshow" but in the content of the discussion, that the broadcast is intended to attract more online spectators to the fashion show live stream and to build our anticipation for the collection of clothes and cosmetics that will soon be available for purchase. Jackson, our host, even offers a running countdown, an effort that becomes comical since online spectators understand that the fashion show by definition will not start when promised. Topshop's brand representatives have declared

to the press the importance of the transmission of affect to consumer audiences. In 2013, then chief marketing officer Justin Cooke told *The Guardian* that the purpose of digitally mediated fashion show experiences was to “connect with the emotional side of the show” (as cited in Rickey, 2013, n.p.).^{cxl} This connection should translate into brand interaction and retail sales, as Atwal and Williams, in their case for *experiential marketing*, contend that, “customers are not rational decision-makers, but are rather driven by rationality and *emotion*” (2009, p. 345, my emphasis). In addition, the format of the preshow appeals to and even provokes consumers’ desire for social membership in fashion.

Considering Goffman’s concept of social performance, the preshow demystifies for the consumer the social *back regions* or *backstage* areas of the fashion show (1973, p. 69), revealing the processes behind the collection’s conceptualization and presentation. The first mannequin parades, held in the *front regions* of couture houses, maintained the social status of the fashion house through a constructed (or literal) divide between spaces of presentation and spaces of production and labour (Evans, 2013, p. 148). Topshop Unique’s preshow setup is an intentional “ritual contamination” of this standard that exposes an inherent concern in the “maintenance of social distance” versus social (or literal) access (Goffman, 1973, p. 45). Discussing performer competence in the art of artifice, Goffman observes that spectators’ distance from certain realities can create moments of “awe” or fascination (1973, pp. 45-46). This increased level of consumer access to and comprehension of the mechanics of the fashion show threatens to diminish the spectacular thrill of the performance as such. Nonetheless, the preshow can be located within a trend of cinema depictions of the creative processes that underpin the fashion industry, in the realms of design and journalism in particular (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 86; see also Rees-Roberts, 2015).^{cxli} In the preshow scenario, the *back region* of the fashion show, inside

the Tate Britain museum, is transformed into the *front region* of brand communication to the online audience, while the *front region* of the Tate Britain museum (the entrance) and the audience risers in the atrium become additional performance spaces in which the attendees interact under the camera's surveillance. The broadcast further capitalizes on what the associate whom I interviewed – who was not involved in the Topshop Unique show but has extensive experience at London Fashion Week – describes as a pervasive press interest in all aspects of the backstage preparations, to such an extent that this to-do has become a new performance to be documented via the camera lens – a *preshow*, as it were, tailored to social media (2017, n.p.). Under the endless need for media representations, the backstage is the last outpost of untouched content to be accessed, photographed and circulated, as well as the area in which the consumer can see the 'drama' so familiar from television:

Social media has now done a preshow, and now that preshow has become the new way to dramatize the show, because seeing a girl take her makeup off is not nearly as exciting as seeing her put her makeup on. There's no post-show to a fashion show. And now the preshow has become the new 'hype hype hype,' and then you get people to watch the show, because they want to see all those [scenarios]. (Associate, 2017, n.p.)

This broadcast form of the established 'social media preshow' for brands and the press doubled too as a chance not only to offer consumers a first look at the models' looks but also to sell the actual cosmetics that Topshop had concocted for that season and was using on the models – cosmetics that consumers would be able to purchase online after the show. Indeed, Jackson and head makeup artist Hannah Murray make a point of promoting the cheek and lip gel that offers the models their wind-burned cheeks and the online spectator sees the product applied on the cheeks of a youthful, ivory-skinned model. For this presentation, therefore, Topshop attempted to create its own dramatization of the backstage action, unedited and in 'real time,' but fused the audience's expectations of a televised broadcast with the more current dictates of social media

access. However, the preshow was unable to manifest the apparent behind-the-scenes ‘drama’ of the fashion show from thin air.

The preshow should be considered an evolution of Topshop’s previous forays into live streaming the enactments that occur *prior* to the presentation, which commenced with Autumn/Winter 2013’s elaborate Google+ hangout entitled “The Future of the Fashion Show,” held in an industrial, futuristic hall at the Tate Modern, as mentioned in the previous chapter. In a 2013 interview, Google+ European head of marketing Cristian Cussen outlines how the team formulated an experiential *narrative* around the hangout to enhance consumer interaction and increase anticipation (Mullany, 2013, para. 4). This elaborate endeavour consisted of teaser videos (“stories” of featured models) posted to Topshop’s website the week prior to the fashion show; 3D Google maps of the presentation space; in-store booths that let customers create and share animated GIFs of themselves in Topshop clothes; and “behind-the-scenes videos” of preparations in the space posted as early as 48 hours in advance (Mullany, 2013, para. 11).^{cxlii} That the planned narrative far exceeded the parameters of the preshow event illuminates the manner in which all of the possible affective components of these streams are calculated, planned and mediated in advance, in the service of a live presentation. A handful of consumers were preselected via an online contest to be visible to others during the Google+ hangout, seated in front of their personal computer screens: the interface thus consisted of multiple feeds – both the contest winners’ feeds and the more prominent live stream preshow feed. The hangout was hosted by famous Italian fashion blogger Chiara Ferragni, who conducted interviews in a designated area that remediated the red carpet outside award ceremonies. Topshop’s directors were on hand to discuss the inspiration behind the new season’s collection. Featured celebrities included then Topshop brand ambassador, actress Kate Bosworth; British socialite, model and

musician Pixie Geldof; and select members (at the time) of the British boy band One Direction (Google, 2013, para. 5). In a media-saturated culture, celebrities offer what P. David Marshall describes as “a kind of guarantee of economic value” (2006, p. 642), and their appearances in front rows are a sound investment for both high fashion and more mainstream brands. The One Direction members’ appearance was a coup for the brand as these men are UK press and tabloid fodder, and their appearance provoked much (affective) expression of adoration on social media. Marshall observes that new media has instilled a sense of more proximal and even personal connections to celebrities, some of whom operate their own social media accounts (2006, p. 640).^{cxliii} The idea of the Google+ “hangout” perpetuates the supposed casualness and familiarity of our interactions, and while the red carpet interviews remediated televised awards ceremonies, we could nonetheless watch them on various devices and with our ‘fellow users’ in smaller frames as if on a video conference call. Once the celebrities were inside the space, the audience had an even closer and unplanned view, as the show was late to start and a camera panned around the space ad nauseum while the celebrities sat waiting with what appeared to be discomfort at their continued visibility. Ferragni also interviewed cultural intermediaries, such as British fashion magazine editors and bloggers (like herself) (Google, 2013, para. 5), whose faces were not as familiar to spectators but who could offer informed commentaries. The Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow sees host Laura Jackson and her camera crew move within the venue spaces and conduct interviews in the midst of the crowds, in the lobby and the center of the performance hall itself. Edited promotional clips released afterwards reveal that the museum entrance still had a designated “red carpet” section for press interactions with celebrities, but this area remains unseen in the preshow stream.

The more immediate (though, as I will describe, more awkward), backstage and in-crowd interviews that our host conducts (which become more awkward due to the presence of the crowd) render the preshow a remediation of televised broadcast fashion programs such as *FashionTelevision* and *Fashion File*, documented in Chapter Four. The main difference between these media formats, of course, is that the interviews seen in broadcast fashion television were edited and aired in the weeks after the fashion show had ended. Hosts such as Jeanne Beker and Tim Blanks stood in the middle of crowded performance spaces prior to and after fashion shows to offer an insider's view of the action and to obtain the most articulate and descriptive soundbytes from the fashion editors and celebrities in the audience. Fulsang (2004) claims that their proffering of backstage access for the viewer "eroded the mystique of fashion" (p. 325). Hosts also had to line up beside other reporters to obtain interviews with designers or fashion house representatives. Beker occasionally chose to include these filmed exertions of affective labour to convey the frenzied, competitive and sometimes exclusionary enactments of the field of fashion. While broadcast fashion television functioned as entertainment, their focus remained on informational content and on articulate, educated reflections on designers' oeuvres and collection aesthetics. Though the Topshop Unique preshow promises the same measure of access, indeed even *more*, the presentation, as a form of brand communication, prioritizes commercial content; however, the content frequently becomes more journalistic as a result of the dictates and traditions of earlier, connected media formats, to the detriment of processes of desire production.

Affect In and Out of Performance Spaces

In the case of fashion show live streams and concurrent social media initiatives, one witnesses fashion companies' endeavours to translate the affect felt in the performance space for online audiences in order to render the performance immediate, with repeated descriptions of the

atmosphere of the production spaces, repeated uses of the word *atmosphere* to refer to fashion shows, and repeated directives from the host to the attendees to describe said atmosphere for the online spectator. It becomes evident that the brand must *produce* a measure of affect, centered on the performance (and in this case the performance to come), for the social media environment, in order to instill user reactions. In the same manner, however, the affect present at the fashion show reinforces the performance's exclusive nature, insofar as the online spectator cannot truly experience it. I am calling the affect that surrounds the mediation of the fashion show a *manufactured affect* because of its calculated production and its constructed-ness, and because, like Massumi's preconscious, performative affect, this sort of affect is channeled in the service of consumer culture (Lury, 2004; Wickstrom, 2006). Unlike theatrical productions or other forms of performance that intend to create an affective reaction in audiences via fictional narratives or other profound representations or technical effects, this preshow attempts to communicate the atmosphere of a real-life, real-time event for a virtual audience, through the mechanisms of the online media interface. As outlined in the Introduction, Brennan's *transmission of affect* describes a direct, incremental phenomenon that occurs between individuals that are co-present within a space: affects pass into and out of our bodies due to "interaction with other people in an environment" (2004, p. 3). The "atmosphere in the room," so intense as to be "felt," results from "social, psychological" factors at work and their influence on one's "physiological" state (Brennan, 2004, p. 1). In the fashion show environment, the pleasurable stimuli are matched in attendees' awareness of being co-present in an exclusive milieu. Nonetheless, the affective vibrations of a performance space, transmitted to and between audience members, reside and remain in that space. In a similar manner, the mimetic potentialities of affect that Wickstrom (2006) identifies in the *brandscape* function most palpably in actual retail environments, in

which consumers are immersed in brand representations, material commodities and other sensory stimuli. It is important to stress that mediated photographs or other forms of content transmitted via digital platforms can still produce an affective or emotional reaction in receivers (see Moore, 2012; Ticineto Clough, 2012). However, rather than transmit affect *from* the performance space (or spaces) *to* the online spectator via virtual communication forms, Topshop Unique's preshow broadcast illuminates the difference between the more automatic, immediate affect that the live audience can feel and a separate form that companies attempt to replicate or disseminate – it is this form that I call *manufactured affect*.

TOPSHOP UNIQUE AUTUMN/WINTER 2015 LIVE STREAM PRESHOW

At the start of the Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow, host Laura Jackson stands outside the Tate Britain art museum. She sports a maroon, red and white striped Topshop Unique tennis sweater from the previous season, and holds a microphone with a handle that reads “TOPSHOP LIVE.” She addresses the camera to set the scene:

Hello and welcome. We are coming *live* from the heart of London Fashion Week, and in just half an hour, the Topshop Unique catwalk show will be taking place in here, the Duveens Gallery [Duveen Galleries] in the iconic Tate Britain. Now, not only are we live streaming the *actual* catwalk show, but I'm going to be going backstage to give you *unprecedented* backstage access. I'm going to be talking to the models, designers, editors, stylists, and of course, the A-listers as they make their way to the front-row seats. Alexa Chung is *literally* around the corner. Kendall Jenner is in a cab. And Cara Delevingne has flown in all the way from Japan. You do *not* want to miss this.

Jackson's use of the adjective “unprecedented” echoes the press's description of the brand's first Autumn/Winter 2013 Google+ initiative as an “unprecedented, all-access entertainment experience” (Kansara, 2013, para. 2): suggesting that Topshop borrowed the term from the press, or perhaps that the press had quoted a press release from the brand. In either case, this preshow claims to offer a higher level of access than its predecessors, even if it becomes clear that the online spectator has seen these same environments before, either in previous initiatives or in

other media representations of fashion shows. As if to remind us of this fact, the introduction is followed by an almost two-minute, highly edited montage of front space and backstage scenes from *last* season's fashion show, inserted to remind us how fabulous these fashion shows (and all-access preshows) *are*, and to build our anticipation for the spectacle to come. The footage includes slow-motion, close-up and often blurred shots: workers mopping the runway and placing press packages on audience seats; production lights turned on; the entrance at the top of the runway that anticipates the models; make-up and hair artists working on models backstage; clothes on hangers next to photographs of each look; models throwing impromptu dance parties and making excited faces at the camera; the arrival of Anna Wintour and other celebrities (and resultant camera flashes); and models such as Delevingne, Donaldson and Dunn stomping down the runway past the front row as attendees applaud and hold up their phone cameras. The footage is set to fast-paced, jangly pop-rock guitar and overdubbed with soundbytes from that season's interviews: Topshop representatives promoting the collection and the brand and celebrities commenting on the scale of the space and noting what a hot ticket the event has become. None of the soundbytes in this clip are taken from fashion editors or other members of the press. As Delevingne is shown exiting via the same runway entrance in the show's final look, creative director Kate Phelan declares, "Every season, it feels like it gets better and better": of course, the online spectator is about to discover just how much.^{cxliv} While, in the context of the entire social media initiative, this montage contributes to a total narrative arc – placing the scheduled live stream in context with last season's fabulous spectacle – its presence interrupts the 'flow' of the feed and the liveness of the unscripted broadcast, pulling the online spectator 'out' of the experience. Simultaneously, the brief cuts and different shots contained in the clip can be said to create what Patricia Ticineto Clough (2012) terms an *affective modulation*, that undermines

narrativization or identification but instead harnesses affect in the service of aesthetics and preferential relations to commodities.^{cxlv} The montage is also inserted to fill the time needed for Jackson, and her camera crew, to travel from one location to the next.

With the promise of an even “better” show, the feed cuts live to Jackson, in the backstage area, who informs the audience that if they need “a fashion fix after that, and I know I do,” the clothes from that season’s collection are now available in stores and online – in essence, we have also just watched a slick commercial. Jackson notes that the countdown is now at twenty minutes “until we go *live* to the show” – as if this state of liveness is not sufficient. In the meantime, Jackson’s “unprecedented backstage access” consists of interviews with Topshop’s creative and casting directors and members of the hair and make-up teams: Phelan, casting director Rosie Vogels, head make-up artist Hannah Murray and head hairstylist Anthony Turner. One concludes that these interviews are pre-arranged, as Jackson is able to locate each interviewee with ease, and as the comments contain related, often identical buzzwords. While this pre-planning creates a polished broadcast (at least in this section), the seamlessness of the host’s movements reminds the online spectator that this production is formulaic, as is the production of fashion shows themselves and the media representations thereof. The interviews take place before the final moments of preparation, and the dressing area appears noticeably quiet compared to the depictions in the earlier, edited footage from last season. Backstage areas just prior to and during a fashion show are often crowded and harried, as dressers have brief windows of time to put the clothes onto the models. A full twenty minutes beforehand, however, most models are still seated in the hair and make-up chairs. Phelan, the first interviewee, refers to the scene as “the calm before the storm,” hinting at action and excitement that for the moment must be deferred (and, in fact, the online spectator never does see the actual hectic scene when the models are dressed). In

each interview, Jackson reminds the brand personnel (and the viewers) that she cannot reveal too much about the collection, but asks them to hint at the makeup, hair and clothing looks that will soon be revealed. Jackson also *repeatedly* makes a point of telling each interviewee that he or she looks “very busy” even if this does not appear to be the case. The online spectator is forced to perform the mental labour of imagining the sort of frenzy that Jackson seeks to invoke or recalling other media representations of frantic backstage scenes of fashion shows from fashion television or reality television.

Jackson leads the viewer down a hallway and into the makeup room, providing, as filler, a history of the Topshop Unique line, which “went online” in 2005, “the first high street brand to have ever done so.” The associate that I interviewed comments that one of the main shifts that he has noticed in the on-site experience of the fashion show in a mediatized era is that the backstage environment has been made “prettier” (2017, n.p.): like the runway performance, the backstage spaces are now spruced up with the impending circulation of photographs in mind. Topshop has the benefit of working in the Tate Britain, and the hair and make-up stations are installed in spacious, wood-floored rooms that appear to be studios or galleries, lending a cool, artistic flair to the proceedings. Freestanding lights are visible on the peripheries of the space, I assume for the benefit of the broadcast. While the associate reveals that brands have paid more attention in recent seasons to the appearances of the backstage workers, requesting that workers adopt a uniform aesthetic or an actual uniform (2017, n.p.), the hair and makeup teams here do not wear a uniform, but do wear muted colours. Upon entering the room, where make-up artists tend to the models with extreme focus, Jackson expresses surprise at the calm: “Oh! It’s quite quiet in here! I like it, very tranquil.” Here, she invokes a sense of atmosphere, even if that atmosphere is not the one that she wishes she could communicate, or that she believes will create an effective

preshow. When she locates Hannah Murray, she repeats her observation that the room is “quite calm,” to which Murray replies, matter-of-factly, “It is at the moment. It’s about to get quite hectic.” During the brief interview, after Murray calls out the cosmetic products used on the models, Jackson then turns to the model seated in the chair (Jessica Burley, not credited) and asks her to describe “the atmosphere backstage.” Burley smiles sweetly and replies, “It’s really relaxed at the moment.” Upon using the word “relaxed,” she hesitates, uncertain that she has given the correct response. She hastens to add, “But, we’ll see later. Yeah, it’s a nice, calm atmosphere.” Leaving the space, Jackson reiterates, “I really like how calm it is in here. It’s really lovely.” Entering the hair studio, Jackson notes that the space is, in contrast, “a little bit more hectic” due to the buzzing of hairdryers. Greeting Anthony Turner, Jackson restates her observation: “It’s very loud, isn’t it!” He responds. “Hairdryers. Lots of hairdryers. Lots of things going on.” While the room does seem more crowded, the audience hears little of the noise, as the sound equipment is sophisticated enough to cancel it out, and there is no need for the presenters to raise their voices. At the interview’s close, Jackson *again* comments that she should let Turner “get on” because “it’s very busy.” It is only here, at the end of the backstage portion of the stream, that one starts to feel that this perhaps could be the case.

The actual fact of the mediatized fashion show, as the associate I interviewed explicates, is that the *real* preshow happens in the fifteen minutes before the models step out onto the runway. It is then that the press photographers descend on whatever small or cavernous backstage space exists and attempt to generate mediatized content – the “second capturing”:

45 to the hour is all the 15-minute preshow when everyone tries to get their interviews in, and then the show starts on the hour, and five minutes before everyone runs to get their seats, the show goes for 15-20 minutes, and then almost immediately the photographers run to their local hotspots and they upload their photos, and then an hour later, the photos are online. (Associate, 2017, n.p.)

Recalling Suzy Menkes's (2013) infamous characterization of Fashion Month's outdoor scenes as a "circus," the associate likens the backstage scene of show preparations and photo-taking to "a madhouse ... a hen house with headless chickens running around. Everyone's running around, the sky is falling, the show is starting, but there's an organized chaos to it" (2017, n.p.). The press aims to capture all of the makeup and hair looks on the models, the licensed accessories, and the collection ensembles, while the brand's numerous PR teams also post media content – from photographs to Vine clips – of preselected looks. So chaotic is the entrance of the press that the staff announce the moment at which the members are about to be admitted:

I [worked at] a Dolce & Gabbana show and the [staff] said, "OK everyone, gird your loins!" which was a reference to *The Devil Wears Prada*. But they opened up the doors and just a *flood* of media go through. They have 450 exclusive backstage passes for press. [There are] people photographing everything you're doing: I'm tying a button or I'm tying a shoelace or I'm fixing someone's eyebrow or getting makeup redone ... and there are people always there photographing, documenting everything. (Associate, 2017, n.p.)

The moment before which the *real* press are about to descend into the Tate Britain's cavernous studio environs – the 'calm before the storm'— is the exact moment at which Jackson and her production team *exit* that area – a maneuver that was no doubt planned so that she could have full access to 'exclusive' *pre*-preshow interviews with the creative, hair and makeup teams without all of the other press photographers present. While Jackson's one-on-one interviews are in this respect exclusive, the spectator never sees the actual backstage madness that is hinted at.

Jackson then introduces *another* teaser clip: preset filler that permits her to walk from the backstage area to the front entrance. The teaser consists of the almost identical footage, from last season, that was shown earlier in the broadcast, set to similar music, this time interspersed with textual reminders that the broadcast is "LIVE FROM THE TATE BRITAIN" and invitations to "GO BEHIND THE SCENES ... WITH THE MODELS ... THE HAIR AND MAKEUP ... THE FRONT ROW." The spectator has so far witnessed all but the last of these advertised

elements; indeed, most of this clip is a teaser for preshow content we have just witnessed, and therefore reads as incorrectly placed in the narration. The teaser does, however, function as a promotional advertisement for the concurrent #livetrends initiative.

When the live broadcast resumes, Jackson stands in the middle of the museum's front lobby, rebranded as the Topshop Café. This section is much more crowded, and Jackson wastes no time in declaring the atmosphere "very busy, everyone's arriving." For the first time, this statement is accurate. Jackson interviews British television actress Emilia Fox, star of the crime drama *Silent Witness*, who is clothed "head-to-toe in Topshop" and professes to wear Topshop clothes both at home and on *Silent Witness* because "there is something vibrant about the brand." Jackson asks Fox to "describe the atmosphere" of the front row, "when you sat there before the show starts." Fox responds: "It's a buzz, and it's fun, watching what everyone's wearing. That's the point, isn't it...". At this moment, she gestures to the crowd. While Fox describes this experience in affective terms, as a "buzz," it is not possible for her to instill the same sensation in the online audience, both because the host and actress are not in that space, and because such a sensation cannot be transmitted. Further, the moment of anticipation *before* the show starts is foregrounded rather than the runway parade itself, and the noticeable clothes Fox refers to are the attendees', not the models'. The fact that Jackson is conducting the interview in a space other than the red carpet area (which the online spectator does not see, nor do we know that it exists) does make our sense of access more immediate. Nonetheless, the conversation follows the format of a red carpet interview, and as such it seems to drag on; while intimate, it lacks the sense of glamour and camera flashes, or pomp and circumstance, associated with a traditional press area. Jackson seeks out another interviewee, updating us as she does so that the front-of-house area is "still really busy, everybody's taking their seats." She finds fashion blogger and

fellow television presenter Angela Scanlon, and asks her to spill details on some of the other London Fashion Week events. Scanlon's account seems intended to contextualize the Topshop Unique show within London Fashion Week – both within the market echelon of the brands that present there and within the overall 'atmosphere'. Scanlon recalls that (shoe designer) Sophia Webster's show featured "a lot of death-defying moves from the models up on a kind of stilt situation. [It was] a little nerve wracking at times..." Her comment recalls Erin Hurley's description of audience members' nervous reactions to Cirque du Soleil performers' feats as a means to characterize affect in theatrical performance (2010, pp. 11-13). Scanlon observes that, despite the persistent British rain, the denizens of Fashion Week have remained in high spirits, "even though inside we're weeping." This comment not only refers to attendees' affective states and a dramatic level of (suppressed) emotion but further calls out fashion shows as the antidote to the gloomy weather outside. Topshop, Scanlon enthuses, is one of her "favourite" shows of London Fashion Week because "the setting is so big, the food is amazing ... and we can buy it all, immediately. It's not unaffordable, but it's still slick as shit." Scanlon mouths this last word, grins cheekily and performs an exaggerated shrug, demonstrating mild embarrassment but also amusement at her crassness. This is one of the few moments in which an expression of unscripted affect comes forth. As Jackson locates her next interviewee, she passes the café bar and comments, "The food is making me feel really hungry." Jackson wants to make the online spectator feel as if we are present to smell the food, but she can only communicate these aromas via a verbal description of her own embodied reaction.

Jackson's interview with Sheena Sauvaire, director of global marketing and communications, functions as an information piece on the #livetrends initiative and the NewGen program rather than as a lead-in to the main event. While Sauvaire's answers are polished and

comprehensive, the interview does little to build the ‘buzz’ that the attendees had alluded to earlier. The more elevated, marketing-based subject matter starts to detract from the ‘real’ excitement happening in behind, as attendees in fabulous winter coats push past, pose for press cameras, take selfies, flash invitations and sip champagne. The *last* edited clip, inserted after this interview, is a montage of runway footage from NewGen alumni: while not relevant to the fashion show that is about to happen, it reorients the online spectator towards the idea *of* a fashion show and puts us in the mood to see clothes. Text on the screen tells us that we can watch the full shows of each of these collections on Topshop’s website.

In the final section, Jackson talks to us from the main fashion show hall, in the Tate Britain’s Duveens Galleries. As celebrities take their front-row seats, the online audience at last witnesses the frenzied pre-show atmosphere that we have come to expect from the teasers offered during this broadcast and from similar media representations: complete with camera flashes, crowds of attendees and production team members pushing past our host, and occasional overhead shots that illustrate the number of attendees present. Still, numerous unscripted hiccups point to the effort required in order to *transmit* this excitement online. Jackson announces that she is seeking out front row attendees. As she moves through the crowd, she looks over her shoulder at the camera to confide to the spectator, once again, that it is “very busy in here.” This time, however, she seems genuinely concerned that she could bump into other bodies, and as she spots a pair of British musical celebrities, Pixie Lott and Jessie Ware, a production team member ushers random attendees from her path and out of the frame. Both celebrities wear Topshop, while Lott’s sweater is almost identical to Jackson’s, a fact commented on with amusement. Jackson prompts Lott to articulate why the Topshop Unique show is so “different from the other shows at London Fashion Week.” Lott responds that “everyone is excited to come to this show

... they have the best models, the best crowd, it's good to see friends, and it's always really fun, so I think it's going to be wicked." At the close of the interview, Jackson again comments, "It's very busy, isn't it," as the camera pans out to the now crowded hall, with boom microphones and cameras on cranes overhead – the online spectator has the sense that Jackson is almost disoriented. Jackson finds Paloma Faith, who expresses her nervousness at doing press interviews, exclaiming that, as another reporter approached her, she realized, "I'm going live!" Jackson, responds, "But this is live at Topshop! It's far more important!" Faith waves to the camera, quickly: she is the only interviewee to address the audience at all.

At last, Jackson spies from across the room two of the three celebrities that she promised us access to from the start: media and fashion icon Alexa Chung and model-of-the-moment and celestoid Kendall Jenner (one of the few Topshop-connected celebrities from the United States), both of whom are seated on a front row bench. Jackson worms her way through the crowd, as a wide-angle camera shot reveals that the space has become even more flush with people; camera flashes can be seen aimed at the front row, where the A-listers have taken their seats. Jackson greets Chung with overt enthusiasm and announces that she is going to sit on the bench, in between the celebrities. In this moment, the online spectator does feel an extreme sense of immediacy to the front row, as the quarters are intimate and crowded, and camera flashes bombard the women. Nonetheless, the camera is positioned a tad *too close* to the action, to the effect that online spectators feel discomfort at our keen awareness of the cramped positions of the bodies on screen. What is manifested is not the thrill of immediacy but several moments of awkwardness that compromise the presentation's polish. As more people enter or walk past the scene, the cameraman is forced to move the camera forward and back, and technical apparatuses are visible behind the women. Jackson starts a repartee with Chung, who also wears a dress from

the current Topshop Unique collection. Pixie Geldof approaches from outside the frame and asks to sit between the pair. As Jackson moves over to include Geldof, she bumps Kendall Jenner's arm and apologizes profusely. Jackson soldiers forward to interview Chung and asks her to comment on New York Fashion Week, which she has just attended. Chung's articulate answer is interrupted by quips from Geldof, in the middle, who chuckles at the awkwardness of the situation and leans back to chat with Jenner and other attendees in the row behind her. Jokes are made about the fact that Geldof prefers, rather than wear Topshop clothes, not to wear clothes at all. Jackson then turns to Jenner and informs her that their interview is streaming "live at *Topshop.com*"; her TOPSHOP LIVE microphone is front and center in the frame. Jackson inquires about an upcoming collection that Jenner is producing "exclusively" for Topshop. Jenner hesitates, looking for a moment at an unidentified woman behind her, but delivers a polished response: "I'm *very* excited." The conversation is halted by an inaudible interruption from the woman, who appears to be Jenner's publicist or assistant. For a reason that is never revealed, Jackson is forbidden from continuing with the talking point. There arises here another awkward moment in which the host is positioned as an interloper and forced to reassure the woman, "Oh, I'm so sorry! We're from Topshop!" The affect the online audience feels upon subsequent viewings is an empathetic cringe at the host's embarrassment, which she of course tries to mask: the camera is positioned so close to her, and to the celebrities, that one feels this wince on an almost intimate level, as if this happened to someone we trust. Still, the moment happens so fast that it would be difficult for the 'live' online spectator to even tell what has happened. Jackson appears to get a signal from someone off camera, so she hastily thanks Jenner and stands up. Chung asks her to confirm that the broadcast is indeed "*live, live*" and Jackson exclaims, "It's *live live!*" She asks Chung if she is "scared" to be in this circumstance. Chung

redirects the question to Jackson, who responds, with her practiced cheer, “A little bit! No, it’s quite fun, actually!” Geldof expresses amusement that the feed is focused on the women “just chatting,” as if such interactions are banal for those that sit in the front row time after time. She makes little hand gestures while she mocks, “Chat, chat, live!” in a musical tone. Jackson dismisses her with a bemused smile and returns to the middle of the hall.

The camera catches another production team member to the left of the frame signaling Jackson to wrap up the broadcast. She hastily turns to the camera one more time, as she did at the start: “I think the show is *literally* about to start, so I’d better take my seat. You’ve had all of the backstage gossip, and now time for the actual show. Thank you so much for watching” (my emphasis). As per custom, the presentation did not “literally” start when our host said it would. During the Google+ hangout two years earlier, the fashion show also started late, and online spectators (myself included) watched the scene as a camera made repeated passes around the risers, with seated (famous) audience members on full view. Internet users filled the time and the Twitter feed with comments about the celebrities’ awkwardness during this interstitial period before the supposed ‘real’ show started in earnest. In 2015, perhaps not wanting spectators to be able to criticize celebrities’ behaviour and posture, producers cut to a filtered, panoramic, slightly aerial shot of the fashion show audience, with superimposed text that confirmed, “WE’RE RUNNING FASHIONABLY LATE...” (Figure 20). Jackson could be seen seated at the end of her row near the camera: relieved of and detached from her host duties, she texted the entire time. No longer our insider liaison, she became one of the elite. Spectators were forced to watch this screen for almost 10 minutes. Rather than feel a sense of anticipation or thrill, spectators felt impatient. Seconds before the show, the screen flashed: “GET EXCITED ... THE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START”: the brand’s final, last ditch directive to consumers to manifest our affect

for a live stream (Figure 21).^{cxlvi} Spectators later learned via press reports and Twitter photographs that the show had started late because Delevingne, who was to sit front row this season rather than walk, and whom Jackson had promised us was due in from Japan, was late arriving to the Tate Britain. She did not ultimately appear in the preshow but featured in numerous arrival and front row photographs, taken and disseminated after the feed had ended. In the case of Naomi Campbell’s late entrance at Burberry Prorsum, mentioned in the previous chapter, Burberry remained “conscious of internet-eroded attention spans,” and delivered on its direct-to-consumer live stream promise even if it meant that one of its A-list celebrities had to enter the space after the show had started (Cartner-Morley, 2015, para. 1-3). Topshop Unique, however, made online spectators wait for its top model attendee even if it risked detaching us from the presentation – instead, it tried to use the wait as a tool to build further anticipation.^{cxlvii}

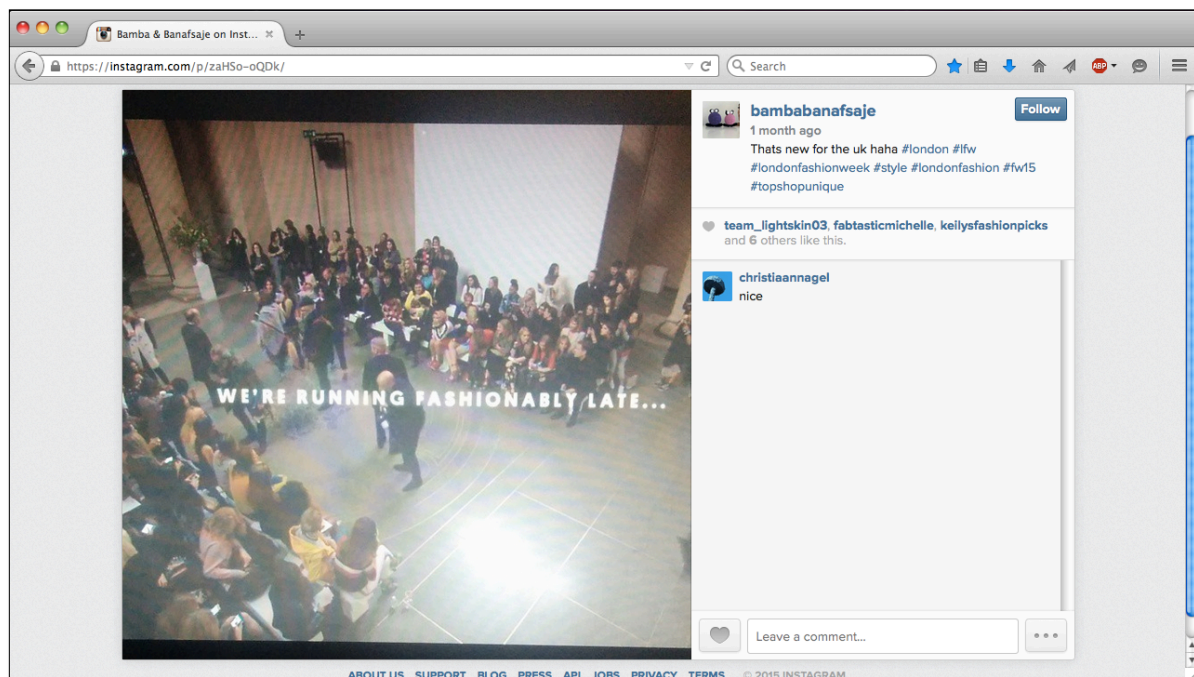


Figure 20. Instagram screen shot of Topshop Unique preshow (bambabanafsaje, 2015).

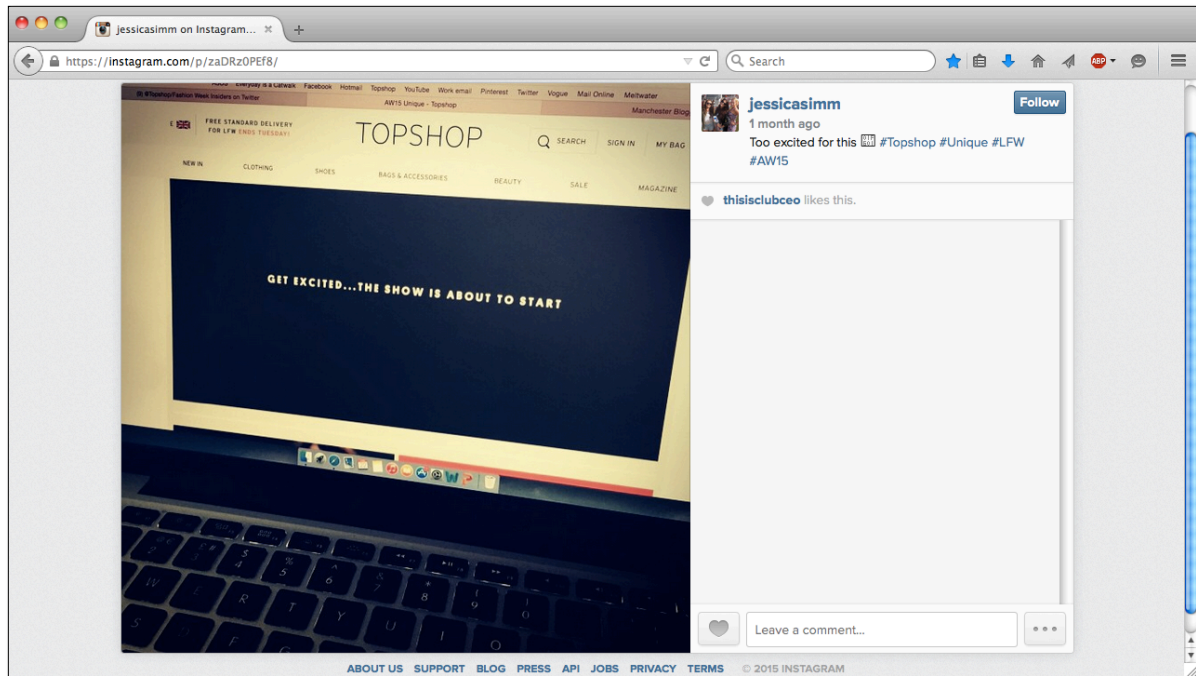


Figure 21. Instagram screen shot of Topshop Unique feed prior to show (jessicasimm, 2015).

Affective Labour/Mediation of Affect

As the preshow host, Jackson accomplishes a notable performance of affective labour, since she is required both to maintain an upbeat attitude and to enhance the liveliness of her interviewees, with the full awareness that the planned but still unscripted and heretofore unedited broadcast is being transmitted to a possible audience of thousands in ‘real time’. Goffmann (1973) calls attention to the affective labour conducted to maintain representations in social performance scenarios, as performers “must take care to enliven their performances with appropriate expressions [and] exclude from their performances expressions that might discredit the impression being fostered” (p. 44). Jackson’s cheerful cadence and tone are omnipresent as she tries as hard as possible to communicate to the viewer “intangible feelings of ... excitement, or passion” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 293): sensations that she often has to create or conjure from thin air. While *back regions* normally permit performers to let their guard down and engage in

“unperformed” behaviour (Goffman, 1973, p. 80), the cameras’ infiltration of the hair and makeup studios forces brand personnel to perform affective labour normally reserved for *front regions*, not just to inform the online spectator but to render their fashion show preparations interesting and worth our time. Several of these personnel are normally not required, or trained, to perform for an online audience in this manner. If an interviewee fails to exude sufficient enthusiasm or offer a usable statement, Jackson, the experienced television presenter, does so on his or her behalf. Model Jessica Burley, nervous speaking to the camera, cannot remember, when asked, the first Topshop item that she ever purchased. She muses, “Probably some jeans or something.” Jackson summarizes her statement in a commercial manner: “A good pair of statement jeans. Everyone needs those!” She later asks Anthony Turner to state the one hairstyle that he never wants to see repeated. When he cannot think of an answer, she offers, “The scrunchie.” Turner admits that he has a soft spot for scrunchies, which provokes awkward laughter. Jackson declares to the camera, in the phrasing of a reporter that has just landed a scoop, “You heard it here first. Anthony Turner loves a scrunchie.” Jackson’s summaries attempt to make memorable and sellable what are in fact banal and often repetitive conversations.

Jackson is further intent on pulling statements from her interviewees that express a pronounced, definitive affect. She asks Casting Director Rosie Vogel to name her favourite model “of all time,” a phrase that she repeats in almost all of the interviews. Vogel, without thinking, responds, “Kate Moss,” and Jackson praises her: “Good choice!” When Turner, who often hunches his shoulders and puts his hands in his pockets, states that the collection about to debut is “one of [his] favourites,” Jackson presses him to declare, “of all time.” Uncertain, he responds, “I think so. Yeah.” While Jackson attempts to raise the conversations’ stakes, the spectator is acutely aware of her concerted affective labour, and performs similar labour to feel a

sense of excitement that is often nonexistent. The celebrities and personnel that Jackson interviews in the broadcast's second half are evidently more comfortable in press interviews, and provide more confident responses. Jackson appears to become almost impatient with the level of detail that certain celebrities provide when asked to describe their favourite Topshop pieces "of all time." When a respondent offers more intellectual content, Jackson closes the interview with a question intended to generate a more marketable, declarative soundbyte. After Sauvaire articulates the intention behind the NewGen initiative, Jackson asks her to name her favourite alumnus "of all time," a question Sauvaire, we assume as a brand representative, demurely notes is "difficult" to answer (on the record). Chung offers an educated summary of the differences between New York Fashion Week and London Fashion Week, but realizes as she concludes that her answer is more appropriate for a fashion television or news program. She muses, "That's a very serious answer." She then offers up a more digestible soundbyte: "London's just more fun!" The host's insistence that interviewees express emphatic and declarative opinions is consistent with the brand's need to provoke a measureable reaction in consumers. Justin Cooke observed in 2013 that Topshop's Google+ spectators "were incredibly in-depth users ... If you look at the comments that people post it's not just 'Hey, this is cool.' They have really strong opinions" (as cited in Google, 2013, para. 11). Such opinions did not just indicate a pronounced affective response but could also be used as information and/or data for further brand strategizing.

Aside from the media celebrities and socialites that Jackson interviews, there are few subjects that possess personalities appreciable to a media audience; even current fashion muse Kendall Jenner, while attractive and trained, is a disappointment in the actual broadcast. Creative director Phelan has a pleasant and enthusiastic demeanour but does not bear a media persona or enigmatic quality in the manner of those visionaries, such as Anna Wintour or Raf Simons,

featured in recent fashion documentaries. Topshop's eccentric billionaire CEO, Sir Philip Green, has a documented bombastic persona, and the British press has chronicled his opulent lifestyle and social appearances with celebrities such as Simon Cowell and Kate Moss, who designed a capsule collection for Topshop (see Reingold, 2008). He routinely appears as a public face for the brand at the Topshop Unique fashion shows, where he poses for photographs and sits with the front row A-listers. While the preshow features a brief clip of an interview with Green in the edited footage from last season, touting the brand's democratic "first-to-market" approach, the preshow production team is unable to get him on camera for an interview.

The interview-based format of the preshow broadcast recalls other types of live, unedited television broadcasts such as red carpet interviews prior to awards shows or athlete interviews during sporting events. A close comparison might be drawn between the preshow and broadcast media rituals such as reality television shows, sporting events or awards ceremonies, but even those broadcasts are edited, more polished and more produced. Here, the awkwardness of the unscripted interactions undermines the innovativeness of the 'real time' online live stream as a medium, hearkening back to the pitfalls of live, unedited television broadcasts. As outlined in Chapter Four, the fashion show live stream remediates broadcast fashion show footage, though the live stream is transmitted in real time, prior to its later status as archived fashion show footage available online. The preshow format, as mentioned earlier, can be considered a remediation of broadcast fashion television programs. The producers of *FashionTelevision* illuminated the social and affective risks associated with fashion reportage, often with a humourous wink. Beker is remembered for including certain moments in which interviews went off the rails, or hijinks ensued, as a means to enhance her accessible persona (see Ingram, 2010). Such moments also added comedic effect and entertainment value. Beker was also not afraid to

showcase moments in which she failed to score the interview. In a 2010 segment on bloggers, still available on *YouTube*, she jokes about the indignity of having to wait to interview a “little kid” as she stands in line to access Tavi Gevinson; to rub salt in the wound, another editor cuts in front of her as the cameras roll (Fashion Television, 2010). The old *FashionTelevision* website also had a video archive of Beker standing amidst the scrum of fashion show arrivals being snubbed by fashion celebrities such as Kirsten Dunst and the Olsen twins – a sort of outtake reel that playfully and self-deprecatingly revealed reporters’ affective labour. In the Topshop Unique broadcast, the smoothest interviews tend to be those conducted in the lobby space as attendees arrive, since most of the subjects are used to answering questions in this environment. Still, there exist moments of awkwardness that are unintentional and cannot be omitted, and the interviews become less predictable and more painful as the live broadcast proceeds, and as our host enters the performance space. The most ebullient personalities, such as Scanlon and Geldof, provide some of the most entertaining moments, as their responses are unpredictable and run the risk of not adhering to the classist expectations of London Fashion Week. While Topshop wants to promote its brand as youthful, carefree and wild, a fashion show at the Tate Britain is an unexpected setting in which to do so. While the broadcast’s unscripted nature provides a certain thrill, since despite control measures, unexpected pitfalls and moments of awkwardness occur, and if such moments offers amusement, it is often out of the spectator’s sense of schadenfreude.

Exclusive vs. Mass Market

The content of the preshow interviews reflects overall the persistent tension between Topshop’s market position as a high street brand and Topshop Unique’s premium status. Numerous celebrities that appear refer to Topshop clothes as “wearable,” both during the broadcast and in the footage from last season’s interviews. When asked to describe her favourite Topshop

purchase, Emilia Fox recalls a black-and-white coat that she wore on *Silent Witness*, “which I think I got tweeted about more than anything else I’ve ever been tweeted about...” Jackson asks her if she has ever *not* wanted to reveal where her clothing came from so that she could be the sole possessor of the look, invoking a Simmelian class-based approach to fashion. Fox, however, claims that she has no problem sharing her fashion secrets, and praises Topshop for making clothes that are so “affordable” and “accessible” that even her fans can wear them: “they take from the designers and then bring it to where it’s economically for everyone.” Fox conflates the Topshop high street collection with the Topshop Unique line, reflecting the unspoken fact that the preshow and the fashion show are as much a promotional tool for the high street clothes and the overall brand as for the ready-to-wear line about to be presented; she also draws an unintentional distinction between Topshop’s staff and ‘real’ designers. While the Topshop Unique line is priced higher (though still lower than other ready-to-wear lines), its existence elevates the brand’s cultural status, even as the attendees repeatedly stress how “affordable” the clothes are. Jackson and her interviewees almost never use the full name Topshop Unique in parlance. Rather, both the host and the interviewees use the brand name Topshop as a shorthand reference to both lines. While the press often, in a similar vein, refers to Burberry the company or brand rather than to Burberry Prorsum the line, to utter the name Burberry does not insert mass-market associations nor does it diminish luxury market status. Either name invokes class. In the case of Topshop, the brand name cannot but refer to the premium *and* mass market lines simultaneously. While it is possible that promoters are attempting to alter these associations and position Topshop as a higher-end brand, I contend that the name’s repeated use reinforces the brand’s democratic nature, in keeping with notions of access touted in the brand’s press materials

and social media use. However, this repetition also threatens to dilute the status of the fashion presentation, via which Topshop enhances its consumer perception and overall market status.

Cinematic Mediation/Modulation of Affect

While the Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow is still available on *YouTube*, it is notable that Topshop also produced not one but three montage compilations from the same fashion show, all of which are rendered far more interesting and aesthetically pleasing via the use of cinematic techniques. The allure of these videos resides not in immediate, unscripted access, or in tracking shots, but rather in the use of montage, lighting, close-up shots, slow motion and music. All of these clips are under six minutes, but feature, in addition to separate interviews with celebrities seen in the live stream, numerous shots and soundbytes that the live stream crew did not obtain. These videos do not function as complements to the preshow but rather reveal the content that the preshow lacked due to its reliance on one host conducting one interview after another. This additional, value-added content includes the moments that celebrities (including Delevingne) walked into the Tate Britain (with more requisite camera flashes); more shots of models posing for the video cameras backstage; softlit close-ups of hair and make-up preparations; repeated shots of Green seated in the front row with Dunn, Delevingne, Jenner, Geldof and Chung; shots of front row faces that did not appear in the stream at all, such as pop star Ellie Goulding and model/socialite Daisy Lowe; and post-show reflections on the collection from the likes of Tim Blanks himself and 1990s British supermodel Erin O'Connor. This content is intercut with footage of the runway parade, again shown in slow motion in order to augment the drama of the event and let the online spectator gaze linger on the clothes, but with frequent cuts to the A-listers' impressed reactions. One of the clips contains a shot of the camera crew filming Jackson's live stream interview with Kate Phelan, and a clip of Alexa Chung commenting that

she watched the first part of the live stream en route to the presentation (Topshop 2015a). These meta-theatrical references to the preshow production reflect the fact that the preshow was just one component of a total mediatized fashion show experience that is most effective when it chooses to modulate consumer affect in a visual, aesthetic sense. To compare the plodding preshow content with these edited video records does not simply reinforce how tedious the format is, but also reveals the extent to which the online spectator needs and expects the intervention of cinematic techniques to create a sense of the aura of the actual event.

ANALYSIS OF USERS' TEXTUAL REACTIONS

To ascertain online users' reactions, I conducted content analysis of a nonrandom sample of the 108 tweets disseminated to #Topshop, that pertained to the fashion show broadcast, sent from the start of the live stream preshow until the end of the fashion show (approximately 200 more tweets were posted in the hours after).^{cxlviii} Sara Ahmed's (2004) concept of the loaded-ness and *circulation of affect*, or emotion, within discourse has been useful to digital and social media scholars. I measured the element of affect in phatic utterances, popular in social media and recognizable for the use of short words, abbreviations, repeated punctuation or CAPS. Media scholar Vincent Miller (2008) states that while phatic utterances are devoid of "substantive content," these texts can be read as unmediated expressions of affect (p. 396). Indeed, users often use phatic utterances to articulate affect's manifestations, such as tears or shortness of breath. The production of these statements has the added potential to create moments of "phatic communion" that establish and maintain social and industrial affiliations and relations (Miller, 2008, p. 398). While Topshop has not disclosed the number of viewers that watched the broadcast, 108 tweets does not indicate massive user reaction. Forty-three of these tweets (just under half) came from users that watched the live stream, and several users tweeted multiple

times; the other tweets came from production team members or Topshop representatives (9 were Vines of models); attendees in the performance space; and media sites and modeling agencies promoting certain models that had walked in the show. Of the 43 tweets from online spectators, I classified the tweet content as follows (Table 2).

# of tweets	Tweet themes and references
10	Celebrities present in front row and/or press interactions (included one repost and one retweet of media site/agency photo)
9	Photos of users' computer screen, referenced experience watching stream - included pets and food in frame, mention of tea
7	Late start time of fashion show (one with screen shot of the stream, one with mention of Cara Delevingne)
6	Collection once the fashion show started
2	Fact that the fashion show was starting
2	Music from the fashion show
2	Utterances that contained positive affect: "YES"; "That was interesting"
2	Expressions of consumer desire for collection items
1	Statement of negative affect: "Hated #Topshop Fashion Show... Lost 1h of my life today!"
1	Preshow host had mispronounced an interviewee's name

Table 2. Content of tweets sent by online spectators during Topshop Unique live stream.

The mentions of celebrities is consistent with companies' use of celebrities to attract consumer attention to fashion shows, the number of photographs of celebrities that the brand also tweeted after the presentation, and the preshow's emphasis on the celebrities' presence. Sixteen additional tweets consisted of actual attendees' photographs of their invitations and pre-show drinks, or blurred shots of models. A handful of savvy online users posted photographs of *their* perspectives of the live stream (some from Instagram), from their own 'front row' seats at their computers, hearkening back to the 2013 Google+ hangout interface (Figures 22 and 23). These tweets demonstrated some degree of interaction, and an awareness of the anticipation that Topshop wanted to instill in consumers. Nonetheless, only a handful of tweets commented on the performance's affective components: two noted the music; two expressed a positive affective response to or evaluation of the collection; two tweets expressed consumer desire; and one tweet

expressed emphatic disdain (indeed the strongest opinion). Of the fashion show-related tweets that followed in the hours after the broadcast, one declared that the user was “‘obsessed’ with the collection” and another declared, “Still reliving the #topshop show from earlier #perfection #LFW.” Most of the tweets did not contain textual utterances at all but instead circulated or recirculated press photographs to garner social media notice. The tweet that contained the most potent declaration of affect came from an attendee in the performance space: Angela Scanlon, the exuberant television presenter whom Laura Jackson had interviewed in the preshow. Scanlon declared the presentation, with CAPS and exclamation points, “My FAVOURITE @Topshop show for years!!! #Topshop #LFW” (angelascanlon, 2015).

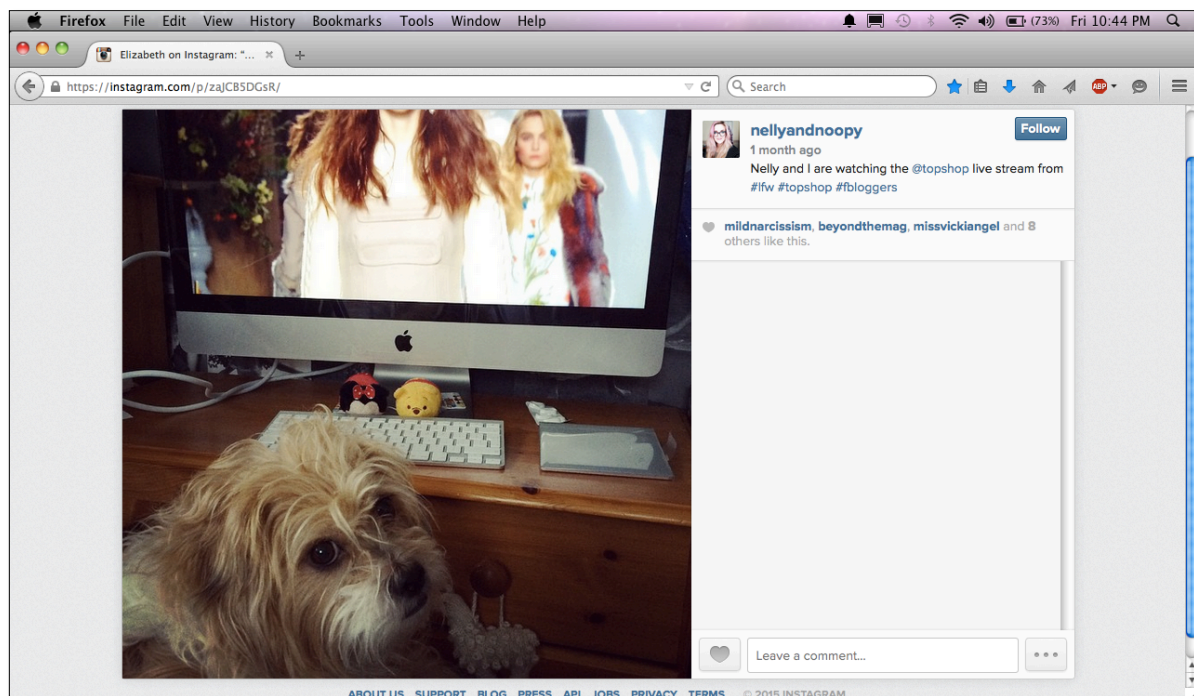


Figure 22. Instagram screen shot of Topshop Unique fashion show (nellyandnoopy, 2015).

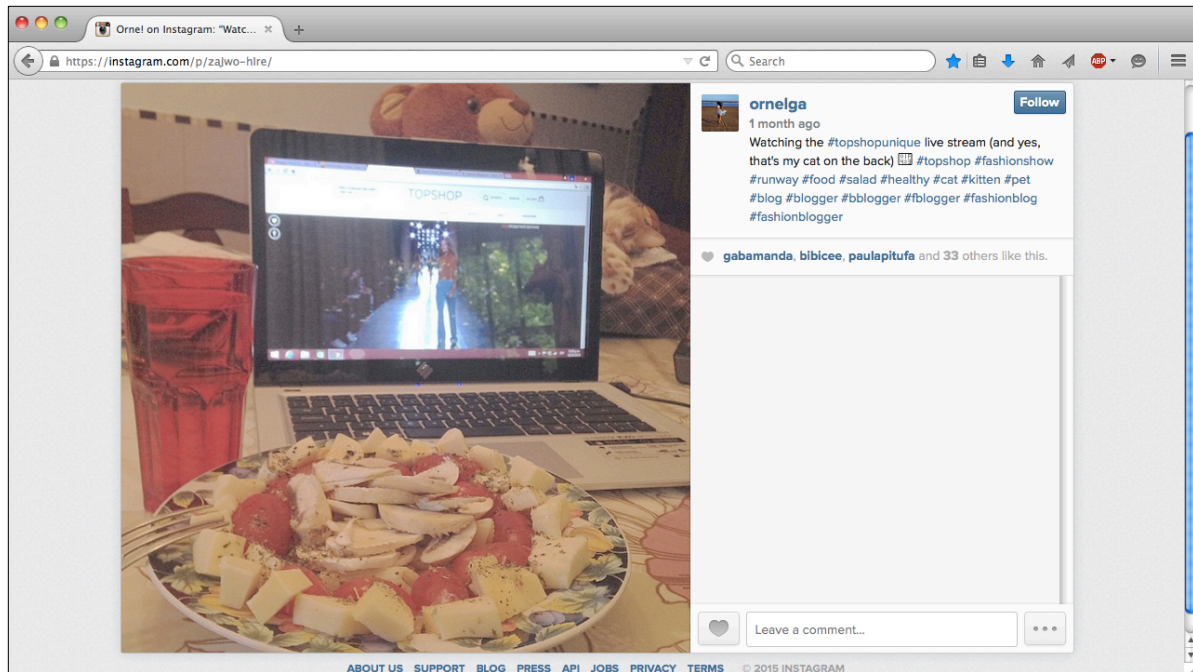


Figure 23. Instagram screen shot of Topshop Unique fashion show (ornelga, 2015).

The most recirculated photograph was an image of Alexa Chung and Kendall Jenner holding up a camera as if to take a selfie – not an actual selfie, but the *pose of* a selfie: a meta-representation of the fashion show’s mediatization (Figure 24). Topshop’s unsuccessful effort to produce a consumer reaction indicates that users have become attuned to brands’ strategies, and/or that a different form of interaction is needed to produce a measurable effect/affect in the digital realm. While the preshow broadcast makes an explicit directive to make consumers “excited,” the brand quantifies this excitement in numbers of viewers, hits and retweets, and in later collection sales; while these do function as appropriate measures, there is little sense from the textual content of spectators’ reactions that the atmosphere or sense of the performance space was transmitted.



Figure 24. Alexa Chung and Kendall Jenner front row at Topshop Unique (juliarebaudo, 2015).

CONCLUSION

Even as online spectators were promised “unprecedented” access to the hidden scenes and elite environs, with repeated demands on our affective capabilities, it was not possible to transmit the actual atmosphere of the performance space to the public via the live stream. The production of desire for fashion and for commodities, and the social ideals these represent, parallel the circulation of affective desires, the Lacanian “desire to desire,” that, as Dean describes, recirculates ad infinitum across networks (2010a, 2010b). Affective production and circulation become an integral component of both consumer and mediatized cultures, as corporations maintain the same affective control under communicative capitalism. In the case of the Autumn/Winter 2015 Topshop Unique fashion show preshow, it is not the brand that hails

consumers to produce content and then reciprocates, as in Burberry's #TweetCam initiative and Topshop's #livetrends initiative (though the latter reciprocation was a direct coercion to purchase). The preshow, via presenters' labour, instead tries to influence and even instruct online spectators to *feel* affect via an unscripted and (for the most part) unedited but nonetheless *heavily* mediated stream of content, imbricated within a broader set of networked affective relations. While it has been documented that pleasurable, affective brand interactions facilitate increased consumer purchases, the Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow used immediate, "live live" access to force online spectator response in a manner that could not be achieved, as spectators were still distanced from the actual performance space. This was the last time that Topshop attempted to coordinate a preshow of this nature, though it still continues to live stream its fashion shows and produce *edited* video content of the most sellable moments. In the end, the failure of the Autumn/Winter 2015 preshow to transmit the affect of the performance space became the point, as the online spectator's distance from the actual happenings was reinforced, leaving us unfulfilled, networked, consuming bodies. While the desire for presence remains, consumers content themselves instead with mediated fashion show representations that modulate our affect for us in a pleasurable manner via cinematic edits, marketable quotes and aesthetic enhancement.

In the face of continued discussions as to whether the fashion show needs to exist, given the affordances of social media to *replace* it as a marketing tool, a close examination of the purpose and format of the fashion show as an exclusive live performance becomes all the more critical. Indeed, while some brands have now chosen to do their marketing and launch collections via social media *exclusively*, brands with the capital to produce a digital media spectacle and release collections for purchase in an immediate timeframe continue to earn press attention. It becomes evident that it is not sufficient just to offer 'unprecedented access' to the presentation,

but rather the total media presentation must be heavily produced, and mechanisms for consumer interaction be considered well in advance. These presentations also reveal fashion companies' reliance on the instant and international circulation of representations. The online spectator's access into the backstage environs of the fashion show, and the level of social intrusion that this could constitute, bears additional social implications for consumers' expectations of access to live performances and their performers in a mediatized climate. While the start of the show marked the end of online spectators' behind-the-scenes look, that consumers and members of the press had this 'all access pass' *before* the show while the models were being dressed reverses the protocol of events such as theatre shows or rock concerts, in which audience members can meet artists after the performance but often not beforehand *because* the performer must enter a proper mindset to do his or her embodied labour. The production of a fashion show preshow thus illustrates the sacredness of these exclusive spaces of preparation and our fascination with them or perhaps indicates a desacralization of these environments under a total commodification of the performance experience: blurred demarcations between the elite realms that consumers can or cannot access and definitions of when the performer is 'on' and 'off,' visible or secluded.^{cxlix}

This dissertation's final chapters now move back to the more material environs of the fashion show: here, I document the phenomena of photo-taking that occurs in the streets outside the venues in order to examine another series of mediatized images that comprises and operates as an integral part of the promotional extravaganza of high fashion and its ideals that is Fashion Month. These chapters serve to debunk statements that there is no "post-show" to the fashion show, nor is there an end to the mediatized *glamour labour* expected of its models and attendees, but rather the fashion performance has moved into the outdoor streets and assumed a character and hyper-visibility all its own.

Chapter 7: Internationalizing Cities, Re-classifying Streets: Tommy Ton's Fashion Month Street Style Photographs

The Italian fashion editor Anna Dello Russo perches on a red motorbike. She wears a sweater dress in a near-identical shade, emblazoned with what appears to be McDonald's famous "golden arches" logo but is instead a doubled signifier for the Italian brand Moschino, whose name is knitted underneath (Figure 25). Dello Russo carries a matching quilted leather purse (similar to those of Chanel) and an iPhone case shaped like a pack of French fries. Behind her, a building with mirrored windows reflects brick and concrete facades. On its outside is the name Deloitte, the international financial firm. The sole clue that the photo has been taken in Milan is the motorbike, a common mode of transportation in Italian cities. However, an individual with fashion capital, seeing this photograph on Condé Nast Media's *Style.com*, would note that Dello Russo's look debuted at Moschino's fashion show, one day earlier, during the Fall/Winter 2014 Milan Fashion Week. Moschino's popular culture-inspired collection had indeed received widespread coverage for its controversial mix of high fashion and fast food icons. This photograph is one of 386 images that Canadian-born blogger Tommy Ton captured of fashion show attendees at the Fall/Winter 2014 Fashion Week circuit, in New York, London, Milan and Paris, and posted to *Style.com* under the banner *street style*. Indeed, during his tenure at *Style.com* (now moved to the *runway* division of the *Vogue* website) from 2009 to 2015, Ton posted thousands of photographs of the outdoor scenes of each bi-annual Fashion Month season, in addition to Paris Couture Week and smaller fashion weeks in other international cities.^{cl}

Figure 25. Anna Dello Russo at Milan Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014a). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/admoschino1>

This chapter focuses on the media representations of Fashion Month that occur in the public, metropolitan streets and popular tourist locations outside the fashion show venues. In a phenomenon that has become known as the *street style parade*, in-house and (often) freelance photographers wait for fashion show attendees and models to arrive to and to exit the venues and compete to photograph their ensembles for personal blogs, professional websites and for print and online media outlets. Since the late-2000s, street style photography for online media, that which is done at Fashion Month in particular, has become a lucrative practice.^{cli} The wide circulation of these photographs has rendered the sartorial choices of fashion's insiders and cultural intermediaries arguably more influential than photographs of the seasonal collections as worn on models (see Titton, 2013). Fashion tastemakers' awareness of this shift is demonstrated in the blurring of demarcations between the fashions worn in the indoor and outdoor environments, as the example of Dello Russo above illustrates (see LaFerla, 2012; Titton, 2013). Street style blogs, the medium from which the Fashion Month outdoor photography spectacle arose, have achieved marked cultural influence within both the fashion and online media landscapes in the last decade. Their claims to capture the eclectic fashions and diverse bodies of 'real' people and on the streets of international cities contribute to a purported ethos of online media's democratization. Claims specific to *street style* as a forum are made due to online media's accessible nature and capacities for user interaction and public discourse; to consumers' opportunities to purchase clothes from different price echelons in the fast fashion era (and thus experiment with dress); and to the fact that several bloggers earned notice through amateur photographic practices (see de Perthuis, 2015; Luvaas, 2016; Rosser, 2010; Titton, 2010, 2013). Geczy and Karaminas (2016) claim that the plethora of online fashion forums and content is democratic insofar as it "enabl[es] a further multiplication of styles and looks" and thus

empowers consumers in sartorial choices (p. 123). However, photographers' communication of a homogenous fashion aesthetic, and their selection of subjects that adhere to fashion's rigid embodied standards, has not gone unremarked (see J. Berry, 2010; Church Gibson, 2012; Rosser, 2010; Titton, 2010). Assertions of *street style* websites as a platform for authentic, cultural or urban expression follow media pundits' promise that the user access inherent in new media can facilitate what Turner describes as "unlimited performances of diversity" (2010, p. 19). However, media instead have come to perpetuate and even build specific, narrow identities that adhere to commercial mandates, mandates that then assume political implications (Turner, 2010, pp. 20-21). The photographs discussed in this chapter reveal that the unification of the proverbial 'street' with the demarcated 'street' of Fashion Week does not further diverse ethnicities and aesthetics but rather entrenches fashion's superficial ideals. While the faces that appear in the photographs are often 'new' at least outside the field, the demarcated standards of attractiveness are timeworn.

In the wake of the street style blog's rise to influence as a medium, photographers turned their lenses towards the outdoor scenes at international Fashion Month shows: photographers either traveled to these events independently to shoot or, later, attended at the behest of the fashion houses. In either instance, street style bloggers earned admittance into the field of fashion (and the fashion show) through their online practice, and in their capacities as pioneers of the medium, whether or not they were field members based on previous positions held. Fashion media outlets contracted photographers to contribute street style images of Fashion Month insiders to be placed alongside standard collection criticism and photographs. Within Fashion Month's structures and schedules, Jennifer Craik describes a form of "global high fashion worn by fashion journalists, stylists and celebrities who travel worldwide to attend fashion weeks and special fashion events" (2013, p. 354). It is this subset of fashion that has come to be called *street*

style in cultural parlance. High fashion's consecration of the Fashion Month insider photograph as the exemplar par excellence of street style has disconnected the street style photograph from its ideals of candid or authentic representations (however tenuous) and placed it within a privileged discursive system. I determine that the diffusion of international sartorial expression does not effect fashion's democratization but instead imposes an urbane and luxurious aesthetic. Under fashion's corporate *imperialization* (Godart, 2012, pp. 14, 129-142), fashion inserts class as its own referent, emblemized in the similar, upscale fashions that insiders and models wear at the shows, and the overall similarities between fashion cities.

In this chapter, I examine two seasons' worth of Tommy Ton's photographs for *Style.com* as a case study that interrogates the professional practice of photographing fashion show attendees in terms of its aesthetic representations and broader class constructs. I contend that these photographs, and their inclusion in media outlets' Fashion Month content, under the heading *street style*, appropriate a contested term as an elitist site on which to inscribe high fashion's social, material and embodied ideals. I further scrutinize representations of the actual cities (the 'streets') in which Fashion Months are held to situate the fashions depicted within fashion's increased internationalization under neoliberalism: its resultant contestations between the global and local and between the politics of the urban street as fashionable or ghettoized. Ton's aesthetic utilizes the streetscapes of the cities in which he shoots to promote an internationalized mode of dress that communicates the wearer's status not just in fashion but also as a member of a cultured class. Specific features of cities are often occluded: rather, cities function as status enhancers within a system of representations that includes beautiful, well-made clothes and modelesque bodies. Elements that do reveal location, such as tourist or historical landmarks, function within existing cultural discourses and media content to promote cities as

idealized *fashion capitals* and tourist destinations. This chapter examines Fashion Month street style photographs' discursive production of cities and attendees' fashionableness, in the photographs that Ton posted to *Style.com* during the Spring/Summer 2014 and Fall/Winter 2014 ready-to-wear women's collections. While chosen in part as a convenience sample, the fashion seasons that these photographs capture represent a pinnacle of street style photographers' presence at Fashion Month. In his ethnographic examination of street style bloggers, Brent Luvaas notes that "by September of 2014, photographers for commercial websites had overtaken them" on the sidewalks (2016, p. 284). Still, as this chapter will outline, the distinction between street style bloggers and commercial or freelance fashion photographers was blurred soon after the emergence of street style blogging as cultural practice.

I first chronicle Ton's meteoric career as an online street style photographer. I then contextualize Ton's depictions of New York, London, Milan and Paris within those cities' cultural status as fashion capitals, a label that both functions within and contradicts fashion's condition of internationalization. Next, I offer a genealogy of the term *street style* as it has been used in fashion and subculture scholarship, to illustrate the class and cultural politics inherent in the term: tensions that help to frame the discursive structures in which Ton's representations circulate. Further, I summarize recent research on online street style photography as both genre and material practice. This scholarship documents a history of representations of modern cities and fashionable subjects from the realms of amateur photography, journalism and editorial fashion. It also chronicles a continued dialectical tension between 'real' depictions and fashion's editorial dictates, particularly in relation to notions of the 'street'. These separate but convergent genealogies function to situate Ton's work within both an amateur and a professional field, and

its aesthetics and representations within not just the fashion system (and its ideals) but also the discursive production of urban environments.

THE RISE OF THE STREET STYLE BLOG

Online street style photography became a recognized practice in the mid-2000s through the work of photographers such as Ton, Scott Schuman (*The Sartorialist*), Garance Doré (*Garance Doré*), Phil Oh (*Street Peeper*) and Yvan Rodic (*Facehunter*). These photographers documented street fashion in international cities, purporting to capture a sense of individualization associated with local sartorial choices. Fashion and visual culture scholars have written on the portraiture of Schuman and Rodic as demonstrative of the new form and its tensions between democratic representations and commercial aesthetics (J. Berry, 2010; de Perthuis, 2015; Rosser, 2010; Titton, 2010). The medium offered photographers a means to reach a vast audience of fashion-interested consumers and permitted readers to discuss the looks in comment threads, interacting both with the creators and with a community of like-minded enthusiasts. This interactive component turned the street style blog as medium into a more “social” forum of content production, differentiated in its apparent democratized ethos from the more controlled “domain of the traditional fashion media” (J. Berry, 2010, para. 7; see also de Perthuis, 2015; Rosser, 2010; Titton, 2010, 2013). While consumers’ response took the form of hits, followers and comments, stakeholders demonstrated their interest in the medium via brand collaborations, advertisements and invitations to fashion shows, both to report on the collections and to capture the ensembles of the well-heeled arbiters that attended (de Perthuis, 2015; Titton, 2013).^{clii}

Ton’s position as one of the earliest successful online street style photographers, hot on the heels of predecessors such as Schuman and Rodic, facilitated his rapid rise to influence in the field of fashion and the formation of an international forum for his work. Ton created his blog

Jak & Jil in 2005, while working as a buyer at the luxury department store Holt Renfrew in Toronto (Amed, 2011b, para. 5). Canadian retailer Lynda Latner, impressed with Ton's online work, paid for Ton to travel to Paris Fashion Week (Amed, 2011b, para. 8). Ton's work earned the notice of Lisa Tant, editor-in-chief of Canadian fashion magazine *Flare*, who offered to run a set of Ton's photographs in each issue (Amed, 2011b, para. 12). Ton has honed what he calls a "candid" and frenetic photographic style that differed from the still portrait shots of his peers (though he does also use posed shots) (Amed, 2011b, para. 13). Still in his 20s when he launched his career, Ton was not as established in the fashion industry as contemporaries such as Schuman, who had worked in menswear (de Perthuis, 2015, p. 4; Rosser, 2010, p. 158). Nonetheless, his position at Holt Renfrew reinforces the fact that several noted street style visionaries were already working in fashion prior to starting their online work. Phil Oh, who learned the trade in part from Ton and succeeded him at *Style.com* in 2015, comments that, even in the earliest seasons, Ton was a "die-hard fashion obsessive" who could recognize all of the designers and brands he photographed (Phelps, 2016, para. 13).^{cliii} These photographers' existing fashion capital undermines popular notions of the blog as an accessible medium through which unknown outsiders might earn field admittance (Rosser, 2010; Titton, 2010, 2013). In 2009, Ton was one of the four bloggers invited to sit front-row at Dolce & Gabbana for the Spring/Summer 2010 collections, a moment that has been understood to mark high fashion's consecration of blogging as a medium (Titton, 2013, p. 128). That same year, *Style.com* hired Ton as its "resident" street style photographer of the scenes outside of fashion shows. While Schuman was the site's first street style photographer (first on its menswear site), from 2006 to 2009, Ton's time at *Style.com* lasted six years, from 2009 to 2015, and it was during this period that the street style Fashion Month parade became a documented phenomenon. *Vogue* lists Ton's recruitment as a catalytic

historical event preceding the moment in which street style “exploded” (Phelps, 2016, para. 21): in the form of bloggers’ increased presence at Fashion Month and the pervasive influence of fashion brands and media sites that had infiltrated the peripheries of the practice at the outset.^{cliv}

Ton’s photographs for *Style.com* demand analysis for several reasons: few scholars have addressed his work at all, and even those that do discuss Ton within the practice as a whole and do not examine his oeuvre in detail. Ton is one of the world’s most prominent street style photographers, and his recruitment by *Style.com* (and also *GQ*’s website) is evidence of his industrial clout. In 2011, *The Business of Fashion* deemed Ton “the world’s most influential street style fashion photographer today” (Amed, 2011b, para. 2): this turn of phrase speaks to an apparent fusion of street style and fashion that his photographs constitute. Those fashion insiders that appear routinely in his photographs (Dello Russo foremost among them) have also gained a public profile and measure of celebrity beyond the field of fashion (Titton, 2013).^{clv} Second, Ton’s photographs have garnered such a broad circulation that his aesthetic has become an exemplar of street style photographs (at least those photographs shot during Fashion Month) and is sometimes used as a referent for the term itself in other online publications. Furthermore, *Style.com* was an essential trade and commercial resource that contains fashion-related news stories, editorials, shopping recommendations, and a database of reviews and photographs of presentations at all of the international, seasonal Fashion Weeks. In an Instagram post announcing the end of his tenure at *Style.com*, Ton referenced his good fortune at working as “a contributor to the most influential and relevant fashion publication” (as cited in Wolf, 2015). *Style.com* was not the sole fashion or mainstream publication, print or online, to publish Fashion Month photographs under a *street style* banner.^{clvi} However, at the time that these photographs were posted, it was arguably the most important and read fashion news website: the fact that the

site included the photograph albums as part of its other Fashion Month reportage legitimates the direct, delimited association of street style photographs with fashion intermediaries' ensembles. For fashion's most notable online publication to contract Ton to photograph street style, with full understanding from both media outlet and audience that such photographs came from Fashion Month, represents the traditional fashion press's commercial incorporation of online street fashion photography as a medium: not merely a conflation of street style with the outfits worn at Fashion Month but a naturalization of this notion in consumers' minds. The sheer readership of the site facilitated the circulation of Ton's photographs as a palimpsest. Luvaas (2016) reasserts that our reading of fashion photographs is contextual (p. 141): on *Style.com*, the street style photograph became *solely* a mode of Fashion Month representation and read in relation to the other elements of the website interface such as collection photographs and advertisements.^{clvii} While Ton's photographs are not advertorial, they nonetheless promote aspirational fashion as construct, and in several cases call out specific brands; moreover, the fact that fashion houses have lent pieces to attendees speaks to street style photographs' visibility and influence. The site does not offer a forum for reader comments but instead presents the photographs as a unidirectional click-through stream from media outlet to consumer, in the mode of the commercial fashion photograph (see de Perthuis, 2015). Ton's images thus participate in and perpetuate a set of social practices and embodied ideals, both within Fashion Month as a social formation and communicated to a mainstream spectatorship. In a close examination of photographs and user comments on *The Sartorialist*, Karen de Perthuis notes that analysis of "how fashion works in [a specific] street style blog offers a model that can be translated or applied ... to other types of blogs across the field" (2015, p. 4). A comprehensive content analysis of Ton's photographs both contributes another representative example to augment the

discussion surrounding street style photographs and demonstrates the effects of their appropriation into established discourses.

FASHION ON THE CITY ‘STREET’

Fashion Month’s representations function in tandem with the cultural histories of those cities where events are held. These associations conflict with fashion’s increased international corporate control and oppositional conceptualizations of the ‘street’. Within fashion’s international cities, individual sartorial choices and fashion-based communities contribute to cultural fabrics in a manner that fashion narratives sometimes overlook:

[T]he creativity arising from the intermixing and chaos of the city, the performance of fashion on the streets ... While it is easy to over-romanticize street style and more democratic influences on fashion innovation, these have clearly been significant in the story of major fashion centres. (Gilbert, 2006, p. 29)

The first recognized street style photographs in 1980s print media were captured in international fashion capitals, albeit in the “backstreets” rather than the standard fashionable spaces (Luvaas, 2016, p. 76). Fashion Weeks, as ephemeral, bi-annual industry events, impress their own set of high fashion and brand signifiers onto urban environments, through the en masse arrival of editors, retailers, celebrities and photographers, the presence of town cars, and, in certain instances, the erection of actual tents. As outlined in the Introduction, scholars observe a reciprocal relationship between Fashion Weeks and international cities in the formation of cities’ identities as *fashion capitals* and as destinations for fashion-interested tourists and consumers (Craik, 2013; Gilbert, 2006, 2013). Fashion Weeks also maintain a discursive function in the promotion of material ideals and aesthetics specific to individual fashion capitals, in addition to the reinforcement of discourses from interrelated cultural and media industries. Presentations tend to occur in tourist-centered cosmopolitan areas, or known cultural performance venues, rather than in residential or lesser socioeconomic communities. Despite their local histories,

fashion houses and Fashion Weeks have become more global in scope due to umbrella control of fashion houses from a select number of multinationals, movement of production offshore, and corporate sponsorship of Fashion Week events (Craik, 2013; Gilbert, 2006, 2013; Godart, 2012).

Within this socioeconomic context, Fashion Month does not simply introduce a set of fashionable aesthetics onto urban streets but promotes an internationalized, flattened mode of dress whose trends are decided by teams at multinational brands. Alan Blum (2003) examines scenes as products of cities' "urban theatricality" and notes that certain scenes—such as the "fashion scene"—are positioned as inaccessible (pp. 365-367). Fashion Weeks' arrivals and exits have assumed such spatial proportions, distinct ensembles and theatrical interactions that press and scholars have compared the spectacle to a circus (Menkes, 2013; Shea, 2014) – another traveling, ephemeral scene – or to a red carpet affair (Titton, 2013; Shea, 2014). For David Gilbert, the succession of Fashion Weeks is a "travelling circus of the controlling elites of fashion culture," a reference to the fact that the same international editors often travel from one location to the next, but without the connotations of spectacle (2006, p. 14). The wearing of non-quotidian fashions on the urban streets can also be tied to events such as New York's annual Easter Parade on Fifth Avenue, which since the 1880s has functioned as a "fashion parade" both in dress and in church decoration, and whose public spectacle preceded the arrival of fashion shows (Schmidt, 1994, pp. 135-139). Craik stresses that Fashion Weeks' producers "promote a 'cosmopolitan atmosphere,'" via a concentration of "international" associations, that creates a "phony reality" to which consumers subscribe (2013, p. 366). This false construction echoes that of tourism advertisements that turn cities into idealized, *simulacral* destinations based on elite cultural representations (Craik, 2013, p. 362). Fashion's internationalization and its presentation within urban environments, can be traced to trends in international media and corporate

advertising. Sociologist Armand Mattelart cites a 1985 annual report from Saatchi and Saatchi that demonstrates that advertisers measured communities not in terms of location but rather social demarcations and cultural preferences:

[T]here are probably more social differences between midtown Manhattan and the Bronx, two sectors of the same city, than between Midtown Manhattan and the 7th arrondissement of Paris. ... [W]hen a manufacturer contemplates expansion of his business, consumer similarities in demography and habits rather than geographic proximity will increasingly affect his decisions. (2005, p. 49, as cited in J. Berry, 2010, para. 20)

Even thirty years ago, marketers perceived confluences between the fashions worn in dominant fashion cities rather than within the populations of those cities; the references to social distinctions between Manhattan and the Bronx in the 1980s illuminate that such considerations are based not just on class but also on race. The ideal of street style photography as a document of place-specific sartorial expression is called into question within an internationalized fashion and consumer culture (J. Berry, 2010, para. 21). The media prominence of Fashion Month scenes in New York, London, Milan and Paris belies the fact that photographers run successful blogs in cities across North America, as well as in Athens, Buenos Aires, Cape Town and Helsinki, and cities in China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan (Luvaas, 2016, pp. 76-112).

Notions of a classist, international street, as a simultaneous form of public space and elite, demarcated space exist alongside alternative imaginings of the street as a place of political resistance. Saskia Sassen (2011) posits the concept of the Global Street that reclaims the “urban street” within cities “as a space where new forms of the social and the political can be *made*, rather than a space for enacting ritualized routines” associated with “classic European” ideals of public space (p. 574). In Ton’s photographs, representations of urban environments both complement and clash with high fashion’s cultural associations: in all cases, the effect is uniformly editorial. My own on-site observation of the scenes outside fashion shows at New

York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016, which I elaborate in the next chapter, confirm that there is a striking sartorial and indeed economic distinction between attendees, or fashionistas that want to attract photographers' attention, and other individuals present in these spaces. Those familiar with the aesthetic conventions and fashions of street style photographs (in particular those taken at Fashion Month) could determine from a block away which people photographers would flock to based on outfits' colours, textures and materials, and on wearers' attractiveness. While the decision of whom to photograph is informed by fashion capital and access to media representations (Luvaas, 2016), comments that I overheard from tourists and locals while observing the parade in Manhattan indicated that one did not need to know high fashion to conclude that attendees were dressed in a manner that transcended the mainstream.

STREET STYLE IN DISCOURSE

Fashion and consumer culture scholars trace the term *street style* to its references to popular trends or movements, as well as to subcultural fashion, rooting its traditional associations in working-class urban communities. Sophie Woodward (2009) outlines how street style has been constituted in a combination of textual and visual discourses: "as part of popular parlance, within media representations of fashion in the street style sections of magazines, in outfits that are assembled, in exhibitions and academics' accounts" (p. 84). She defines street style on a literal level as mainstream sartorial choices that are "observed *on the street*," and situates it an "everyday practice" derived from a complex set of social relations: it is tied to urban locations but also intersects with cultural and artistic scenes such as those of music (Woodward, 2009, pp. 84-85, my emphasis). Research in subcultures illuminates the problematics between examination of street style as representative of subcultural or urban communities and acknowledgment that street style is open to a diverse set of influences (Woodward, 2009, p. 85).^{clviii} Ted Polhemus

(1994) formulated a ‘bubble-up’ model of fashion adoption based on subcultural practice that contradicts more classical social theories of fashion trends as dictated by the upper classes.^{clix} However, Caroline Evans cautions that academic or curatorial attempts to categorize subcultures overlook the nuances of fashion statements as cultural practice derived from multiple sites and references and fail to account for more “subtle” forms of resistance (1997, p. 170).^{clx} Just as subcultures are “fluid, unstable, complex and shifting” (Evans, 1997, p. 170), street style must be read as flexible rather than demarcated. Urban locations do still offer a defined parameter within which academics can document style, and indeed style as personal or cultural expression is rooted in material environments (Woodward, 2009). Still, there remains a distinction between notions of street style as international, as the product of numerous geographical and cultural influences, and of street style as *placeless*, as unlocateable or erased, a phenomenon that occurs in editorial fashion and with increasing frequency in online street style photographs.

In recent decades, high fashion has rendered the street style image editorial and inverted the term’s socioeconomic associations. In limiting discussion of street style to Fashion Week ensembles, the press all but eliminates the aspect of quotidian dress and describes items from the social realm of high fashion, positioned at an economic remove from the communities that birthed subcultures. Monica Titton (2010, 2013) delineates between notions of *style*, as referring to elements of individual (and more experimental) taste, and *fashion* as that which is represented within the fashion system and controlled through the machinations of aesthetic economies. Street style, in particular subcultural style, has offered well-documented inspiration to high fashion: aesthetic elements from hip hop and punk cultures alone have recurred in collections from Chanel and Jean Paul Gaultier, in addition to a host of mainstream, international retail lines (Barnard, 2002, pp. 45-46). Dick Hebdige (1979) terms this process *incorporation*, in which the

dominant culture appropriates and thus nullifies statements' subversive intent in the interests of commercial acceptance (p. 94). For fashion publications to name Fashion Week photographs *street style* represents not just an appropriation of a photographic medium but also fashion's textual incorporation of the term. Journalists complain that for media discourses to use the term to refer to fashion insiders' outfits diminishes the form of 'authentic' individual expression that true street style should ideally constitute. *The Globe and Mail's* Courtney Shea locates a socioeconomic disconnect in the term's current discursive usage:

Street style has jumped the proverbial shark, having morphed ... from a once-subversive subset into a mainstream, parody-worthy universe in its own right. ... Even the term 'street style' has started to feel a bit off—contemporary street style is as truly of 'the street' as current-day JLo [Jennifer Lopez] identifies with 'the block'". (2014, para. 2)

The outfits worn to Fashion Month cannot even be considered a form of personal articulation but are often donated or loaned to editors from fashion houses' public relations companies or worn in exchange for a fee or brand mentions (Berlinger, 2014; LaFerla, 2012).^{clxi} Numerous fashion editors and bloggers have become notorious for changing outfits between presentations (de Perthuis, 2015; Titton, 2013), and Dello Russo is one of the most oft-mentioned culprits in the fashion press (see Berlinger, 2014; LaFerla, 2012). Still, journalists' laments hint at a time past in which street style could exist separate from commercial influence: "While savvy readers have long known that the editorial content that appears in their favourite monthlies was influenced by advertisers, street style was once a space free from these kinds of transactional compromises" (Berlinger, 2014, para. 5). Luvaas (2016) frames this difference as that between "a highly merchandised construct" and "true personal style" (p. 24). Ton reveals that he has "told junior editors, 'Stop borrowing clothes and wear your own clothes, that's the reason we fell in love with you'" (Phelps, 2016, para. 39). Still, a historical overview of the street's function as an element in fashion photographs reveals that this ideal mode of pure, untouched expression, if it existed at

all, has always operated in a complicated dialectical relationship to commercial fashion. Such an examination also confronts a historical politics of representation of specific urban environments.

STREET STYLE IN PHOTOGRAPHS

Historical photographic forms that precede online street style photography include street photography outside of the fashion system, in which the representation of people is incidental; anthropological portraits of human subjects, often from remote cultures; fashion photographs that capture models in front of outdoor locations or streets replicated in studios; street style photographs in which subjects might or might not be aware of the camera; and street style portraits in which non-professional ‘authentic’ subjects pose for the photographer (see Luvaas, 2016, pp. 25-42).^{clxii} de Perthuis (2015) attempts to situate the street style photograph within the form of the fashion photograph, imbricated within the discursive structures of the commercial fashion system. While the democratic nature of the street style *blog* photograph remains for de Perthuis ambiguous, I contend that the nature of the street style photograph on a high fashion media site such as *Style.com* is not just commercial but positioned as classist and luxurious.

The presence of cities and streets (as places and ideas) in both street style and fashion photographs, and combinations of these forms, illuminates the manner in which street fashion photography operates on a continuum between the authentic and the produced. Both print and online street fashion photographers have earned their reputations touring cities – their home cities and international locations – with an apparent casual, all-seeing approach that numerous scholars liken to the *flaneur* of the modern Parisian arcades. In an echo of Woodward, Luvaas defines street style photography “in its most straightforward ... as simply fashion photography taken ‘*on the street*,’” in contrast with the produced nature of studio shoots and fashion shows

(2016, p. 23, my emphasis). He articulates the multifarious connotations but continued cultural predominance of ‘the street’:

From a voyage of discovery into unknown lands to an uncovering of all that is ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ in an age of artifice to a glamorous slideshow of the couture-wearing elite, street style photography has served multiple masters, and as it has done so, it has altered the conventions through which it depicts ‘the street’, from a simple, mood-creating backdrop to a kind of conceptual screen, separating a figure from its context. Nonetheless, in all of its guises, ‘the street’ has remained a central trope of street style photography. ... The street, then, is a *subject* of street style photography, perhaps even *the* subject, a fluid, amorphous entity that accumulates meanings as it snowballs into fashion world ubiquity. (2016, p. 25, author’s emphasis).

This chapter is interested thus in the manner that Ton’s street style photographs simultaneously depict and refuse to depict the street – moments in which the street becomes aestheticized, and moments in which it becomes effaced. Transcending notions of the ‘street’ to the total urban environment, Titton comments that the *city* has occupied a “central” position “as both scene and real space for the photographic staging of fashion” (2010, p. 128). Here, she illuminates a tension between cities as theatrical scenes as opposed to “real” depictions, while “staging” functions as a metaphor for the performative nature of fashion presentation. This difference references fashion shoots that represent the scene as a fictional or editorial location but also indicates the constructedness and calculatedness of fashion’s mediatized representations. Titton (2013) does not examine specific representations of cities in street style photographs but rather presents an overview of the dominance of cities in this practice. Both Luvaas (2016) and Titton (2013) trace street style photographs to the earliest photographs of the modern period and its societal fascination with man-made environments and architectural structures, notably in Haussmann’s Paris. These photographs can be considered the predecessors to depictions of cities and landmarks in editorial fashion photographs. Luvaas documents the medium’s evolution through the work of three modernist urban photographers in Paris: August Sander and Eugène Atget, and

later Henri Cartier-Bresson (2016, pp. 33-42). He credits fashion photographer Irving Penn with integrating the street into the editorial fashion photograph (in this instance his portraiture) and creating a notion of the street “where upmarket fashionistas could go slumming in search of ‘real life’” (2016, p. 43). Similar notions of the street’s romanticized grittiness can be found in the work of Edward Steichen (Luvaas, 2016, p. 43; Rocamora & O’Neill, 2008, p. 187). 1960s youth culture and fashion’s embrace of subcultures saw fashion again find inspiration in the street as a location of raw cultural expression (Luvaas, 2016, p. 44; Rocamora & O’Neill, 2008, p. 188). Luvaas (2016) and Tilton (2013) identify a confluence of photographic forms in the work of Bill Cunningham, who shot for the *New York Times* from the 1970s until his death in 2016, and is considered to be the father of present-day street style photography (see also Rosser, 2010; Shea, 2014).^{clxiii} Cunningham’s practice fell, however, within a more journalistic practice that did not prioritize composition, and the upscale locations and events at which he shot belied ideals that his photographs were representative of a total population (Luvaas, 2016, pp. 45-47).

In a useful examination of street fashion portraiture in the UK, Agnès Rocamora and Alistair O’Neill (2008) document that while the press once used photographs of people ‘on the street’ to capture ‘real’ fashion choices, the ‘street’ has become a simulacrum, if depicted at all. *i-D Magazine*’s iconic 1980s “straight-up” portrait, created by UK fashion photographer Steve Johnston, formalized street fashion photography in magazines (Luvaas, 2016; Rocamora & O’Neill, 2008; Tilton, 2010: p. 134). This format captured subjects against a white wall on an actual street, represented as a democratic “site for the creative performance of ‘real’ people,” but this ‘real’ remained a construction, dependent on its dialectical relation to fashion’s falsities (Rocamora & O’Neill, p. 185). The “straight up” was also recognizable for its comparative *lack* of aesthetic composition or technical production, emphasizing a sense of the street or the club as

an “immediate” ground, even if that location was known only to its inhabitants (Luvaas, 2016, p. 49). Johnston has revealed that he shot most of the portraits in front of the same wall each time, and thus, “the street is present in them only as an idea, a site of authentic, grass-roots creativity” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 51). Newspapers and magazines from across Europe and in Asia soon adopted the format (Luvaas, 2016, p. 49; Rocamora & O’Neill, 2008, p. 188). Rocamora and O’Neill contend that the fashion press’s co-optation of street fashion has erased the street’s specificities and the street itself in lieu of white space or a ‘placeless’ brick wall that stands for both the ‘street’ and the white wall of the straight-up (2008, pp. 195-197).^{clxiv} In a 2003 studio-shot homage to street fashion in the magazine *The Face*, the street is “stripped of its identity as a situated physical place to become a blank canvas” or a reductionist “urban wasteland” (Rocamora & O’Neill, 2008, p. 195). Rocamora and O’Neill contrast the quotidian urban street, “the public space of ordinary people,” with “the exclusive space of the fashion show and its extraordinary audience of celebrities and other fashion insiders” (2008, p. 189). These distinct spheres inform each other: high fashion needs ‘the street’ to position itself as upper-class, while the ‘street’ needs high fashion to be read as authentic (Rocamora & O’Neill, 2008, p. 189).^{clxv} A return to more ‘authentic’ street fashion portraiture can be found in *NYLON Magazine*, launched in 1999, which included international street style portraits and published a book of these photographs, *STREET*, in 2006, as well as in the Japanese magazines *FRUiTS* and *TUNE*, inspired by UK magazines such as *i-D* and *The Face* (Luvaas, 2016, pp. 55-56).

While online street fashion photography returns to literal streets, the aesthetic that its forerunners have established commits a similar act of erasure – the brick wall reappears, but its ‘urban’ connotations are appropriated in the service of editorial, international fashion. Luvaas states that the “cultural value” of street style blogs resides in their illustration of “specific cities

at specific moments in time ... well beyond the traditional boundaries of the global fashion industry” (2016, p. 4). However, Fashion Month representations have come to permeate fashion media sites and even the street style blogs, including Luvaas’s own. This occurrence has made it unclear not just whether or not the photograph was taken of a Fashion Month attendee, but in which cities the photographs were taken. Susan Ingram (2013) reads the street as (not) depicted in *The Sartorialist*, which renders cities so unlocateable that Schuman has to include labels:

[T]he city forms an anonymous backdrop against which fashionistas can look urban. The ‘*really cool people*’ whose pictures Schuman finds worth taking are in an interesting way *placeless*. In many of the images, the city disappears completely, and it is rarely clear from the photos themselves where they have been taken, which is why each has to be labeled. Viewed without their labels, it becomes apparent how lacking in specificity these places are, and how similar the looks. Thus the *Sartorialist* is ‘conflating global fashion centers.’ (p. 12, my emphasis)

‘Urban’ becomes an inverted signifier, connected not to working-class streets but to fashionableness. It matters not what cities the subjects stand in but rather that their looks are cosmopolitan: a more upscale, ‘cultured’ notion of the urban. Schuman does indicate which images were captured outside fashion shows, and which fashion shows these were, but he often shoots in the same locations he travels to for Fashion Month, and his composition remains uniform. Elizabeth Wilson (2006) notes that ‘urban’ is often used in marketing to invoke the lifeblood of metropolitan streets, in hip brand names such as Urban Outfitters, and even in an ironic manner that alludes to cities as wastelands, as in the case of the cosmetics line Urban Decay (p. 35). Sarah Banet-Weiser (2012) asserts that the terms ‘street’ and ‘urban’ are racialized in United States cultural discourses, connoting either fearful ghettos or nostalgic historical sites (p. 105). The ‘authentic’ street is forever an “imagined” notion (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 92), as it is impossible to locate a pristine street left unblemished by commercial culture,

or “a space outside of the market in which authenticity can take root and flourish” (p. 120). For Luvaas, the street remains a site of contested representations:

... [T]he street as a space of movement and flow, a place to see and be seen; the street as an ordinary pedestrian reality, and a hard scientific ‘fact’; the street as a romantic ideal, a bubbling cauldron of creativity; the street as the last vestige of authenticity in a commodified culture; and the street as a stage on which that very commodified culture performs some of its most ostentatious displays. (2016, p. 68)

I contend that street style photographs from Fashion Month collapse the distinction between the constructed and the authentic, superimposing the Fashion Month scene and its elitist associations upon the ‘street’ even as the quotidian life of the street continues on and around it. The depiction of insiders as ‘ordinary people’ on blogs and media sites paints the street itself as a status marker.

Ton’s photographs must also be considered within the context of other contemporaries that conceptualize ‘the street’ in their photographs in an ambiguous fashion, though he remains a forerunner within this milieu. Luvaas (2016) locates Ton’s aesthetic within a handful of other street style photographers who focus their lenses both on Fashion Month scenes (in addition to their off-season practice): H. B. Nam (*streetfsn.com*), Youngjun Koo (*koo.im*), Michael Dumler (*onabbottkinney.com*), Nabile Quenum (*jaiperdumavest.com*) and Driely S. (*Driely S.*), and, in particular, New York-based Adam Katz Sinding (*Le 21ème*), whose work he profiles (pp. 63-64).^{clxvi} These photographers have all broken with the tradition of portraiture and seek instead to capture more “dynamic,” movement-based shots, in which “the details of the garment” are but one component: “Their work is less about clothing per se than it is about ‘decisive moments’, those fleeting gestures and haphazard compositions ...” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 64). While these photographers’ work bears similarities, Ton declares himself a pioneer in the use of both the landscape orientation and a cropped, close-up focus: “My images were all horizontal. People were kind of like, *What?* The fact that everything was cropped tight or focused, it was something

different” (Phelps, 2016, para. 10).^{clxvii} Luvaas observes that these photographers are oriented towards the imperatives of high fashion and thus prioritize *street style stars* or fashion editors-turned-celebrities (2016, p. 65). However, he further claims that the photographers also “put ‘the street’ back into ‘street style’ photography” – not the authentic, gritty street but rather “the street of the poetic moment, the street of romantic possibility, of happy accident” characteristic of modernist European cities: “Anything that doesn’t fit that conception dissolves into a field of lens blur” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 65). While I note Ton’s use of lens blur in several photographs and document that the streetscape is an element of his composition, Ton’s conceptualization of the street is far more ambiguous, and more nuanced. Moreover, his focus on fashion is far from incidental, and indeed cannot be when one considers the photographs’ placement on a fashion media site. In this context, the street must be the internationalized street of *fashion tourism*: a phenomenon that Craik defines as both recreational tourism based on fashion and consumerism and the modes of travel that the field instantiates (2013, p. 353). Ton’s photographs are more readable than those of his more experimental contemporaries, prioritizing fashion’s opulent commodities and the aspirational people that wear them over a sense of mood. This is not to suggest that Ton’s photographs are democratic but instead that his composition treads a balance between editorial fantasies and Condé Nast’s mandate as a retail facilitator. Furthermore, I do not intend to claim that street fashion provides an ‘authentic’ counterpart to high fashion. However, the clothes that Fashion Month attendees wear are often expensive and as such exist at a social remove from those garments and symbols that historically constituted mainstream or subcultural fashions, rooted in more middle- or working-class communities.

METHODS

I performed manual content analysis on a nonrandom sample of all of the photographs that Ton posted to *Style.com* during the Spring/Summer 2014 (n=339) and Fall/Winter 2014 (n=386) ready-to-wear women's collections, for a total of 725 photographs (n=725). The breakdown of cities is as follows: Fall/Winter 2014—Paris (44.3%), New York City (27.7%), Milan (17.9%), London (10.4%); Spring/Summer 2014—Paris (47.8%), New York City (24.2%), Milan (16.5%), London (12.1%). To obtain an accurate count of cities depicted, I cross-referenced the photographs with the archives on Ton's personal website. Ton has tagged each photograph with the location, names of high-profile subjects, the designers (if known), and themes or "trends" that he has identified.^{clxviii} Paris occupies almost half of the total number of photographs, suggesting that Ton either attended more fashion shows there, or preferred to take more photographs there; this statistic further attests to Paris's continued dominance as a fashion capital (Rocamora, 2006b, 2009). Ton's *Style.com* album titles speak to high fashion's classism. The head for Spring/Summer 2014 is "Whiz, Bang, Zoom," referencing Fashion Month's frenzied pace. The head for Fall/Winter 2014 is "Accept No Imitations," positioning Ton, the photographs and the clothes as luxury commodities. Gillian Rose's (2012) notion of *social modality* in visual discourse analysis accounts for Ton's photographs as a form of fashion representation that intersects with media discourses, aesthetic or designer trends, idealized bodies and cultural references, all predicated on an elevated class echelon. Writing on the discursive production of Paris as fashion capital, Rocamora (2009) combines Bourdieu's (1993) concept of the production of symbolic value and Foucault's (1977) connection of discourses to power structures into a formulation of *fashion media discourse*: an analytical framework readily applicable to visual and textual discourses of fashion cities and to the fashionable persons that inhabit or travel therein.

ANALYSIS: TOMMY TON'S CITIES AS STREETSCAPES

Ton's photographs share numerous elements: foremost are the fashion insiders walking or running to or from venues, past the hordes of photographers (sometimes seen and sometimes unseen) in a predetermined set of enactments (see also Luvaas, 2016). In the background are rows of (often black) cars and motorbikes, elaborate streetscapes and/or textured architecture. Ton also offers cropped torso or close-up shots that feature handbags, shoes and other accessories (Figure 26). Ton depicts the literal street as an editorial backdrop against which to emphasize fashion, and cities are often recognizable only to those persons that are already familiar with them. Weather helps to indicate location: shifts inform elements of light and shadow, while select photographs represent extreme conditions. New York City endured wet snowfall during Fall/Winter 2014 Fashion Week, and several photographs depict insiders stepping over snowbanks or draping coats over their heads. Colourful taxis and buses, in addition to license plates, often become the only distinct markers of place. Photos taken at New York Fashion Week (8 from each album) show editors in front of or climbing into classic yellow taxis. In London photographs, red double-decker buses appeal to tourist materials and invoke its fashionable, 1960s youth culture. Nonetheless, the vehicles' ubiquitous presence becomes naturalized as a scene of international mobilities and an advertisement for these cities as tourist destinations: not New York as it is lived but New York as it is discursively produced. These vehicles become a flattened and often blurred element. More than half of the photographs (56.1%) depict the literal street, often with its associated icons or referents visible – (54.7% for Spring/Summer 2014 and 57.3% for Fall/Winter 2014). 349 photographs (48.1%) illustrate cars and 104 (29.8%) of these depict cars in a prominent or close-up position in the frame (Figure 27).^{clxix} 211 photographs (29.1%) contain traffic, parking or directional signage, or barriers and

traffic cones. 219 photographs (30.2%) depict subjects walking on or in the street, while 69 (31.5%) of these feature subjects in an indicated crosswalk. 174 photographs (24.0%) depict individuals close in front of an architectural structure, while half (50.1%) illustrate structures in the distance. 33 photographs (5.0%) were coded as ‘perspective shots’ that Ton captured from the middle of a street, with buildings on each side meeting at a point (Figure 28). Here, Ton’s use of perspective creates a striking aesthetic backdrop that harkens back to a modern fascination with urban architecture and features cities without revealing location.

Figure 26. London Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2014, Burberry Prorsum outfits. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2013c). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/ss14-london-womens-04137>

Figure 27. Model Edie Campbell, Paris Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2013d). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/edielv12>

Figure 28. Model Hanne Gaby Odiele at Milan Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2013e). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/hannegabyjunya>

Cities as Placeless

Ton’s photographs often convey a sense of placelessness, similar to those on *The Sartorialist*.

Rosser (2010) observes that the location of street style photographs, in the main fashion capitals of New York, London, Milan and Paris, lends status to the fashion insiders that appear in them (p. 161; see also Titton, 2013, p. 132). Nonetheless, such status is often communicated through the mere *fact* of the editors’ placement in fashion capitals and not the unique features of the capitals themselves. I coded 343 photographs (47.2%) as ‘streetscape’: in which the elements of the urban location comprised additional space in the frame to that of the subject(s) or were otherwise instrumental to the composition (Figure 29). This percentage is consistent across seasons (51.3%

for Spring/Summer 2014 and 43.8% for Fall/Winter 2014). Historical architecture with friezes and columns reads as European but not location-specific: it flatters and lends cultural status to the subjects and their fashions, and to the cities as museum cities. It suffices that the architecture appears to be European and ‘antiquated’. 76 photographs (10.5%) capture subjects in front of walls or doors: colours and textures reflect the outfit or showcase it through contrast (11.5% for Spring/Summer 2014 and 10.0% for Fall/Winter 2014). 20 of these photographs (26.3%) feature a brick wall. One particular beige brick wall, in New York (Fall/Winter 2014), matches an insider’s parka (Figure 30). In a subsequent photograph, the wall offers a plain backdrop for Russian fashion editor Miroslava Duma’s flower-printed coat and headscarf (Figure 31).

In 18 photographs (9 from each album), Ton captures subjects against graffiti in Milan and New York City: the juxtaposition of the graffiti with the ensembles is distinctive, as it appropriates graffiti’s cultural associations with an ‘authentic’ urban street for editorial fashion’s aesthetic ends. Banet-Weiser examines the role of street art in processes of branding *creative cities* and determines that it assumes an “ambivalent” status as both contentious and productive (2012, p. 115). The cultural politics of street art are linked to those of racialized communities:

[Street art] nurtures a nostalgic dichotomy between the authentic and the commercial, one that relies on street art’s association with graffiti and tagging, which are not only deeply racialized in the US imagination but also fetishized for their links to racial otherness, and therefore rendered ‘authentic’. (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 101)

Graffiti emerged out of the US 1970s and 1980s hip-hop scene as a form of artistic expression and as a direct response to the encroachment of commercial culture onto public spaces and the increased disenfranchisement of Black and Latino neighbourhoods due to “urban ‘renewal’” policies (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 102; see also J. Austin, 2001; Chang, 2005; Dimitriadis, 2009). Banet-Weiser explicates street art’s associations with a racialized Other as a combination of “the exoticizing aspects of racial tourism with a white fear of the ‘urban,’ a classic tension found in

media representation, popular culture, and entertainment” (2012, p. 105). As “figures” that rhetoricize urban spaces, such “calligraphies howl without raising their voices” and resist photographic pinning down (de Certeau, 1984, p. 102). The practice of using street art as a means to brand cities as ‘creative’ renders street art palatable for a white audience (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 105). Thus, it parallels street style photographers’ use of graffiti to mark streets, and the insiders standing on them, as fashionable. In New York, the highlighting of graffiti as a fashion backdrop is ironic, as the Giuliani administration had graffiti and other “‘unwholesome’” (racial) signifiers removed from Times Square in the 1990s (Banet-Weiser, 2012, p. 109). In an image from Milan, Fall/Winter 2014, Ton frames Dello Russo in profile in a fringed black jacket and pencil skirt in front of black, curled scrawl (Figure 32). In another, fashion editor Viviana Volpicella stands in a white trench coat, printed with red lips and embellished red heels, in front of a yellow wall with red graffiti, which echoes her outfit’s colours, shapes and even texture. The tagged walls recall more ‘authentic’ urban ‘streets’ but are here used for a hip class contrast that features the fashions first and foremost.

In Milan, the landscape, including billboards and storefronts assume a function that Johan Jansson and Dominic Power characterize as a *brand channel* for advertisements and for the promotion of the city’s overall fashionable status (2010, p. 900). These elements, however, are absent from Ton’s photographs. Discussing the 1953 film *Roman Holiday*, Church Gibson remarks that while “Milan is the centre of Italian fashion and home to Italian couture shows, it is not as photogenic a city as Rome” (2006, p. 92). Travel writer John O’Ceallaigh observes that Milan’s historical and artistic “treasures” are harder to find than those of other European tourist destinations and housed inside plainer architecture (2016, para. 1). His tour guide states the difference between Milan and Rome in feminine terms: “Milan is buttoned; Rome has her blouse

undone and her goods on show” (2016, para. 1). O’Ceallaigh takes the sexual metaphor further: “If a wanton display of flamboyant landmarks makes Rome a dishevelled showgirl then Milan, with her stern, unadorned façades and industrious outlook, is a sober schoolmistress. Still, its cultural charms are bountiful, even if kept largely under wraps” (2016, para. 2). This description offers one possible reason for the lack of place identifiers in Ton’s photographs of Milan, as opposed to the outdoor tourist landmarks present in several of his photographs of Paris. Still, in the one photograph that indicates street names, the storefront is that of a *trattoria* rather than a fashion or tourist destination.^{clxx} 404 photographs (55.7%) have blurred backgrounds that render streets indiscernible or erase them (53.1% for Spring/Summer 2014 and 58.0% for Fall/Winter 2014). 129 photographs (17.8%) contain a featured item – a sculpture, advertisement, elaborate wall or architectural structure, landmark or set of (torn) street posters – that bears a similar or contrasting palette or texture to the outfit, but is not intended to indicate location per se.

Figure 29. New York Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2013g). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/ss14-newyork-womens-23637>

Figure 30. New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014g). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/fw14-newyork-womens-27043>

Figure 31. Miroslava Duma at New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014e). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/fw14-newyork-womens-26839>

Figure 32. Anna Dello Russo at Milan Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014b). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source: <http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/adrpradaft1>

Tourist Locations

Ton has begun to depict specific locations more often, as certain fashion shows are held at recognizable tourist destinations; nonetheless, he still uses attractions to create a fashionable aesthetic, prioritizing an editorial feel over common actions and aesthetics depicted in more ubiquitous tourist photographs. In Fall/Winter 2014, Ton photographed fashion insiders walking in Paris's le Jardin des Tuileries, in front of landmarks such as the Golden Sphere. Fashion editor Natasha Goldenberg positions her arms as if to hold the sphere, manipulating the perspective (Figure 33). The photograph can be read as a quotation to familiar tourist practices: Goldenberg seems to chuckle at her awkward position, aware that she is posed in an awkward, intentional manner. I note here, however, that Ton blurs the landmark and keeps it at a visual distance. He therein draws attention back to her face and outfit. Moreover, the fact that Goldenberg does not direct her gaze to Ton but rather to someone near him suggests that numerous photographers attempted to capture her at once. In another photograph, the Belgian model Hanne Gaby Odiele mimics a sculpture, simultaneously invoking and mocking poses in fashion magazines; her makeup appears to have been done for a previous fashion show (Figure 34). Photographing editors in front of the cone-shaped bushes, Ton experiments with perspective and line, as the bushes parallel the lines of skirts or a pointed silk headscarf. The Eiffel Tower is the most persistent visual signifier of Paris: like a couture label, it is Paris's "geographical signature" (Rocamora, 2009, p. 172). Artists depict the Tower as a feminine form, as the shape of its base recalls the lines of a dress or skirt (Rocamora, 2009, p. 167). Three photographs juxtapose the Eiffel Tower with female fashion insiders in positions that parallel its shape. In the first, from Spring/Summer 2014, Dello Russo stands wearing black stiletto ankle boots and a black minidress with chainmail-like panels. Lean and muscular, she appears half as tall as the structure – the effect is furthered as the Tower occupies the photograph's center, while the chainmail

pattern reflects its crossed steel beams (Figure 35). In a second photograph, editor Giovanna Engelbert wears a sweater dress that flares out past the knee and black stiletto heels. The Tower rises further behind, to the top right. Battaglia's cross-legged stance and the flare of her dress mirror its base (Figure 36). In the final photograph, from Fall/Winter 2014, stylist Sarah Chavez stands in profile, in front of the Tower's right leg, bent over to light a cigarette. Her ankle-length, black skirt blows in the wind in the same direction as the Tower's left curvature (Figure 37). The depiction of smoking here is fashionable, as Ton comments, "There's a certain chicness to the way that people smoke" (Hainey, 2014, para. 10). Despite its iconic status, the view from the top of the Eiffel Tower can also create a sense of placelessness, in a similar manner to de Certeau's view from New York's World Trade Center (1984, pp. 92-93). The Eiffel Tower's view "naturalizes" Paris within the modern period as simulacrum, while its height represents Paris's opportunities for "social ascent" (Rocamora, 2009, pp. 166-67).^{clxxi} Craik (2013) declares that in our current social climate, the "traveling ... spectacle" of fashion "rivals the more familiar attractions of the tourism industry" (p. 368). In one Paris photograph (Spring/Summer 2014), editor Michelle Elie does an air kick that frames a group of tourists. She wears a multi-printed outfit and four-inch platform ankle boots, while the tourists are dressed in jeans, chinos, golf shifts and windbreakers, and recognizable as such for a flag that the guide carries (Figure 38). Ton's photographs of Paris thus reduce tourist landmarks to icons *for* international tourism and appropriate their cultural associations as a thematic backdrop to a luxurious spectacle; in the final photograph here, the fashion editor's embodied form is not just focused and foregrounded but imposed over other anonymous bodies undertaking stock tourist practices to illustrate the contrast in dress.

Figure 33. Natasha Goldenberg at Paris Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014f). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/fw14-paris-womens-13425>

Figure 34. Hanne Gaby Odiele at Paris Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014c). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/fw14-paris-womens-10316>

Figure 35. Anna Dello Russo at Paris Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2013a). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/ss14-paris-womens-02337>

Figure 36. Giovanna Engelbert at Paris Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2013b). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/ss14-paris-womens-02402>

Figure 37. Sarah Chavez at Paris Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014i). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/fw14-paris-womens-12750>

Figure 38. Michelle Elie at Paris Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2013f). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/ss14-paris-womens-13218>

Fashion as Exclusive

The photographs' composition presents fashion as an exclusive realm in which access is offered but then denied. Just 84 photographs (11.6%) depict subjects that look *at* the camera: all others look ahead or to the street, are shot from behind, or have their heads omitted from the frame. 199 photographs (27.5%) illustrate subjects wearing sunglasses: the most frequent accessory seen aside from handbags and shoes. When asked how insiders can attract his lens, Ton responds, "Give me the coldest stare ever . . . ignore me completely . . . I love that sense of distance between me and my subjects, there's a sense of mystery . . . and the fact that they don't want to

be photographed or they're running away from you makes you want to photograph them more” (Hainey, 2014, para. 14-15). In a later interview, he takes a similar stance that exposes a fetishization of female bodies: “My funniest rule is to avoid us at all costs. The moment that a girl stops and keeps posing for everyone, it makes her less desirable. If she runs away from us, we’ll jump over cars and do whatever we can to get her picture” (Phelps, 2016, para. 35). Here, Ton positions himself as outsider paparazzi. Ton’s comments here echo the work of historian Peter Bailey (1990), whose analysis of Victorian barmaids as a cultural trope determined that spatial and temporal distance produce initial desire and enhance the allure of the unattainable object. To return to Foucault’s theories of surveillance, Ton’s photographic gaze is Panoptical, while fashion insiders maintain a constant awareness of his camera’s presence, in the peripheries if not in front of them. His camera has the power to render insiders more visible both inside and outside of the field of fashion. Ton prefers to photograph subjects that do not seek him out because he perceives their style as more “natural and effortless” (Shea, 2015, para. 2). This comment is prefaced with the subhead, “Authenticity is always in fashion” (Shea, 2015, para. 2). Here, the notion is turned on its head, creating two categories of fashionista: the real insiders whose less ostentatious dress marks authentic field membership, and the wannabes that emulate the codes but create an inauthentic impression. The individuals Ton deems “natural and effortless” are precisely those insiders that possess high fashion capital and do not need to be made (more) visible. All of the photographs depict women, while men appear in just 16 (2.20%), and no man is photographed on his own.^{clxxii} 606 photographs (83.6%) feature one individual (even if others appear in the background) while none features more than five. While the totality of photographs depicts the ‘fashion set’ as a collective, the focus on select members indicates that competition for distinction happens at an individual level. The remainder of the Fashion Month scene

becomes part of the spectacle: 261 photographs (36.0%) feature members in behind, near or at a distance (38.1% in Spring/Summer 2014 and 34.2% in Fall/Winter 2014) while a handful (45, or 6% of total) capture other photographers shooting the same subjects, boosting their perceived social influence.

Fashionable Mobilities

Fashion's exclusion is also reflected in sheer movement, an element that communicates ideals of cosmopolitan, international mobilities. Street names that do appear in the frame are often on directional signage with arrows pointing to other parts of cities; traffic markers indicate "walk" or "don't park," suspending insiders even within their current location. Their presence in the frame is transient, like fashion shows or like fashion itself. 258 photographs (35.6%) feature the subject holding a cell phone, while 94 (36.4% of these) illustrate subjects talking or texting, detached from the chaos or coordinating their Fashion Week mobilities. 401 photographs (55.3%) depict subjects walking through the urban environment, often with skirts, coats, or hair billowing out behind them or in the opposite direction. 430 photographs (59.3%) are shot at a 45-degree angle; 219 (30.2%) position subjects at the side of the frame to feature an additional element of the street, or the fashion crowd. 101 (13.9%) depict subjects in profile; and 84 (11.6%) tilt subjects' bodies. 149 photographs (20.5%) were coded as communicating an overall sense of 'movement' due to the illustration of a sidewalk or traffic circle's curvature (and cars traveling on the street); the placement of cars parallel or opposite to the subject's facing direction; the unusual placement of a vehicle; or subjects riding bicycles or motorbikes (the latter of which are not place-specific). While the title of *international* fashion editor or retailer lends attendees a measure of status, personnel and models become for the duration of Fashion Week placeless, as do their ensembles.^{clxxiii} Due to their hectic schedules, some intermediaries and

executives might not inhabit these cities outside of the locational and social parameters of fashion events (Craik, 2013, p. 367; Skov, 2006, p. 773). Craik (2013) deems these same attendees participants in practices and economies of *fashion tourism* (p. 354). Ton's depiction of cities contributes to a state in which, as fashion show producer Alexandre de Bétak cautions, audiences "are tired of seeing too much of the same. You don't even know what city you're in anymore..." (as cited in Anaya, 2013, n.p.). De Bétak's lament can be read as a complaint at the sameness of indoor and outdoor representations and as an existential comment on the ennui and placelessness of the fashion editor as tourist. In Ton's images, insiders are held up as arbiters of 'real' fashion in 'real' life. It does not matter which streets these are: rather, high fashion is constructed as an aspirational realm within its cities.

Embodied Fashion Capital

The fashions and bodies that appear in Ton's frame reference high fashion's ideals of embodied social distinction. Identifiable brand logos do not consistently appear, though Louis Vuitton's *Damier check canvas* pattern and Chanel's iconic quilted leather are still visible on handbags.^{clxxiv} Instead, fashion insiders commit to a moneyed aesthetic communicated through luxurious fabrics. Outerwear appears in 504 (69.5%) photographs – 166 (49.0%) from Spring/Summer 2014 and 338 (87.6%) from Fall/Winter 2014 – with a total of 598 pieces depicted, due to multiple people in the frame or to layering practices.^{clxxv} 239 coats (40.0%) appear to be constructed from wool or felt; 126 (21.1%) appear to be leather or suede (often the classic black leather jacket); and 80 (13.4%) read as fur, faux fur, or, in two cases, feathers, all luxury signifiers since prehistoric times (Thomas, 2007, p. 6). These expensive materials recall Bourdieu's (1984) observation that the upper classes do not convey distinction through opulence but rather base their consumer choices on considerations of cleanliness, smoothness and fabrics

to convey financial ease (pp. 247-48). 492 photographs (67.9%) contain handbags or purses: 564 such items appear in total, while 60 photographs contain more than one item. These accessories are the focus of 148 (30.1%) of these photographs. Leather handbags continue to be fashion's most coveted item (Thomas, 2007, pp. 188-194). Leather here comprises the dominant material: 405 bags (71.8%) appear to be made of leather, crocodile, suede or other animal skins, while 163 (40.2%) are black leather, indicating insiders' desire for simplicity, but also the subscription to a uniform. Connie Wang suggests that insiders have adopted a pared-down appearance to differentiate themselves from the inauthentic outsiders that parade in colourful outfits hoping to gain Tom's notice. Because the ensembles' worth resides in fabric and construction, provenance is thus discernible only to possessors of *fashion capital*: "The people who know about these things know that the plain grey sweater is from The Row and costs \$1,000" (Shea, 2014, para. 9). Almost all academic critiques of *The Sartorialist* reference a *Refinery29* satirical chart that aims to help fashionistas earn Schuman's notice, recommending accessories that one can wear if one is not already a street style star, "model pretty" or an "old, rich and European" man (Barberich & Gelardi, 2012; see Church Gibson, 2012; Rosser, 2010; Titton, 2010). In 2012, the authors updated the chart, noting that street style photographers had come to prefer a more minimal approach: "if you want to get shot by Mr. Schuman, now, you've got to dial it WAY down ... too many creative punches can work against you" (Barberich & Gelardi, 2012, para. 1). Authentic insider status is thus communicated through authentic materials, which in turn denote authentic luxury brands to those that possess authentic fashion capital. Jeans appear in 175 photographs (24.1%), often ripped or with oversized patches that create an apparent high-end low-end juxtaposition. These jeans also come, however, from ready-to-wear collections, and the distressing and patches increase their retail value. Insiders further opt to emphasize a lithe

physique. Half (50.0%) of all outerwear pieces were coded as ‘oversized’.^{clxxvi} This indicates that fashion insiders still intend their key pieces to be noticeable. The exaggerated proportions furthermore make wearers’ bodies appear slimmer. 34 coat-wearing individuals (20.6%) in Spring/Summer 2014 and 50 individuals (14.8%) in Fall/Winter 2014 drape coats over their shoulders, emphasizing both additional fashion items and a streamlined appearance underneath.

Ton’s photographs further promote pervasive industrial ideals of beauty and style that are both classist and racialized: the preferred, thin, Caucasian bodies that are not just used to advertise clothes but are also advantageous for career advancement in fashion – an actual *measure* of embodied fashion capital (see Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, p. 747). Titton comments that street style blogs, including but not limited to photographs taken outside fashion show venues, “reintroduced the body image, racial stereotypes and sartorial style of mainstream fashion into a new media format and an old photographic genre” and uses the presence of muses such as Giovanna Engelbert and Hanneli Mustaparta, who had prior careers as models before transitioning to work as fashion editors, to illustrate this point (2013, p. 135; see also Titton, 2010). Almost all photographs (711 or 98.0%) capture attendees whose bodies were coded as ‘lean,’ ‘lean – athletic,’ or ‘lean – petite,’ while another 13 (1.8%) were coded as ‘petite’. Only one photograph depicted a heavier individual (an established member of the press). In addition to Battaglia and Mustaparta, both of whom appear frequently in Ton’s photographs (Battaglia fourteen times and Mustaparta four times in the sample), other featured editors such as Emmanuelle Alt (five appearances) and Caroline de Maigret (eight appearances) also worked as models. Ton’s photographs are also notable for the repeated appearance of current working models, including Odiele, who appears in thirteen photographs (the third most often behind Dello Russo and Battaglia); the East Asian models Ming Xi, Liu Wen, Soo Joo Park and Xiao

Wen Ju, who appear 29 times combined; and other faces-of-the-moment such as Joan Smalls, Saskia de Brauw, Caroline Brasch Nielsen, Binx Walton, Edie Campbell, Chloe Norgaard, Alanna Zimmer and Grace Mahary, all photographed three or more times.^{clxxvii} While the lack of diversity in the photographed bodies reflects broader, contentious industry standards, the images nonetheless perpetuate such limited ideals. Several scholars criticize Schuman for promoting similar, limited standards of attractiveness and dress (Church Gibson, 2012; Rosser, 2010; Titton, 2010). The racial breakdown in Ton's photographs was coded as follows: Caucasian –502 (69.3%); East Asian – 95 (13.1%); Unclear – 91 (12.6%); Black – 34 (5.0%), reflecting high fashion's disproportionate whiteness.^{clxxviii} Wissinger (2013) blames mediatization for what she perceives as fashion's whitewashing, as tastemakers select models that offer the safest choice to placate consumer attention spans, resulting in a stock model "that is very white and thin [cast] in order to be read as fashionable in a split second" (p. 139). Her assertion adheres to Turner's (2010) conclusions on the non-diverse realities of mediated personas under commercial interests. The literal and figurative narrowness of these visible bodies has already had real effects on industry personnel. Entwistle and Rocamora (2006) interviewed junior fashion editors that felt insecure about their outfits within the fashion show environment as a then-still comparatively exclusive space, visible (for the most part) just to other members of the field of fashion (p. 747). A decade later, Fashion Month's relentless photo-circulation has amplified these insecurities as editors face the judgment of photographers and pressure to be the next *street style star*, leading to increased concerns about their physical appearance and worries about how their visibility within this mediatized set of ideals influences other women (see H. Phelan, 2011, para. 10-12).

Scholars and columnists propose that fashion editors have become the arbiters of fashion trends, perhaps more so than the collections (Titton, 2013; Berlinger, 2014). Titton documents a

reciprocal relationship formed between the fashion insiders that have advanced their careers as intermediaries via their appearances in street style photographs, and additional media processes and personnel that dictate what is fashionable (2013, p. 135). Editors can be trusted to “incorporate the newest fashion trends into their wardrobes” because their positions already place them ahead of the representational curve (Titton, 2013, p. 135). These editors function simultaneously as arbiters and as models off the runway (though Ton’s photographs also depict the *actual* models before and after the shows). The sheer reach and popularity of street style albums could attest to this notion. However, a close examination and season-to-season comparison of photographs of these fashion editors reveals that ensembles worn to Fashion Month are not pushing the envelope of fashion trends but are often uniform. Such fashions present a set of means and materials through which members of the fashion set communicate industrial and social distinction rather than innovative expression: even as there remains, in the literal outdoor street, a clear visual demarcation between the aesthetics of the fashion show attendees, the photographers and the other members of the populace going about their quotidian lives. Furthermore, when the items that editors wear are the actual outfits that have just appeared on the runways, the editors participate in the perpetuation of trends as dictated by the fashion houses (see also Berlinger, 2014), but do not demonstrate that these trends can be made *wearable*. Titton declares that, “the establishment of street style blogs was only possible through the intense cooperation with fashion industry insiders and resulted in the reinforcement of prevailing power structures and visual narratives” (2013, p. 135). The aesthetic of Ton’s street style photographs for *Style.com* is derived from the photographic practice he started for *Jack ‘n’ Jill*, and the albums can therefore be seen as a perpetuation of the industrial and social phenomenon that Titton identifies. Ton’s photographs further demonstrate, however, that the aesthetic standards depicted

are not those of *mainstream* fashion per se but those enclosed within the field of fashion, a social (and literalized) realm predicated on more class-based forms of capital. Much as earlier media formats inform the reception of discursive and experiential content, all of the luxury signifiers in Ton's images are readable precisely because of the intertextual resonances between street style photographs and earlier (and still active) print media, both in terms of their materialities and what Rose (2012) terms the *social modalities* of their representations: or, rather, users' enculturation in recognizing and desiring the symbols of class and capital in fashion magazines and consumer culture. *Style.com*, while accessible to a consumer public thanks to the 'democratic' medium of the Internet, was nonetheless a site dedicated almost entirely to high fashion and its brands and aesthetics, and these photographs would have appeared next to luxury brand advertisements and within other Fashion Month look photographs and reviews. Moreover, the site's content and format remediated the same editorial aesthetics and authorial voices of the print version of *Vogue* and other publications under the Condé Nast banner, as does *Vogue*'s newer fashion show-focused interfaces. Ton's photographs, within the discursive logic of the print magazine, functioned here as a more editorial-focused and spontaneous set of images in contrast to the more informational and repetitious look photographs.

Elements of 'Real' Streets

In Ton's photographs, elements of the 'real' streets persist that resist incorporation, such as construction sites or refuse; still, Ton contains these within a fashion frame. In a Fall/Winter 2014 photograph from New York, a model is shot in front of a blue dumpster that overflows with garbage bags and piles of cardboard boxes. She wears a dark green canvas, shearling-lined jacket and a long, grey wool scarf draped over her torso and head, and she carries a water bottle and a leather shoulder bag with a panel the same shade as the cardboard. The model shielding herself

from the elements in front of a dumpster invokes the “homeless chic” aesthetic that has made designers such as Vivienne Westwood the subject of criticism. The press release from Fall/Winter 2010 Milan Fashion Week described Westwood’s problematic menswear collection as an homage to “the roving vagrant whose daily get-up is a battle gear for the harsh weather conditions” (as cited in Merkelson, 2011, para. 14), a description which this photograph inverts in its application to New York Fashion Week attendees. The oversized khaki green shearling coat, scarf wrapped (seemingly) hastily around the model’s head and absence of gloves cause her to appear abject, while the plastic water bottle and leather tote bag remind the reader that her calculated appearance is still expensive. While she appears to be closing her coat for warmth, her stance emphasizes the water bottle and the tote bag within the frame (Figure 39). That same season, Ton captures Canadian bloggers Samantha and Caillianne Beckerman at New York Fashion Week, posing alongside street workers (Figure 40). The Toronto and New York-based Beckerman Twins have been profiled in the Canadian press for their eclectic outfits and posh, whirlwind lifestyle (Sanati, 2006). The photograph draws attention to the labour that maintains the urban backdrop, but also smacks of class tokenism. These problematics are alleviated because one of the twins, in her neon toque, resembles a traffic cone. This appearance almost inverts the status of her clothes, as do the holes in her sweater and jeans, since the workers’ uniforms are intact and clean. Still, the holes are intentional: whether achieved through manufacture or wear, her distressed appearance is one of conspicuous waste. Furthermore, three street workers are Black, while the Beckerman Twins represent the Caucasian subjects that dominate Ton’s photographs. Luvaas describes a Driely S. photograph of a tall, blonde woman posing for (visible) photographers while two panhandlers sit against a wall, pointing to such photographs’ capacities to render “occasional critique” of the class-based nature of these

enactments (2016, p. 64). The posed, even touristic nature of the photograph of the Beckerman Twins eliminates this potential. The combination of high fashion and street workers' uniforms abstracts street fashion from situated streets and occludes the cultural specificities of fashion capitals, in addition to the high-low sartorial combinations that once characterized street style.

Figure 39. Model Mijo Mihaljcic at New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014d). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/fw14-newyork-womens-00816>

Figure 40. Samantha and Caillianne Beckerman at NYFW, Fall/Winter 2014. Photo: Tommy Ton. (Ton, 2014h). Image omitted due to copyright restrictions. For a reproduction, please consult the following source:

<http://www.tommyton.com/archive/index.html#!/media/fw14-newyork-womens-00398>

CONCLUSION

Analysis of Tommy Ton's *Style.com* Spring/Summer 2014 and Fall/Winter 2014 photograph albums demonstrates that high fashion has incorporated the contested term *street style* to refer to the ensembles worn by members of the upper-class Fashion Month industrial scene. Ton renders fashion cities as an editorial, aesthetic canvas to celebrate designers and the arbiters that wear their beautiful clothes. He therein reveals the constructedness of high fashion as a social space within cities and illuminates processes of internationalization in contemporary branding practices in both fashion and tourism. Ton's photographs also promote fashion's reassertion of class hierarchies in a neoliberal era. One needs cultural capital in order to recognize these international cities, and this comprehension is predicated on habitus: if one recognizes a specific location, element or designer, one feels a sense of inclusion within a jetsetter fashion scene that is both elite and mobile. At the same time, it becomes sufficient for high fashion to represent these cities *as fashion capitals* rather than as specific geographical locations. Since not all consumers possess the means to travel or to purchase the products, or the clout to attend fashion shows,

current street style photographs become a tool for the production of desire. The proliferation of these images as representative of the ‘real’ is intended to fuel the luxury *and* mainstream, fast fashion marketplaces via consumers’ imitation. At the same time, the fashion industry, saturated with and tired of these representations, has spoken of a “return to the real” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 294): an antidote to the supposed sameness, but also a means to come up with the next ‘authentic’ construct. The next chapter goes behind the scenes of the Fashion Month street style spectacle to examine the complex embodied material and social practices through which the street style photographs taken during Fashion Month are shot and produced. In it, I draw from my own experiences watching street style photographers at work outside venues at New York Fashion Week – Fall/Winter 2016. Reflecting on the field observations I conducted, I explicate the crucial function of cameras and media devices not just as conduits between those present in the space and those watching online but also as mediators of established and novel social enactments between field members. These reveal individual and collective imbalances and assertions on the basis of class ideals, masculinized and feminized modes of address and spectatorship, and racialized social and industry roles and positionalities.

Chapter 8: “This is the runway”: the Camera as Scriptive Thing at New York Fashion Week

This chapter turns its focus from Fashion Month photographs to the nature of the interactions that create them – rather, it examines Fashion Month from the embodied perspective of the camera, or via its lens. It does not present a photographic record, although it does include photographs, but rather situates the camera itself, or the media device, as a focal point of analysis. This chapter relies on the detailed participant observations that I made of the indoor and outdoor environments at New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016 (which I refer to in shorthand as Fashion Week or NYFW) in the dual roles of fashion show attendee and researcher. Both of these roles come with a predefined set of practices and social behaviours that I had to take note of and learn to adopt, often in the moment. Based on these observations, I demonstrate that the camera, sometimes contained in the device, functions both as a media or social interface and as a *scriptive thing* or *scriptive prop* (Bernstein, 2009) that dictates and produces specific enactments between participants. I further characterize the modes of performance undertaken *for* the camera in terms of Wissinger’s (2014) notion of *glamour labour* that demands that models and attendees be conscious at all times of their screen-based representation. This chapter converses too with other scholars’ field observations of Fashion Weeks’ indoor environments (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, 2011) and outdoor *street style* parade (Luvaas, 2016).^{clxxix} This chapter is divided into sections that correspond to the indoor and outdoor enactments of New York Fashion Week. The sections that describe indoor shows address both the audiences’ social interactions with and for other field members, the arrivals of celebrities and audiences’ and press photographers’ interactions with the runway performance. The latter section, in which I observe the often athletic practice of outdoor photo-taking, deals primarily with interactions between attendees and photographers, but I also examine moments in which photographers planted

outside exit doors approach models that have just walked in the fashion shows. While Luvaas observes that the indoor and outdoor arenas of have become “porous” (2016, p. 281), there nonetheless remain literal barriers between these spaces. To differentiate between them helps me to delineate relations, practices and modes of dress specific to each arena. For practical reasons that included travel times, arrival protocols and appropriate dress, I conducted the outdoor observations on dates when I did not have invitations to indoor fashion shows.

This chapter, in particular its ‘indoor’ section, draws from Entwistle and Rocamora’s (2006, 2011) on-site examination of London Fashion Week made just prior to the advent of social media and the industry’s implementation of live streaming. While their observations of the field are relevant to New York Fashion Week in a broad sense, the hierarchical riser model the authors describe is a more standard setup, often seen at the main Fashion Week venues. At NYFW, there exist alternative seating arrangements in more open studio spaces. However, even these different spatial constructs tend to offer elite attendees a privileged view of the collection and place those attendees in a position in which their clout is visually communicated to others (a fact that I gleaned from the nosebleed sections at Kanye West’s Yeezy Season 3 launch when I first arrived – with the help of a Jumbotron). The presence and actions of press photographers and the use of cameras assist in this delineation of status. In a mediatized climate, the camera interface has assumed a far more integral and pervasive function in the maintenance and conduct of social enactments and has facilitated new modes of interaction outside of the contained venue environments. Entwistle and Rocamora (2006) state that, “the actual publicity machine will render the participants visible beyond the field” (p. 745), hinting that press and public relations are separate components. In the present, the attendees themselves contribute to the circulation of content from the space, and the “publicity machine” that utilizes professional cameras makes

fashion visible to consumers on a scale inconceivable a decade before. The camera or device functions as the literalization or rather the icon of mediatization at Fashion Week.

There exist social and functional distinctions between the professional cameras wielded by street style or freelance photographers and members of the press, and smartphone cameras or other similar devices that audience members use to record or photograph productions: the latter can also be used for other communication and computational processes. The smartphone acts not just as a camera tool when attendees use it as such but also as a host of *interfaces* between attendees, and between attendees and Fashion Week's social environments. Here, I draw from Manovich to examine the handheld *interface* not just as a *semiotic* conduit or *content-interface* – a literal screen between our bodies and the presentation – but as a *cultural interface* that both transmits fashion content and informs the interactions that comprise fashion culture (2001, pp. 66-70). The professional camera too functions as interface, as its screen establishes a frame that separates “two absolutely different spaces that somehow coexist” (Manovich, 2001, p. 80), while the photographs render content visible and mobile outside of the field of fashion. Tracking cameras and other camera apparatus used to live stream the fashion shows are visible to attendees, but lighting and other effects work to focus our attention onto the models and clothes. While these cameras are crucial to fashion's mediatization, this chapter focuses on the cameras that inform the social interactions between persons within Fashion Week environments.

THE CAMERA AS SCRIPTIVE THING OR SCRIPTIVE PROP

Robin Bernstein (2009) positions the concept of the *scriptive thing* or *scriptive prop* at the intersection of performance studies and material culture. She derives the term from a theatrical definition of *script* as verb: “to denote an evocative primary substance from which actors, directors and designers build complex, variable performances that occupy real time and space”

(Bernstein, 2009, p. 69). The *scriptive thing*, in a similar manner to the dramatic or instructional text, “broadly structures a performance while simultaneously allowing for resistance and unleashing original, live variations that may or may not be individually predictable” (Bernstein, 2009, p. 69). For Bernstein, an *object* takes on the status of *thing* – rather, it starts to *matter* – in particular “situational and subjective” contexts or through specific and even symbolic forms of use or misuse (2009, p. 69). The *thing* contains the potential to instill the beholder’s “awareness” not just of its material presence but also of one’s own position or cultural status “in material relation” to it (Bernstein, 2009, p. 69). Like the brandscape, the *thing* enters into a connection with the user that, as Bernstein illustrates, “unmoors” both “from a fixed position” and forges a new interaction within social space: “An object becomes a thing when it invites a person to dance” (2009, p. 70). The condition of performance, in J. L. Austin’s sense of the *performative* speech act, distinguishes the *thing* – or, rather, *things* make humans perform in fashions that are both comprehensible and implicit:

Stylized body performances in everyday life are utterances of thoughts that cannot be expressed in words. These thoughts are neither conscious nor unconscious, neither wholly voluntaristic expressions of intention nor compulsory, mechanical movement. Things invite us to dance, and when we sweep them onto the dance floor, they appear to become animate. (Bernstein, 2009, p. 70)

Scriptive things or *scriptive props* both establish and reproduce performances within social or field-specific contexts, and can also function both to disrupt and reinforce dominant, discursive constructions. The *scriptive thing* dictates behaviours in manners that are both explicit and unconscious (Bernstein, 2009, p. 70). These behaviours here take the form of those subtle and outward manifestations of habitus that attendees perform within Fashion Week environments.

In Bernstein’s formulation, *things* script performances in two specific manners. Firstly, she outlines that things dictate our actions through “orders,” defined as “*determined* actions that

are necessary for a thing to function” (2009, p. 71, author’s emphasis). In the case of the camera, this includes the inputs required to use the device, its adaptation to light conditions, its shutter speed, the nature of the screen interface and its editing features. The material actions of use also include broader social circumstances. *Scriptive things* structure human interactions through a process of “enscription” that hails the user in an Althusserian sense as subject: “interpellation through a scriptive thing combines narrative with materiality to structure human behaviour” (Bernstein, 2009, p. 73). Fashion Week’s conditions and locations of camera use are varied and include media pits, front rows, upper rows, a crowd outside a fashion show exit door, after-parties and even the hoods of cars, as I will demonstrate. Secondly, *scriptive things* inform human uses through a series of “blandishments” or “*implied or prompted functions*” (Bernstein, 2009, p. 71, author’s emphasis). At Fashion Week, the camera delineates the individual as *actor* within its performative structures and addresses the subject as the person to be photographed and thus rendered visible as member. The device as interface can also operate as a social shield between actors. Processes of photo-taking can be read as individual, two-person dances between cameras (and their holders) and individual subjects, or as partially choreographed dance pieces comprised of numerous discrete interactions. In its ephemeral but chaotic nature, Fashion Week can itself be read as a social *dance* that exists in a separate semiotic and sometimes literal space from other quotidian mobilities in its host cities. An examination of how the camera mediates participant relations with each other and with their environment, reveals the extent to which certain *scripts* were developed for the camera lens even before fashion’s mediatized condition.

In the *mediatized field of fashion*, the camera scripts the live performance(s) of the here and now and mediates these interactions to fashion’s transnational networks and future affective consumer encounters. Fashion Week’s documented field-specific social enactments, such as the

standard ‘air kiss’ described in the Introduction, remain (Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, p. 747-748). Nonetheless, New York Fashion Week observations demonstrate that the camera as interface has produced new actions between intermediaries both inside and outside the venues. Furthermore, the camera communicates attendees’ *fashion capital* to both in-person and online connections. Attendees still dress and perform in order to convey their fashion capital to other field members, but, now, also dress to perform for the street style photographers’ cameras: a new level of interaction that transcends the field and builds new relationships and more nuanced professional stratifications between intermediaries. This new outdoor scene is conducted both for field members, who can discern who is important and who is not based on who is *photographed*, and for a public audience that accesses photographs online.

A focus on the camera as material device moreover enhances Jansson’s Bourdieusian approach to mediatization, which foregrounds the “materiality of media” and their individual and collective implementation into the environments and enactments that comprise the field (2015, p. 21). Jansson states that media take the form of a *communicational doxa* first as *technics*, which instantiate both “embodiment relations (extensions) and hermeneutic relations (representations)” between actors; as *properties* or “classified and classifying symbolic markers” needed to denote the “identity of an institution or agent” (and their measure of habitus); and as *texture*, in which the presence of media and its material devices is ubiquitous and assumed in both quotidian and professional life (2015, p. 21). Rocamora references Jansson’s notion of media as *texture* in describing the central role of the camera phone in “everyday life” and the development, marketing and use of certain cosmetics created for selfie-taking and other screen-based self-representation (2016, p. 14). At NYFW the camera as both device and camera phone function assumes all three of the criteria for the *communicational doxa*: it is materially and inescapably

present, as are the various embodied relations and symbolic power dynamics that it constructs, indicates and documents. Its texture is felt not simply in terms of the ubiquitousness of its use but in more tangible terms, in its sound, in its flashes, in its users' movements, and in its feel in one's hand, while even the *material* fashion choices and literal *textures* of fashion show attendees are used to differentiate the photographers from those that are there to be photographed. Attention to material in fashion choices, itself a method of social distinction for Bourdieu, reiterates that while the mediatization of fashion and the fashion show offer a representative example of the condition that scholars have described as mediatization in *everyday life*, or the *mediatization of everyday life* (see Jansson, 2015; Kortti, 2017; Rocamora, 2017, p. 517), Fashion Week operates at a separate social and material remove from other urban dwellers' experience.

INDOOR AUDIENCE-PERFORMER RELATIONS

In addition to the Yeezy Season 3 presentation, I attended four other fashion shows at NYFW: these were for Chromat, a swimwear and athleisure line; fashion lines Lela Rose and Veronica Beard, both of which offer classic, tailored womenswear to a professional and ladies-who-lunch set; and the renowned Chinese-American designer Vivienne Tam. Unlike Entwistle and Rocamora, I was not embedded with a media or retail outlet, nor did I hold a freelance or volunteer position; however, contacts from prior freelance work in fashion retail and archival research proved invaluable in helping me secure tickets. I obtained a ticket to Vivienne Tam with the assistance of a contact that had worked for the brand; for the remaining shows, I secured tickets via cold-call e-mails in which I identified myself as a researcher. Out of dozens of inquiries, three publicists offered me show tickets. Three of the four fashion shows were located in a similar section of Manhattan: Chromat presented at Milk Studios a space oriented towards independent brand showcases and a hip, arts-interested crowd, located in Chelsea (near The High

Line); Lela Rose showed at The Gallery at Skylight Clarkson Square, the second most prominent NYFW venue, in SoHo, near the corner of Washington Street and 10th Avenue; and the Veronica Beard presentation took place at Hoffman Hall in the boutique High Line Hotel, also in Chelsea. Vivienne Tam was held further uptown at Skylight at Moynihan Station, the official NYFW hub located in the Garment District, on West 33rd Street between 8th Avenue and 9th Avenue, a block from Penn Station and Madison Square Garden. These four different structures offered me an expansive sense of the various possible spatial and presentational setups, as well as a look at how attendees were demarcated, herded and catered to once in the invitation-holder lineups. The ticket I obtained for Vivienne Tam bestowed the most visible status: here, I was seated in the fifth row of the main venue but still in the upper risers. In the smaller and/or more intimate spaces, however, I ‘felt’ closer to the action and indeed was positioned at a closer distance to the models, even if I was seated in the back row (of just two rows) at Lela Rose, and had to stand behind the last risers at Chromat. At Veronica Beard, in Hoffman Hall, I could move around the space and thus had ‘equal’ status to other attendees, even if no one knew who I was.^{clxxx}

The various types of photographers are differentiated in their role, location and use of certain cameras. Inside the venues, attendees were indicated as such by our use of handheld media devices, while the press and media pit photographers brandished the cameras. Indeed the possession of the professional cameras *denoted* accreditation. As mentioned in Chapter Four, in relation to the fashion show’s spatialities, media pit photographers are those professionals that press outlets and magazines hire to take frontal look photographs. Fashion’s enhanced mediatization has increased the number of photographers that need to fit into the space. Prior to shows, press photographers and contractors for outlets such as Getty Images move about the

space photographing attendees of record in a burst of camera flashes, while video camera crews stand behind reporters conducting interviews for television and online news sites.

The runway setups at NYFW instantiated various modes of audience spectatorship, but in all cases, multiple cameras acted as interfaces between the audience and the performance and between the performance and the outside world, or, rather, the sheer *fact of* the cameras remained a constant. Milk Studios, where I viewed the Chromat show, and Skylight at Moynihan Station, where I attended Vivienne Tam, are far different in size but had the same U-shaped layout with two runway sections and a turn at the end (Figures 41 and 42). Elite attendees were seated on benches in the middle, with their backs to each other but conspicuous to attendees in the risers on each side. At Lela Rose, the spacious white studio was divided up into three different runway sections (Figure 43). Models entered upstage center and proceeded down the middle runway, then turned right and crossed to the left-hand runway, then walked back upstage, then crossed all the way past the center entrance to the far right runway, then walked down that, then turned right and finished their parade walking back up the center runway to the same entrance/exit. This was a tricky bit of choreography that required models to pause when crossing the center runway upstage so as not to collide with the model that had just made her entrance.



Figure 41. Chromat fashion show, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.



Figure 42. Vivienne Tam fashion show, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.



Figure 43. Lela Rose middle section, before show. New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016. Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

While fashion shows are now produced so that the space can be readable from all perspectives and screen interfaces (Browne, 2016, p. 7; Rocamora, 2016, pp. 6-7), admittance to the actual performance space makes apparent the continued, inescapable presence of the media pit. For the Lela Rose show, the media pit crew was crammed into one section at the end of the first, middle runway. The creation of the standard frontal photograph is the result of a performative, social contract between model and media pit photographer, in which the model poses for the time needed to run off a series of shutter clicks. Photographers are often “crammed cheek by jowl in their scrum” in order to obtain the required “focused” perspectival shot (Browne, 2016, p. 7). Scott Schuman produced a short film, entitled *The Pit* (2013), in which he interviews veteran and junior media pit photographers at Men’s Fashion Week in Italy. Shots reveal the media pit’s obvious (white) maleness with an emphasis on the long telephoto lenses:

the demographic can be attributed in part to the location, but the media pit as a subfield is male-dominated. Media pit photographers have historically engaged in “cat calling at the models if they didn’t stand completely still for the requisite 3 or 4 seconds” (Browne, 2016, p. 7), in a manner that can be compared to a red carpet or to paparazzi crowding celebrities. This practice can be traced to earlier decades in which photographers and models were on a first-name basis (Schuman, 2013). *The Pit* depicts photographers hollering at unnamed models: the verbal addresses are derived perhaps from their labour conditions and/or from the industry’s traditional objectification of male and female models in castings and photo shoots (see Mears, 2011). To watch the procession in person reinforced the models’ focus towards the media pit photographers, as Bork Petersen describes (2013, p. 155) and their lack of attention to the video cameras.

Attendees took photographs and film clips of the model parade: the embodiment of this action is subtle and involves holding out one’s arm just so. While the gesture appears to be discreet and refined, it is performed in part so as not to extend one’s camera out onto the runway and intrude on the models’ space or the media pit photographers’ shots (see Schuman, 2013). From the back risers, one faces numerous other bodies and screens in between the camera and the runway and cannot hold the camera out too far without invading fellow attendees’ personal space or fields of view. At Lela Rose, I was afforded an excellent view from the second (and last) row, as each bench was taller than the one in front of it. I was perched in a section upstage, facing in the opposite direction, towards the third runway. Those around me appeared to be members of the press and invited customers.^{clxxxix} Once the show started, audience members were free to crane our necks and watch, film or photograph from whatever angles were available to us – or, at least, a sufficient number of people wasted no time in turning their heads and even bodies that I assumed that this was acceptable behaviour. Because people that faced away from the

center runway were permitted to turn around, our contortions became far more obvious and unabashed, with turns happening in waves as the models maneuvered their way through each section of the space. Seated at the end of the bench, I was also able to turn upstage towards the center entrance/exit though this move seemed a tad too conspicuous. Attendees that faced towards the middle did not appear to feel this impetus to turn to watch or record the action behind them. Journalists have declared that the practice of taking Instagram shots has become outmoded and “kinda *basic*,” marking the photo-taker as inexperienced in the field, while editors in the front row have started to *not* take photographs or to take written notes (Laneri, 2015, para. 4-5). However, most of the people around me did not hesitate to snap photographs, or perhaps I was too preoccupied with the same action to notice if others restrained themselves. Once the models stepped out for the finale, almost every attendee in the space whipped out his or her smartphone to photograph or video-record the procession (Figure 44). I perceived the parade not just through my smartphone’s camera lens, but also through multiple other camera-screen interfaces, a visual repetition that amplified the environment’s mediatization.



Figure 44. Lela Rose fashion show finale, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

The Veronica Beard show took the form of a static presentation in which models stood for one hour on risers at one end of the spacious, antiquated Hoffman Hall, while audience members were free to sip wine and mingle, or to maneuver to the front of the crowd and photograph them. The models were forced to remain posed, and thus became more commodified than models in a procession, in the sense, to return to Baudrillard, that their bodies were frozen in place as fashion mannequins and thus open to sexualisation (1993, p. 96). The models appeared diverse in skin tone and hair colour, albeit with six models of colour out of a cast of 20; the audience was predominantly White. Fashion scholars have documented that mid-1800s fashion models were termed *mannequins* (from the Dutch ‘manneken’ or ‘mainikin’) in reference to the wooden forms then used in garment construction (Bork Petersen, 2013, p. 169; see also Evans,

2003, 2011, 2013; Vinken, 2005). At Veronica Beard, the models' positions on the platforms, lined up 10 in a row, enhanced their role as both dress forms and retail mannequins: anonymous, motionless vessels for the clothes propped before an audience of both personnel and consumers. Their formation also imbued them with a doll-like appearance. Fashion has borne a fascination with the trope of "the 'woman as doll,'" one that "has reappeared in fashion shows and photography with notable persistence," frequently as an emblem and celebration of "the commodification" of the female form (Bork Petersen, 2013, p. 170). Evans documents that, in the 1850s, actual dolls were used to present collections abroad, while the earliest fashion models functioned as dolls insofar as couturiers dressed them 'up' in the clothes (2011, pp. 58-59; see also Bork Petersen, 2013). While the Veronica Beard models were not dressed up or made up to read specifically *as dolls*, the calculated placement of the six models of colour interspersed with the Caucasian models invoked the ethnic diversity of American Girl dolls, themselves collectible commodities and an appropriate reference given the historical 'all-American' semiotics of the hall and its location within New York.^{clxxxii}

However, a complex relation was established between audience and model, as models were permitted to meet and return the audience gaze (Figures 45 and 46). As the presentation wore on, I read various levels of comfort and expressions of ease, amusement, annoyance and even defiance across the models' faces even as their stance remained neutral, with hands in pockets. Evans articulates that different, multidirectional gazes operate within the fashion show space dependent on role, class position and gender (2013, pp. 164-79). Members of the audience scrutinized the models in our various capacities as consumers (and consumers' husbands or companions), journalists and/or bloggers and photographers. The use of cameras on the part of both press photographers and attendees 'penetrated' the invisible 'fourth wall' between model

and audience. While most attendees maintained a distance of a few meters, a male photographer walked up to a model and placed his camera within inches of her arms and torso, obtaining close-up shots in an invasive manner that drew murmurs from the rest of the attendees assembled, suggesting that his move constituted an aberration of proper conduct or made us uncomfortable on her behalf. As this happened, the model remained immobile. Evans remarks that, much like dress forms and dolls, the fashion model traverses the states of “the organic and the inorganic, between the animate and the inanimate ... the living and the dead” (2011, p. 59; see also Bork Petersen, p. 170). The “doll-like” and even “mechanical” nature of models’ replication and movements (or lack thereof) render them “something a little less than human” (Evans, 2011, p. 64). Bork Petersen posits however that while the still model elicits a sense of uncanniness, our fascination with her can also stem from, and take the form of, “a desire for the in-animate, the non-human” (2013, p. 169). It is possible to read the photographer’s action as a manifestation of this desire, or a capture of close-up shots in order to satiate a consumer desire for the fashion image. However, it is equally plausible that he aimed to document the outfit’s trim and textural details for retailers’ and consumers’ information. His own robotic demeanour, in addition to his use of a close frame, erased all sense of the model’s personhood, while his camera reduced or fractured her anatomical form to a series of parts, an act of *fragmentation* that Laura Mulvey (1975), writing on cinema, would classify as the fetishization of the female form.^{clxxxiii} Standing mere meters from the model and the photographer at the moment of his approach, however, I felt a palpable sense of just how *live* the model was and how in-humane her treatment under the literal lens of the photographer.



Figure 45. Veronica Beard fashion show, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.



Figure 46. Veronica Beard fashion show, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

The venues further facilitated electronic methods of gatekeeping and the transmission of fashion show content obtained from camera interfaces. Smartphones performed an additional function as one's ticket to the event. For three out of the four presentations that I attended, invitations were sent to me via e-mail, and brand representatives then e-mailed me a QR code prior to the show.^{clxxxiv} At the Skylight at Clarkson Square for Lela Rose, I scanned the QR code first on a machine, which spat out a piece of paper with another code; I then met a human gatekeeper at a second door who ushered me to an appropriate line based on that information. Inside the entrance to the main Moynihan Station venue, a gatekeeper established three lines based on a barcode on our e-mailed invitations: seat assignment and barcode, barcode but no seat, no barcode but on the list. While I had a barcode and a seat, I was not labeled a VIP. At the Skylight at Clarkson Square, a small pop-up Internet café was sectioned off from the line-up area. Between shows, people could sit on couches, sip free coffee or champagne, and post online content. These media hubs are now commonplace in Fashion Week environments though in some cases access is restricted to those with specific accreditation. Here, it was expected that attendees would use their computers to mediate the fashion show to the outside world, even as this environment remained exclusive to them; I was able to access this area without hassle. At the main venue, a similar space in the middle of the lobby was off-limits to all but VIPs whom the rest of us watched from the peripheries while in line and after the show.

The Camera as Indicator of Social Influence

Within the presentation space, and without as I will later demonstrate, the camera and its direction indicate that someone is a particular subject worth photographing, while those that are not hailed as such use our devices as a form of social protector. *New York Times* theatre columnist Charles Isherwood's bemused account of NYFW in 2010 pinpoints the role of the

camera in the maintenance of social constructs and the indication of celebrities as such. The saturation of cameras instills “the bizarre sense that everybody at a fashion show is famous. ... [E]veryone seems to be photographing everyone else. If you are not wielding some kind of picture-taking implement at a fashion show, you are virtually naked” (Isherwood, 2010, n.p). At Lela Rose, several attendees in the second and third sections took their seats and proceeded to text, surf their phones and not look up until their companions arrived. I did not witness people taking selfies or photographs of each other, almost as if to do so had become passé.^{clxxxv} Instead, the media interface let people demonstrate their connections to people that were *about to* arrive or to *appear* to communicate with a virtual audience or read fashion content (Figure 47).^{clxxxvi} A few members of the front row used their phones before photographers approached them, hinting that the practice could also operate as a deterrent for photographers, albeit not a foolproof one.



Figure 47. Third runway section prior to Lela Rose, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016. Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

At Veronica Beard, I concluded, based on the attendees' more familiar and relaxed interactions, albeit with more air kisses, that much of the audience consisted of friends, relations and clientele of the two designers, sisters-in-law Veronica Miele Beard and Veronica Swanson Beard. Some women had brought children, who stood in front of the risers so that their parents could photograph them in front of the models. In this more intimate reception, with its free white wine, attendees felt more comfortable taking selfies and photographs of each other, while some documentation appeared to be intended for New York society publications. I read attendees' behaviour as predicated more on insular, class-based structures that underpin Bourdieu's habitus. This interpretation was influenced by the space, with its wooden beams, beautiful, old-fashioned rugs, leather furniture and an elaborate fireplace, which became a popular backdrop against which attendees photographed themselves or each other.^{clxxxvii}

The request to take one's photograph, and the act of capture itself, *consecrate* the famous person within the fashion show environment. Bernstein describes photographs in which humans pose with inanimate tableaux as citational performances of prior acts of posing for photographs (2009, p. 77). One can therefore interpret photo-taking as its own performance that cites other, familiar instances of photo-taking. The practice of photo-taking announces the arrival of someone famous due to its nature as a readable performance in the sense of *twice-behaved behaviour* (Schechner, 1985, as cited in Bernstein, 2009, p. 77), and as a *performative action* (pace J. L. Austin (1975): the important person becomes important because the camera indicates them as such. At Lela Rose, the area in which I was seated, Section DD, was located just behind the upper front row area, where several of the VIPs were located. Brand PR representatives chatted with these individuals, several of whom I later learned were Lela Rose's relatives, while a trio of actresses took their seats here prior to the start time. In his reflections on NYFW in 2010,

Isherwood describes the arrival of the actress Katrina Bowden, then a cast member on the NBC sitcom *30 Rock*, as a moment of excessive action and mild confusion:

Fashion editors and buyers, paparazzi and reporters burble and air-kiss happily in the middle of the room. Suddenly a tumult of motion, like a herd of buffaloes in full charge, signals the arrival of a celebrity. There she stands: a statuesque blonde in skyscraper heels, fringed in photographers and television cameras in a feeding frenzy. But who on earth is she? Dumbfounded observer — me — stares in bewilderment. The level of excitement engendered in the pap[arazzi] pack suggests significant wattage. But I'm drawing a complete blank. I ask my neighbor. He doesn't know, either. Then it comes to me with a certainty I can't explain — why, it's Diane Kruger! Yes, it's definitely Diane Kruger. The satisfaction of grasping this name from nowhere passes quickly, however, followed as it is by the revelation that while I would swear before the world that the woman before me is Diane Kruger, I have no idea who Diane Kruger is. (2010, n.p.)

In this scenario, the actress (Bowden) is not a household name but appears at least to be *famous*: her noteworthiness is made apparent to most attendees *because* of the cameras' focus on her, which causes the audience to wonder what films, television series or commercials she has been seen in before. Isherwood locates the precise moment that celebrities become visible in the fashion show environment via the presence of cameras. His conclusion that the woman before him is Diane Kruger speaks too to Diane Kruger's position as one of the more influential *fashion celebrities* (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 23), who has performed as a brand ambassador for the likes of Chanel and often sits front row at fashion shows (more so in Paris than New York). Isherwood comments that, "the temporary disorientation caused by the arrival of one or another Blonde of Unknown Distinction was a regular occurrence, indeed almost a running gag" (2010, n.p.). Here, he emphasizes both the routine nature of these enactments and the tenuous nature of celebrities' profiles, dependent on mediatization both within and outside of the fashion show venue. While certain celebrities are recognizable no matter their location – the most frenzied "ruckus" that Isherwood witnessed was caused by the arrival of Sarah Jessica Parker (2010, n.p.) – fashion shows establish an environment in which people are attuned to the presence of celebrities and in

which documentation of celebrities, and of each other as celebrities, circulates.^{clxxxviii} For Isherwood, the mediatized social interactions assume their own status as a separate performance: “[T]he jostling melee of entry, seating and the all-important photo-taking constitutes the liveliest part of the show. . . . [F]ashion folk gossip and greet one another and trade impressions as the cricketing of camera shutters spritzes the (usually hot) air” (2010, n.p.). The cameras become so ubiquitous that their sound creates an atmospheric component.^{clxxxix} It is the cameras and their flashes that indicate that someone is famous, or *worth the shot*, rather than the entrance of that person per se.

None of the on-schedule fashion shows that I attended boasted A-list celebrities of the profile of those that attended some of the most exclusive presentations. At Lela Rose, however, I did experience the same phenomenon, in which actresses entered the space and became *audible*. I was alerted to their appearance by a smattering of clicks behind me, which prompted me, and others near me, to turn around. The actresses then became *visible* as I noticed the horde of photographers and witnessed a rapid, dizzying explosion of flashes. The three actresses were all attractive and petite, with long hair, and all appeared to be in their twenties (though one I learned later is in her thirties). The trio posed for the cameras in front of the LELA ROSE backdrop. The actresses looked familiar, and for all intents and purposes like Hollywood starlets, but I could not place them. Following the show, I received an e-mail press release from the Lela Rose team that attached photographs of the three actresses and mentioned their special, invited appearance, wearing dresses from past Lela Rose collections. The actresses were Lorenza Izzo, famous for roles in the horror films of Eli Roth (and married to Eli Roth); Skyler Samuels from the television series *Scream Queens*; and Portia Doubleday from the television series *Mr. Robot*. Reading these actresses’ names, I remembered who each of them were (and I have since watched

episodes of *Mr. Robot*) but I did not recognize them in person. Rather, I knew that these were famous women based first on the fact that they entered the runway space from the backstage area, second, that they did so together, and third, that photographers surrounded them. After the photographers captured the trio in front of the backdrop, the actresses posed while seated on their front row bench – the short distance between the entrance and their seats facilitated the process, as the actresses did not have to move far. I could watch all of the action happening just a couple of meters from me, and since we were not yet seated, I was free to look, but had to take care not to be in the shot, and furthermore, the flashes became increasingly uncomfortable to stare at.

At Vivienne Tam, I watched as photographers flocked to East Asian women, who also appeared to be actresses, seated on the front row benches.^{cx} At the end of the show, the photographers zeroed in on another East Asian woman seated next to a tall blonde at the bottom of the set of risers I had been seated in. As I slunk past so as not to get in the shot (again), I overheard one photographer tell another that the blonde was a former Miss Universe, and that she “just wanted to get a shot of the two of them talking to each other.” It remained unclear if this conversation was ‘authentic’ or staged for the benefit of the press. Seated in the fifth row, I found it harder to discern the identities of the people photographed. I learned later through an online search of photographs from the show that Lorenza Izzo had sat front row at this show too, but I had not discerned her despite being a few meters from her hours before. Isherwood observes, as have others, that celebrities enhance the cachet of the fashion house much as their presence sparks audience interest in a theatre production, as was illustrated in Chapter Two:

As the future of Broadway seems increasingly dependent on the ability of producers to cast film and television names in plays and musicals new and old, a fashion show without a few boldfaces in the front row is taking place in an existential void. (2010, n.p.)

Another young woman, wearing a beautiful floor-length dress and red lipstick, arrived at Vivienne Tam and stood in the ticketholder line with the rest of us. Based on her immaculate appearance I concluded that she was a VIP attendee, and staff whisked her and her male companion backstage. The Internet search confirmed that this was Broadway actress Ana Villafaña, star of the Gloria Estafan tribute musical *On Your Feet!* It became clear that the fashion shows I attended were public showcases for attractive young actresses known for certain roles in film, television and theatre, and who are perhaps known in New York cultural and social circles. These actresses might be international in travel and citizenship but are not yet international *celebrities*. None of these photographs appeared on the mainstream media sites that I searched while attending NYFW, as those sites tended to feature front row photographs from the shows with a higher level of star power. Nonetheless, the press releases and presence of the photographers indicate that brands view these starlets as essential to their market position, and as official/unofficial brand ambassadors, and there remains a market for the online circulation of celebrity images, whether or not the vast public knows who these celebrities *are*.

OUTDOOR OBSERVATIONS AT NEW YORK FASHION WEEK

To conduct the outdoor observations, I staked out the main fashion show venues before and after shows that I as a researcher presumed would attract street style personalities if not celebrities; the official online NYFW calendar told me the shows' times and locations. It was productive to spend time outside The Gallery at Skylight Clarkson Square on Washington Street and Moynihan Station, the latter of which is located in a prominent tourist location, down the street from Madison Square Garden and across from a Marriott Hotel, as these were the main venues. The locations of the *most* coveted fashion shows from the likes of Alexander Wang and Marc Jacobs were *not* publicized on the official NYFW website, and thus I was not able to observe the

more elaborate arrivals and exits outside those shows, nor spot the celebrities whose faces appeared in the newspapers. Attending fashion shows from brands on a spectrum of name recognition also permitted me to determine that street style photographers prioritize specific fashion shows due to a certain ‘caliber’ of attendee – much as I prioritized certain fashion shows so that I could see as much outdoor action as possible. Photographers outside Moynihan Station confirmed that this was a useful tactic, making comments such as “You’ll be able to see a lot of [notable] people at [or rather outside] Marchesa,” or simply via the mere fact of their presence.

Camera Interactions on the ‘Street’

This section demonstrates that the series of moves of street style photographers and fashion show attendees comprises its own separate dance that is at once predicted and spontaneous. This dance, which happens on and in the streets outside venues, is derived from prior media and photographic practices and has been developed over a period of seasons. The camera identifies, hails and makes visible (or invisible) specific actors. I differentiate here between the social expectations and practices of fashion show attendees or *street style stars* and the labour of the professional models, even as certain models appear routinely in street style photographs. The discrete nature of these multifarious interactions reflects de Certeau’s observation of urban mobilities as “broken up into countless tiny deportations (displacements and walks)” (1984, p. 103). Examination of interactions as scripted through the camera reveals inequalities in their embodied nature and the implicit and explicit social contracts that underlie them.

Movements are determined too by the urban locations at which Fashion Week takes place within its cities. While, scholars and critics have compared the street style parade to a red carpet, the space of photo-taking at New York Fashion Week is not demarcated or sectioned off. There is no set space here in which the celebrities or important people stand and the lesser-known

public gawks and stares, though in both of the locations at which I photographed, there were a handful of tourists or members of the public present across the ‘street’.^{cxci} Depending on the location, the entire sidewalk and even intersecting streets in front of and beside the venue became the ‘parade route’. This imposition of the fashion scene upon the streets was reinforced in a photographer’s comment, “*This is the runway!*” which I overheard on West 33rd Street, just outside Moynihan Station. Fashion Weeks’ outdoor enactments happen *on* streets that have other uses as places of commerce, infrastructure and/or tourism, and therefore participant’s actions, or what de Certeau would term *spatial practices*, must take into account other, simultaneous urban *modalities* (1984, p. 96). New York Fashion Week had erected traffic cones and barriers and hired personnel to ensure a smoother flow of traffic, but in some areas the photo-taking impeded the industrial work of businesses and warehouses, to the annoyance of personnel and passers-by: the ‘real’ inhabitants whose quotidian mobilities underwrite the streets (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93).

Luvaas (2016) remarks that street style photographers’ interest in an individual subject is informed via pre-existing mediatized representations and personas. He differentiates between *street style stars* who are “famous at Fashion Week” but not often photographed in between and *celebrities* proper who are famous first and foremost for their work in “film, television and music” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 273). The individuals that photographers deem *somebodies* possess a “digitally mediated aura” that translates to the outdoor space: the attraction is predicated on “their brand superimposed on real life, not the direct pull of some affective trait that oozes out of them” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 266). Decisions on whom to photograph are made as a *collective* process of *negotiation* based on a series of smaller communications and individual choices – if an influential photographer aims his lens at a subject, others will often follow suit (Luvaas, 2016, pp. 268-270). The notion of the “digitally mediated persona” is applicable to the allure of other

characters at Fashion Week, including minor celebrities and fashion celebrities, and addresses the manner in which attendees and observers read our environments and the people in them via other online representations, as well as print editorials, advertisements, films and television series. Luvaas declares that in order to recognize an individual as a *somebody*, or “to be overwhelmed by their presence in physical space, you have to know who that *somebody* is in the first place” (2016, p. 266), positing recognition as central to allure. However, perhaps due to my own research in street style photographs, I found that I did not need to recognize an individual before becoming drawn to them or wondering if he (or more often she) was somehow important, which often turned out to be the case. Rather, I had a sixth sense about who would be hailed both inside and outside based on their dress and/or calculated appearance. Influencers dress for their part with full anticipation of the cameras’ presence. In a feature entitled “How I Choose My Fashion Week Outfits,” Australian blogger Carmen Hamilton of *Chronicles of Her* discloses that she takes a mirror selfie on her phone before she steps out in order to determine if there is an element “lacking” in her outfit (2017, para. 9). She therefore anticipates how her ensembles will look not just to other persons on the street but in the inevitable circulated photographs.

There was an obvious sartorial *distinction*, in sense of Bourdieu’s class distinction, between those people present outside the venues to attend shows and/or be photographed, and the photographers, not just because the attendees dressed up but because the photographers dressed in a more incognito but still remarkable fashion. The sheer number of street style photographers present can be conceptualized as its own distinct subfield (Luvaas, 2016, pp. 122-133), whose practices intersect in a direct fashion with those of editors and retailers at the literal site(s) of Fashion Week.^{cxcii} Besides the fact that the photographers held cameras, most photographers also wore a uniform of sorts that consisted of a ski jacket or black or blue

windbreaker. These outfits were practical because photographers had to stand outdoors in often cold or inclement weather, and created a visual contrast with attendees' colourful and ostentatious ensembles that made the attendees noticeable from a distance. The industry name for this look is "the crow" in reference to the black attire – while the look is functional and utilitarian, it is also fashionable:

The look is high-end and minimalist: basic black in trim, tailored cuts, drop-crotch sweats or tight-black jeans, high-top black sneakers or boots. In New York, the street style photographers adhere to an edgy 'downtown' look similar to the kinds of people they might shoot in SoHo or Chelsea. It is a fashion look, no doubt, but a look out of sync with the bright-coloured *somebodies* of Fashion Week. This is the look of a self-conscious *outsider*, someone who has embraced their peripheral status... (Luvaas, 2016, p. 276)

Luvaas's self-identification as a still fashion-forward outsider adheres to my self-perception as a researcher. Some male photographers wore tweed blazers or colourful sweaters that made them appear as dandies compared to the other men, and select female photographers (women of colour) wore enormous faux-fur coats or vintage-looking peacoats and cat's-eye sunglasses (Figure 48). These photographers identified themselves to me as *street style* bloggers and wore these outfits to promote their own fashion sense to the crowd (see also Luvaas, 2016, p. 276).



Figure 48. Photographer on Washington Street, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016. Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

In order to capture wider shots of the crowd at Moynihan Station, and because I felt every inch Luvaas's "self-conscious *outsider*," I stood across the street upon my first arrival to the venue as an outdoor observer. This location situated me with the rich-looking female tourists outside the Marriott Hotel, who were dressed in fur coats, leather or pleather pants and stiletto boots. I had adopted the photographer uniform: I wore a navy Diesel down bomber jacket, burgundy Timberland boots, a toque (albeit with a neon print) and sunglasses, which had a functional use and permitted me to feel a little more inconspicuous. The use of my iPad and smartphone cameras, however, branded me as an outsider, and it was hard to take decent shots of street style mavens rushing past without a professional or at least hi-tech camera. Nonetheless, the smartphone camera proved unexpectedly valuable as it rendered me visible to a New York

City police officer tasked with directing the flow of traffic. The officer looked at me with an amused, quizzical expression (Figure 49). Perhaps he realized that he was in my shot, or wondered who this person was photographing from an uncommon vantage point. The officer asked if I needed to cross the street. I told him that I was there to document the entire scene. He smiled and informed me that if I wanted to do that, I should not be afraid to jump into the thick of the action; he then proceeded to stop the car closest to him and motioned for me to cross. As outlined, Bernstein (2009) explicates that the *scriptive thing* addresses the user through an Althusserian interpellation, emblemized in the famous scenario of the police officer's call of "Hey, you there!" (p. 83). The authority figure's address of the person as such initiates the moment of "subjectivation – how one comes to 'matter'" (Bernstein, 2009, p. 83). In a bizarre twist, as I stood across on West 33rd Street across from Moynihan Station, my presence with my smartphone camera produced an actual 'Hey, you there!' from an actual (extremely polite) police officer. This police officer, who functioned as a gatekeeper of sorts, decided that I should at least be permitted to enter the crowd *outside* the venue. The camera that I held indicated to him that I was someone that perhaps *mattered*, even if he did not comprehend how, and in his motion, he introduced me into the scene. Bernstein adds that interpellation also happens within a context of "identifiable, historicized traditions of performance" both theatrical and quotidian (2009, p. 83). While I stood on the outskirts of the scene, the camera contextualized me as someone that could or should be part of it. At the same time, this position marked me as curious outsider based on Fashion Week's arrival and exit conventions. It was still not possible to obtain entrance into the indoor venue without a fashion show invitation, as there were official Fashion Week gatekeepers hired to keep photographers and wannabes out (see also Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006, 2011).



Figure 49. Police officer on West 33rd Street, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016. Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

Because the photographers formed a social field, though a more fluid one, I had to earn some measure of acceptance from them in a brief period and thus disclosed my status as researcher and as observer. I did not have the time to talk to all of the photographers in the moment – or rather they did not have the time to talk to me – but the photographers I did speak to had no problem with my observing their work on the condition that I did not interfere with a shot. Even making sure that I remained out of shots was a physically labourious process that offered me just a hint of the strenuous movements undertaken in this practice. One photographer wanted to know my Instagram handle if I was going to ask her questions. This was the second time that week that I had been asked my Instagram handle, and I concluded that an Instagram account functions as a form of currency in the expression of fashion and scholastic capital.

Luvaas (2016) notes that he felt nervous his first time shooting at the (then) main site at Lincoln Center but simply “walk[ed] up” to the venue and started shooting, learning the protocols as he went (p. 262). Had I read his book before my trip, I would have taken a better camera and not felt so compelled to ask people permission to exist in their working environment at the outset.

Models ‘Off Duty’ at Fashion Week

I arrived at Moynihan Station at the end of the Naeem Khan presentation, and found the photographers gathered outside the backstage entrance. Several models appeared, recognizable not just for their tall, slim bodies but for their hair and makeup, still styled for the fashion show. Models’ hair had been teased and crimped within an inch of its life, rendering them even more noticeable. The photographers descended upon the models, asking them to pose: the models did so in a casual manner, sometimes sticking out their tongues in a performance that was far more demonstrative and laidback than the standard aloof, mechanical runway march, but nonetheless read as practiced and calculated. I overheard one photographer tell a model, "Thank you for posing for us with your makeup and showing that to us," a statement that suggested that he was photographing her makeup as part of a beauty trend feature (Figure 50). Within this crowd, it was impossible to discern the photographers’ roles, nor did it matter as the models posed for whatever camera was present. In an account of her “research mission” at a prior New York Fashion Week, Wissinger documents a similar process of photo-taking:

Paparazzi, fashion students, film crews, fashion reporters and curious onlookers jumble together as fashionistas and their acolytes in sky-high heels totter by. Models, still in their wild hair and makeup from the runway, stop amidst calls of ‘Over here!’ and ‘Just one more!’ to pose obligingly for the battery of flashing cameras before disappearing into the black cars waiting to whisk them off to their next show. The excitement is palpable. (2013, p. 133)

That Wissinger's account is from the earlier half of this decade reiterates that this series of enactments has become routine and that the models expect to face it. The entire scene that I observed, which went on for several minutes, constituted a distinct or third model performance *after* the runway appearance and one for which each model's glamour labour was remunerated in the increase of her profile. The models' mischievous poses outside the venues recall models' cultivation of mediatized public personas in the 1960s: "the artificial, haute couture mannequin's mannerisms gave way to the fresh-faced spontaneity inherent to the lit-from-within television image" (Wissinger, 2014, p. 3). While the current roster of models is more anonymous than their predecessors, those that want to succeed are required to maintain a social media profile in addition to their professional portfolio. The industry name for photographs of models outside fashion shows, or for the 'quotidian' outfits that models wear to and from shows, is "model off duty": this label suggests that the models are liberated from their 'work' and can behave in a more authentic fashion. This set of anticipated interactions between models and outdoor photographers emphasized the fact that the phrase is a (perhaps ironic) misnomer as the models are profoundly *on duty* at all times. It speaks to fashion's needed artifice that the models wore their make-up the entire time and would have taken it off in private, out of the view of the cameras and spectators, or had it removed for their next show in time to have a new palette applied. Post-show at Naeem Khan, the models understood that their images would circulate in the service of both their personal brand and that of the fashion line (see Wissinger, 2014, p. 13).^{cxci} Even as the Internet promotes the absence of a filter, the glamour labour required in models' performance of 'off duty' personas is more constant than ever before. The models could move enough to pose, but the closeness of the crowd and narrowness of the sidewalk prevented them from leaving until photographs had been obtained.

While I was not able to access the backstage environs of Fashion Week, the associate that I interviewed has worked as a consultant at fashion shows at New York Fashion Week and London Fashion Week and made several pertinent observations as to the pervasive presence of cameras. As demonstrated in Chapter Six, press and consumer attention has been refocused on behind-the-scenes preparations, and the press has gained an increased measure of access to these (often confined) spaces in order to capture shots of models, looks and products. The mediatized backstage area has presented models with a brand new forum in which to showcase both the collection pieces and their own mediatized faces. The associate discloses that models seek out the cameras, sometimes running the risk of slowing down the hair and makeup process:

I've been at shows where ... my job is to take the model with me from hair to makeup. People [think], 'Can't she just walk herself?' ... [I]t's a two-minute step. But you've got to navigate through 50 people ... [T]hat model – that's her opportunity to shine. So that model will stop and take every single photo she can of the prep because she knows that if she gets more backstage photos of her taken, they'll be in the magazines – so she'll get a photo of her in the clothing on the runway, and she'll also get one backstage, and so she gets twice the exposure. (2017, n.p.)

The interactions that I witnessed between photographers and models on the sidewalks after the Naeem Khan presentation revealed that Fashion Week's outdoor streets constitute a third space or set of poses via which models can increase the odds of their image appearing in various media forums. The numerous poses can be read not just as models' commercial savviness but also as an act of survival, as Wissinger reveals the increasing "precarity" of modeling in a mediatized era in which consumers flit from one photograph to the next and each photograph could mark or end her career: "careers tend to be made or destroyed in the space of a blink" (2013, p. 139). While backstage passes are reserved for members of the press and for celebrities, outside the venue, the models would have posed for professional and amateur photographers. The platform, however, seemed immaterial to them, so long as their image was uploaded and circulated.



Figure 50. Naeem Khan model and crowd, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

Street Style Photography as Embodied Practice

The stretch from 8th Avenue and West 33rd Street to the doors of the venue formed a convenient runway that I recognized from past street style photographs taken at NYFW. Photographers lined up in assemblages at various points along the sidewalk, some were concentrated near the model entrance/exit before the main venue doors, and some stood in front of the venue doors. Luvaas (2016) refers to these formations as “small clusters” (p. 262). Internal communications and rules exist in the service of an overall “etiquette” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 277) that acknowledges the competitive nature of the process but attempts to permit each person their preferred shot. If one photographer asked an individual to pose in a crowded section, other photographers would often

join in, while some photographers asked certain people to stand in or move to certain places to make a better-composed shot. Luvaas (2016) articulates photographers' movements as a complicated, implicit and learned dance in which individuals of influence claim persons of interest, and other photographers have to find a position around the first without entering someone else's frame or impeding others' movement (pp. 277-279). This entire process happens in a matter of seconds. Some photographers were stationed as far down as the subway exit/entrance to capture people as they emerged onto the sidewalk or spot people that no one else had. I identified a series of different relationships and different forms of address, all scripted via the presence and use of the camera. The motion of raising the camera viewfinder to one's eye functions as a signal that the photographer has called dibs on the shot and other interested photographers must assemble around him (Luvaas, 2016, p. 278). Certain photographers will also *ask* an individual to pose if space permits or if the photographer has sufficient clout (Luvaas, 2016, p. 278). This action too functions as a public claim: "Once a photographer has done this, this subject is *their* subject until the point at which they thank the subject and allow them to move on. Once a subject has been thanked, they are once again fair game" (Luvaas, 2016, p. 278). Based on the nature of the interactions that I witnessed at Moynihan Station – respectful or solicited versus aggressive or unwanted – it appeared as if the more recreational street style photographers were concentrated along the sidewalk while the photographers more akin to paparazzi waited near the doors to see if a more famous attendee stepped out of a town car. To position oneself further down the sidewalk, towards the tourist district and the subway entrance, meant that a photographer could pick out a subject first and ask him or her to stop and pose with the fence as a backdrop. To stand closer to the venue meant having a full, elongated perspective of those that walked the distance of the sidewalk.

When possible, some photographers opted to crouch and capture attendees as they walked past, without asking them to stop. These photographers tended to situate themselves in areas off the beaten track. Several top photographers “prefer to take candid shots of their subjects” rather than ask them to pose, via the use of a telephoto lens or their own leaps or contortions (Luvaas, 2016, p. 280). En route to the Lela Rose fashion show at Skylight Clarkson Square, I noticed one photographer staked out on the street corner a block before the main intersection, at Washington Street and West Houston Street, at which people turned to enter the block on which the venue was located. When I arrived at the same location three days later as an observer, prior to the Ralph Lauren Collection show, I spotted him on the same corner. He identified himself as a street style blogger and confirmed that he prefers to shoot on that corner because it is less crowded than the stretch closest to the venue. It was obvious, as I stood next to him, that he could also spot attendees walking westward along West Houston Street before the other photographers did. Even meters past his spot, there was a “cluster” of at least a dozen others. It was also easier for photographers to crouch outside the smaller shows at venues such as Milk Studios, where there were fewer attendees and fewer photographers to compete with.

The main ritual between photographer and subject is another specific hand gesture, a subtle motion that indicates to the attendee that the photographer wishes her to step to a certain spot and pose. In lower-traffic areas and at less crowded times, it was possible for photographers to verbally request to take a subject’s photograph, but this gesture offered a recognizable shorthand for such pleasantries in a more crowded or harried environment. Luvaas (2016) describes photograph solicitations too in terms of a specific “etiquette” (p. 273). He documents that the preferred photographer-subject relationship is cordial and collaborative, and that some photographers and mavens have developed professional and even romantic relationships (2016,

pp. 280-281). Street style stars knew to anticipate a nonverbal hail, as I witnessed in the presence of of-the-moment Danish fashion influencer Perneille Teisbaek (one of Ton's more recent muses) outside Ralph Lauren (Figure 51). One woman, dressed in an incredible, textured cream-coloured faux fur coat, strolled down West Houston Street scanning the photographers assembled, aware that she would be photographed and prepared to stop and pose at the moment of the hail. This corner was a popular section for photographers to wait, preparing either to call over fashionistas before they turned onto Washington Street or to pounce on them just after. This attendee posed for at least a minute in a parkade entrance while the photographer obtained his shot and a crowd of others assembled around him to obtain theirs – I took mine as the crowd parted (Figure 52). At this corner, the hand gesture became a signal of validation but also an order, as it was expected that a person dressed in such visibly luxurious clothes and styled hair would be willing to pose and rude if she did not. This woman was outnumbered by the male and female photographers and 'cornered' into her position. It was clear, however, through her catering to and return of the camera gaze that she maintained a measure of control over the situation; moreover, she towered over the photographers (in their winter boots) in her pointed heels. The end of the photo session arrived when each of photographers had obtained their shot. The photographers' own, enacted pose of holding up the camera was often accompanied by a knee bend if time and location permitted. Near the doors to Moynihan Station, a photographer coaxed another fashionable woman to let him photograph her in between the parked cars (Figure 53). Her oversized hat and pink dress juxtaposed with his 'uniform,' and his bent knee before her aristocratic stance, demonstrated the sartorial contrast between fashionista and photographer, while his pose became another Brechtian *gestus* that revealed the field of fashion's class politics.



Figure 51. Fashion influencer Perneille Teisbaek, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.



Figure 52. West Houston and Washington Streets, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter, 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

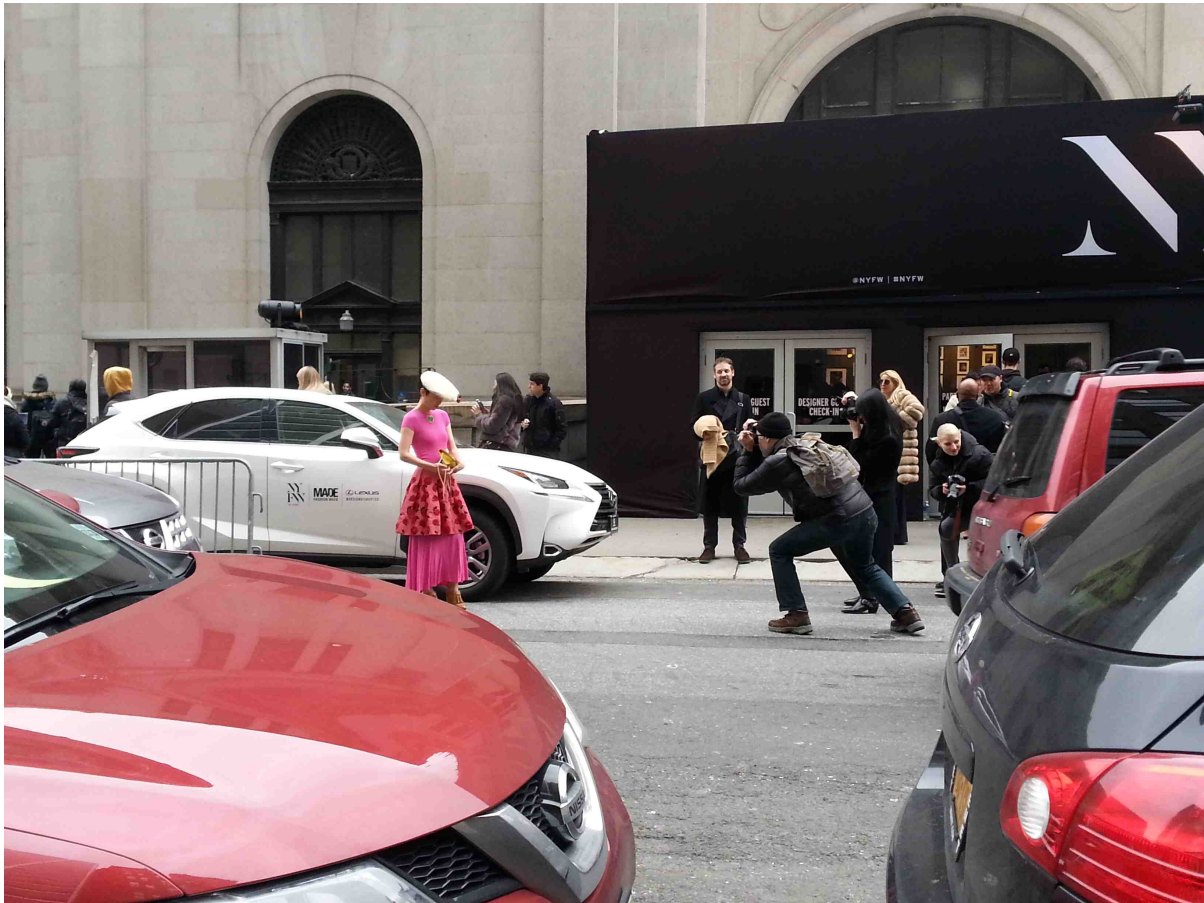


Figure 53. Outside Moynihan Station entrance, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

Street Style Photography as Gendered and Racialized Practice

The solicitation of the photograph further contained inherent gender and racial politics, and the physical and affective labour that photographers performed to obtain the shot often exposed these positionalities. While sites exist for street style photographs of both female and male fashion personnel, the predominance of photographs of female fashion show attendees has been documented. Esther Rosser (2010) compares street style photographers to early-1900s journalists photographing mannequins and socialites at the Parisian racetracks and French resorts (p. 162). Fashion companies' decision to donate clothes to street style personalities recalls couturiers' practice of dressing elite women for social appearances, which turned upper-class recreations

into “not only anticipated but highly organized events” (Rosser, 2010, p. 162). At NYFW there existed a striking gender and racial imbalance between male photographers, a vocal handful of which were heteronormative males of colour who appeared to be in their 20s, and female attendees who were often white (though there were, of course, exceptions). Male photographers, regardless of race, tended to approach female attendees in either a complimentary manner, which sometimes tended towards the effusive, or blocked attendees’ paths and took the photograph without consent. I watched one striking woman in a brilliant red felt coat, a matching studded, leather clutch, and knee-high black boots, pose for a handful of photographers outside the subway entrance/exit (Figure 54). I did not recognize her, but it was clear that she had dressed for the cameras: her ice-blonde hair was brushed back, and her makeup was impeccable. She strolled down West 33rd Street with a methodical gait, and the photographers took notice, as did tourists and other Manhattanites. A man and a teenage boy stood next to me at the corner, and I overheard the man remark, “She looks expensive.” His statement was accurate – the pieces could have been worth thousands of dollars, and her look was meticulous – but the doubled implication that she was a prostitute could not be dismissed. Much like the racetrack one hundred years earlier, those women that appeared in public in fanciful clothes had commodified their bodies in pedestrians’ and consumers’ minds, even if most poses were predetermined and consensual.



Figure 54. 8th Avenue and West 33rd Street, New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016.
Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

On West 33rd Street near the model door, prior to the Marchesa show, I spoke to two young photographers: one, a Black male in his 20s, self-identified as a street style blogger and was dressed in a tweed suit and sweater vest, while the second was a Caucasian woman who identified herself as a freelance street style photographer and wore a hooded jacket. The male photographer insisted that the best photographic method was to ask the attendee for permission and thus establish a respectful relationship, and he bemoaned the lack of politeness of the other men that stood in a pack by the venue door. The female photographer commented that she did not feel appropriate intruding in other women's personal space. Rather than ask attendees for a photograph, however, as some other female photographers did further down 33rd Street, she tended to stand back or crouch down to get her shot in a more discreet fashion. Other female

photographers in this section did the same. The photographers closest to the door behaved in a manner that seemed more similar to paparazzi. A woman who passed them called them this word in a joking manner, to which one responded, “We are *not* paparazzi!” Luvaas (2016) notes that while photographers’ behaviour appears to the untrained observer to be similar to that of paparazzi, the differences between even the most aggressive street style photographers and paparazzi are “night and day,” and are made apparent if and when the “real paparazzi” arrive (p. 273). Luvaas further outlines that paparazzi are present primarily to shoot celebrities and thus congregate by the backstage entrances/exits; that paparazzi and street style photographers shoot for different markets; and that paparazzi seek out unflattering or “compromising” photographs rather than well-composed ones (pp. 273-276). Still, I observed situations in which female attendees demonstrated resentment at what appeared to be repeated intrusions on the part of these male photographers. Several of us turned after hearing hollers from a young Black woman, with braids and an earcuff, who exited a Lexus. One of the more vocal young men that had been stationed by the door had spotted her through the car window and made a beeline for the car, with his camera pointed towards her; she in turn reamed him out, shouting that he needed to leave her alone and causing us to wonder if he had attempted to photograph her on other occasions. In this moment, the woman became what Bernstein describes as a “resistant performer” who “understands and exerts agency against the script” even as she comprehends it (2009, p. 75). She notes, however, that, “an action that appears to be transgressive actually follows a script’s range of implications” (2009, p. 75). The young woman emphasized her position by holding her arm out in a defensive move, and the photographer backed off as the valets stepped out of the entrance to usher the woman inside. While the woman’s act of resistance was noticeable and

audible, it nonetheless operated within a pre-understood script that positioned female attendees under a phallogentric lens, emblemized in the camera apparatus.

Several female intermediaries hurried past photographers, sometimes looking at them with disdain, especially if photographers tried to jump out and/or impede their steps. In one instance, a male photographer near the main venue door called out an attendee for avoiding his lens as if she had denied him and was thus ungrateful. While the presence of the smartphone in the street style photograph makes the female subject appear occupied, disinterested or ‘hard to get,’ it occurred to me here the extent to which the device functions as an almost literal shield that removed the attendee from her social ‘obligations’ within the outdoor enactments. The speed at which the women walked and in other locations *ran* past the cameras invoked the Parisian trope *la passante*, the fashionable woman who, Rocamora articulates, walks the streets forever looked-at within her urban environment (2009, pp. 126-151). *La passante* does not need permission to be present, but rather functions as an “erotic ... apparition” that the male never meets nor makes love to (Rocamora, 2009, p. 132). Like the female fashion show attendee, *la passante* is intended to disappear, in this case into the venue or into the crowd. She “hurries” through the space and “does not take the time to contemplate the pleasures the city offers the gaze” as she does not want to be mistaken for the prostitute (Rocamora, 2009, pp. 137) – in contrast to those fashion show attendees (if these were attendees) that enticed the cameras or stopped to pose. The female attendees that refused to stop for the male photographers and did not even make eye contact with them (save for the occasional sneer) defied a script that tried to position them as prostitute but were considered rude or snobbish for doing so. Luvaas remarks that fashion show attendees with sufficient clout have the option to enter via the backstage door, and therefore if one enters via the front venue doors, one either expects or wants to be

photographed: “It is telling ... that the editors attending the shows, no matter how pronouncedly they perform their lack of desire to be photographed, still come and go through the front entrance” (2016, p. 275). Furthermore, he declares that the influencers depend on the photographers as much as the photographers depend on them (Luvaas, 2016, p. 275). Luvaas’s remarks, while accurate in a broad sense, hint at his own male bias. The women’s performance of discontent that I witnessed was a palpable one, or perhaps their affective expressions demonstrated that repeated adherence to the patriarchal script was wearing thin.

The Photograph as Dance

Most fashion show attendees, that were considered *somebodies*, posed as convention dictated. As described, the attendees were recognizable for their fashionable outfits and often for their attractiveness at a distance, and several walked up the West 33rd Street stretch with the full expectation that they would be photographed at some point. I watched The Glamourai, a fashion blogger that I follow, walk up to the entrance prior to the Marchesa show, in a long, blue felt coat, four-inch heel boots and a blue, wool beanie. She strolled calmly past photographers on the sidewalk and anticipated the hail of those crowded further up. She slowed down further and then stood still, facing them as they assembled in front of and to the side of her. The photo-taking lasted for seconds before she smiled politely, said a polite “thank you” and moved on to the entrance. Bernstein (2009) dissects the motivations behind a pose in a specific photograph she examines, and concludes that the subject “consciously knew her photograph was being taken and that she built and oriented her performance around that knowledge” (p. 87). The Glamourai’s actions too demonstrate her awareness not just that several photographers wished to take her photograph but where these photographers were located, and her actions therefore constituted her

side of the photo-taking as a “dance with the camera” (see Bernstein, 2009, p. 87). This was the sole incidence I witnessed of an attendee, and a recognizable one, thanking photographers.

Through these scenarios, which lasted anywhere from a shutter click to a few minutes, I observed that the work of fashion’s subfields was both at odds and mutually reinforcing, as influencers and models that posed for the cameras could be reassured that their personas would circulate to a wider audience, and photographers would earn an income from their work. Bernstein postulates that the “photograph-to-be” qualifies as another material *thing* with which the poser undertakes the “dance” (2009, p. 87), a statement that foreshadows Schneider’s (2011) examination of photographs’ futurity. The future photograph and others’ engagement with it offer the “reason” for the act of photo-taking, as well as the dance’s material product and its archival record (Bernstein, 2009, pp. 87-88). The Glamourai later posted a photograph on her Instagram account, taken from one of her appearances at NYFW and credited to one of the photographers – based on her outfit it appears to have been taken of her at the moment that I watched, and therefore I re-called that moment, even as I encountered it anew in a virtual environment. In other cases, the dance was seen as a more capitalistic, invasive practice akin to that of paparazzi photo-taking, or at least experienced with a similar level of discomfort by those positioned in front of the camera lenses. In the photograph that Bernstein meditates on, the dominant performative movement is that of “stillness,” which threatens to reduce the person in it to the status of material *thing* or *object* depending on the viewer’s interest (2009, pp. 87-88). However, outdoor Fashion Week photographs capture subjects both in still poses and in various speeds of motion, and thus render women as resistant subjects that *refused* to stand still *and* as preyed-upon females outrunning male photographers while in stiletto heels.

The Photograph as Action Sequence

Outside the Ralph Lauren Collection presentation, I found a *much* larger crowd of photographers than I had seen outside the Lela Rose fashion show earlier in the week. *Far* more running happened outside this presentation as the venue was on a side street on a stretch of warehouses and studios that was comparatively devoid of other tourists or pedestrians. The venue was, however, located next to a warehouse for Bloomberg bank, and across the street from a UPS Customer Center and shipping warehouse. There were numerous delivery trucks and vans present, whose drivers and supervisors were demonstratively displeased with the chaotic happenings around them. An angry security guard in uniform called out to photographers and attendees to "clear the streets," and it remained unclear as to whether he was a representative of NYFW or making these demands on behalf of the warehouse workers and drivers. Photographers and attendees undertook a more varied and erratic series of movements, as photographers spotted fashion insiders walking up the street and raced towards them, while others waited stealthily to request that an attendee pose in a separate area. While Luvaas (2016) describes Fashion Week as the site at which "the slow dance of street style transpires on the proverbial sidewalk" (p. 283), this odd scene consisted of alternating slow dances and sped-up, acrobatic chorus numbers with the occasional unscripted stunt – all happening on literal sidewalks and streets. Based on the fact that street style photographs often erase other photographers from the frame, one might assume that people would stand outside and photograph in a more communal manner. Instead Washington Street became the site of a free-for-all, as photographers swarmed around the same people and jockeyed for an advantageous angle while still ensuring that they remained out of other viewfinders. As the show's start time approached (and went), more famous muses such as Hanneli Mustaparta arrived: these women alternated between walking up the sidewalks for the

benefit of the photographers and then sprinting into the venues, or bolting past all assembled (Figure 55). Unlike the female *passantes* outside Moynihan Station, these women did not eschew the photographers' lenses but instead, in the case of Mustaparta, turned the sprint into a performance that could be captured but just for a brief second, if the photographers worked for it. The later it became, attendees ran past out of an apparent exigency to reach the venue rather than out of a desire to enact or resist the script that all present had worked to build. Upon seeing these known faces, photographers would run into the street without hesitation or attention to the position of traffic, which was often at a standstill. In Schuman's *The Pit*, an Italian street style photographer describes the need to take the perfect shot as "like a drug" and speaks of the "adrenaline" that courses through him: he exudes an Italian machismo. In New York, a similar (perhaps more American) show of manliness was evident as I watched one male photographer jump over the hood of a car in a parkour-style stunt reminiscent of an action film, determined much like a paparazzo to obtain his shot no matter what material structures and objects came between him, his intended subject and the possibility of a financial windfall.



Figure 55. Fashion editor Hanneli Mustaparta at New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016. Photo: Rebecca Halliday.

One photographer stood comparatively alone, in the middle of the street, near the main venue entrance. This was Tommy Ton, whom I had searched for the entire week, his presence a clear indication that the Ralph Lauren Collection show was an important calendar event. Ton was far more methodical in his practice: he often stood still or walked with a casual but focused approach, and I never once saw him run or jump over a car hood to obtain a shot. The *scriptive thing* functions for Bernstein as a “heuristic tool ... to make responsible, limited inferences about the past” (2009, p. 76). To watch Ton work with his camera in such a calm, calculated fashion – as opposed to the lesser-known photographers running and jumping around him – offered me a novel perspective on the process through which he obtained his photographs. On-site observations illuminated the contrast between his lack of motion and the tendencies of subjects

to walk or run past him. Ton stood much further in from the corner where most of the other photographers had congregated, a location that permitted him both to create personal hails between himself and his subjects, or more often to snap them in a running motion. He located himself in the precise spot to capture Mustaparta's run without having to move more than a meter or two. Ton's more studied, careful approach also indicated, from a social materialist perspective, that he did not need to run or throw himself over the hood of a car because as a pioneer of the script he did not depend on a seasonal freelancer's income. The photograph as heuristic or archival tool illuminates the effectiveness of combining content analysis of street style photographs with observations of the conditions and locations at which they were taken. A reciprocal process occurred too in which Ton's photographs helped me recognize certain important persons and locations during the observations, but I could now pinpoint specific locations the photographs of Ton and other practitioners that shot in New York.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has incorporated participant observations that I made at New York Fashion Week, Fall/Winter 2016 in order to characterize the social and material interactions that the total mediatization of Fashion Week has established, both those that are novel and those that are derived from prior media-based enactments. While it became evident that the field of fashion was comprised of numerous discrete social performances, Bernstein's concept of the *scriptive thing* or *scriptive prop* illuminated the camera and the media device as the anchor and interface for this multitude of relations and hails. This analytical 'lens' helped me both to emphasize the extent to which camera devices are omnipresent at Fashion Week and to itemize each of the relations and actions that these devices instantiate. Furthermore, on-site field observations, placed in conversation with other researchers' accounts, revealed the class, gender and racial

politics implicit and explicit within New York Fashion Week's enactments, as well as the forms of labour that all parties must perform. Furthermore, observation of Fashion Week and its mediatization permitted me in fact to reiterate the manner in which these interactions and scenes are still *embodied* and determined via the relations of and between bodies. The limitation of this on-site research resides in the impossibility of tracing the circulation and archiving of all of the different photographs and other media representations taken at New York Fashion Week. To document the sheer number of cameras present in each fashion show venue – indeed it is unusual for audience members *not* to photograph the presentation – in addition to the feverish race for attendee and model photographs in the streets outside, does take a step towards characterizing the vast market for these representations. While outdoor photographers were unwilling to disclose what income they derived from their work, the fierceness of the competition to shoot the most sought-after subjects indicates that there is capital to be made.^{cxciiv} The result is a constant and continuing plethora of mediatized representations for fashion-interested publics to select from. The continuance of the street style parade into the most recent seasons and the flood of indoor and outdoor representations circulated in newspapers and on websites and social media reveals that the demand for fashion content has not abated and will not soon diminish.

Conclusion: the Fashion Show *Remains* (with apologies to Rebecca Schneider)

On September 11, 2015, the storied French fashion house Givenchy produced a stunning fashion show for its Spring/Summer 2016 ready-to-wear collection, outdoors at dusk on Manhattan's Pier 26 – an event that was opened, in part, to members of the public. 25,000 people entered on a special website for a chance to obtain one of more than 800 free tickets, “2000 of [these people] within the first 2 seconds” that the offer was posted (Rocamora, 2016, p. 6).^{cxcv} For consumers that did not get spatial access, screens were installed in outdoor locations around New York (S. Lau, 2015, para. 2). The show was the first Givenchy fashion show to be held at New York Fashion Week and promoted the launch of its Madison Avenue flagship store; the collection also marked a decade under the Creative Direction of Riccardo Tisci, no small achievement in a climate of fast turnaround. Top fashion personnel, fashion celebrities and stars such as Kanye West and Kim Kardashian were also present (Horyn, 2015a, para. 6; Mower, 2015, para. 1).^{cx cvi} The black and white collection was ethereal, intricate and breathtaking and shown on 88 models, both male and female. To add an extra element of spectacle, not to mention cultural capital, the show was produced in collaboration with Marina Abramovic, one of performance art's all-time luminaries and a friend of Tisci, who selected the external elements and “curated” a series of pieces and “installations” before, after and interspersed with the model procession (S. Lau, 2015, para. 4). While the date of 9/11 was a coincidence rather than one the fashion house chose, the producers honoured the occasion, envisioning the performance as a moment of unification and reverence under the dual light columns of the Ground Zero memorial (S. Lau, 2015, para. 4). Performers “acted out simple, strenuous, and repetitive rituals” that invoked death and rebirth: climbing stairs on the pier and the wooden set, holding up new trees, and bathing under a faucet (Mower, 2015, para. 2; see also Horyn, 2015a, para. 4). The affair was accompanied by haunting

Serbian folk music, while llamas strolled about the pier (Sagansky, 2015, para. 1). In a nod to more current media, a neon installation read “I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF LOVE” (S. Lau, 2015, para. 6). Tisci also contracted multimedia artist Marco Brambilla to capture the event in a novel virtual reality format with five 360-degree cameras positioned on the pier (Sagansky, 2015, para. 1). The performance was received as simultaneously optimistic and as sombre and profound, with the house’s roots in 1990s couture and that era’s troubling theatrical statements considered a foundation for a proper “meditation on the losses” of 9/11 in an era of media saturation (Mower, 2015, para. 2): for critics, the material collection and installation existed in tension with but won out over social media. The cultural statement of one-ness was also achieved via supposed class equalization in the form of consumers’ presence (Ellison, 2015c, n.p.). The house’s decision to let consumers attend such an elaborate event constituted a massive break with recent tradition; indeed the show fused high-end fashion with and as spectacle in a mediatized climate. Still, critic Susie Lau commented that its level of opulence emphasized the price that could be (and is) placed on a commodified fashion show ticket: “Fashion Week being up for sale is nothing new, but this Givenchy demonstrated that being physically present at a fashion show is the final frontier, up for public consumption” (2015, para. 3). Tisci posited that fashion shows should, in the future, be accessible to “real people,” and permit consumers to feel an “emotion” that cannot be transmitted on social media; however, owner Bernard Arnault, of LVMH Moët Hennessy – Louis Vuitton, considered the event a “one-off” (Ellison, 2015c). Nonetheless, smaller brands such as Rebecca Minkoff have taken up this model, producing in-season shows for consumers in retail-oriented spaces in addition to standard Fashion Week shows for industry personnel.^{excvii}

Documenting the pervasiveness of digital fashion films and other online communication tools, Geczy and Karaminas comment, “No longer does fashion rely on seasonal catwalk shows and conventional media such as magazines and newspapers to highlight and communicate couturiers’ ranges” (2016, p. 111). Nonetheless, while alternative communication modes such as fashion film exist, the fashion show *remains* as an invaluable medium. While it is not the *sole* showcase mechanism, it still performs a crucial industrial function as the focal event at which fashion houses debut collections not just to intermediaries, clientele and celebrities, but, now, to an online consumer audience. This audience witnesses the complete spectacle of models, social media personalities and celebrities and can respond to it in virtual communities but *remains* separate from the performance proper. In essence, fashion still relies on fashion shows as material, performative events, even as certain companies venture into simultaneous virtual and digital initiatives. The fact that the fashion show has *not* disappeared and is now mediatized has illuminated the elements that maintain its cultural fascination, both for intermediaries and for consumers: the clothes, the theatrical nature, the presence of celebrities – and the manifestation of a social realm that still remains for inaccessible to all but a select few. The ‘see now buy now’ model has attempted to collapse fashion’s production, promotion and retail schedules, but it nonetheless is thus far dependent on the presentation and transmission of a fashion show to earn public attention. This dissertation attends to the *live*, live performance as the foundational construct of mediatized spectacles. I maintain that the commercial allure of these presentations is not based solely on the items for sale but online spectators’ desire for presence within the exclusive milieu. While most fashion shows remain accessible to consumers only in the virtual realm, their pervasiveness has propelled consumer culture’s demand for the material, either as products, experiences or as *content*. As the associate observes, the level of access to the fashion

show (at least one not produced for consumers) is “the same as it used to be. It’s just that people consume more of it” (2017, n.p.). If one cannot access the space, one can access the clothes – with the needed funds. Media representations of the fashion show have also exacerbated a cultural focus on aspirational bodies that has taken on a material dimension in mediatized social practices. These bodies are not just those of models or celebrities but also of fashion celebrities, cultural intermediaries, influencers, reality television stars and other faces-of-the-moment. We are told that these faces are famous before we see them or know their names – their bodies are materialized before their publics on the runways and in the front rows.

In several respects this dissertation is an ephemeral and temporal snapshot of fashion at a particular cultural moment: a document that compiled and dissected social and industry phenomena that were relevant and even contested at the time of research. Certain practices that I discussed in detail have, like the fashion shows and collections, become last season’s stories, or faded from press discourse over a period of seasons with the arrival of new media developments. While social media pundits and fashion companies declared at the start of this decade that the “conversation” around Fashion Month was happening on Twitter – and it was – companies have used Twitter less and less to stream fashion shows and prompt consumer feedback. Instead, companies have turned their focus to the use of live streaming applications such as Periscope and Facebook Live that *all* intermediaries can use to film and stream fashion shows from their seats, offering both an ‘official’ brand view and a perspective from various seats around the venue. At the same time, Instagram has come to dominate the market as the preeminent tool for fashion and brand communication. While the press observed a decrease in the taking of mere photographs in recent seasons (see Laneri, 2015), I note a resurgence of Instagram posts in part due to the launch of features that permit for animation, narrative and even disappearance – all central components

of the *live* fashion show. Several of the *street style* photographers who pioneered the practice of outdoor Fashion Month photo-taking no longer work for the publications that launched their careers and have instead rotated to positions as freelancers (albeit much wealthier than when they started) or with other media outlets. *Style.com* was transformed into an e-commerce site for Condé Nast Media but then shut down within months, while its fashion show reportage now resides on the specialized *runway* page of the main *Vogue* website, and can also be accessed in the RUNWAY app, dedicated to video content and look photographs. Like fashion collections and fashion shows, virtual archives and social media ‘remain’ ephemeral – not just on Snapchat, on which photographs disappear, but on Twitter and Instagram, in which content is updateable and replaceable. The obsolescence of virtual content too threatens even the ‘see now buy now’ model, since looks posted to brand or arbiter accounts can sell out before a customer can even locate them for purchase (see Hyland, 2017). Constant and rapid shifts in attention, media use and cultural discourse, combined with tendencies of one mediatized phenomenon to eclipse another, constitute the pitfalls of writing about media in the new millennium (see Bolter & Grusin, 2000; Gere, 2008) and examining fashion in the *culture of speed* (Tomlinson, 2007) – even this term is now a decade old.^{cxcviii}

Like fashion trends, certain discussion topics created out of fashion’s mediatization have entered, saturated and exited the public conversation and then been resurrected a few seasons later. While fashion companies that did not embrace digital technologies were considered outliers three years ago, there exists a sense in the fashion press that media applications have saturated consumer culture. Reporting on Tommy Hilfiger’s plan to stage his third ‘see now buy now’ fashion show for his millennial-focused TommyxGigi collaboration at London Fashion Week in September 2017, *Fashionista* rattled off the planned technologies in a sarcastic tone that

hinted that such initiatives are no longer novel: "...[E]verything featured on the runway will be live-streamed, as well as shoppable among select Tommy Hilfiger stores, retail partners, the 'Tommynow' app, Facebook Messenger (via chat bot TMY.GRL) and Tommy.com. Yay, technology" (Bobila, 2017, para. 2). The press uproar over bloggers' infiltration of the material environs of Fashion Month, which culminated in Menkes's (2013) rousing editorial "The Circus of Fashion," was quelled a few seasons later as personnel determined that the restructure of fashion's (literal) hierarchies had been irrevocable. In fact, as early as the infamous Dolce & Gabbana show, the press had dubbed stories on fashion bloggers' disruption of fashion shows a "trend piece" that needed to die (Kamer, 2009, n.p.). Yet the same narrative of field contestation reared its head in September 2016 at Milan Fashion Week, as *Vogue* Creative Digital Director Sally Singer directed a left field aside: "Note to bloggers who change head-to-toe, paid-to-wear outfits every hour: Please stop. Find another business. You are heralding the death of style" (2016, para. 3) – refueling the embers of the debate. Such was the felt antagonism of the comment that UK *Vogue*'s then-Editor-in-Chief Alexandra Shulman felt compelled to tweet that her team did not share the same position as its American counterparts.

The most circular debate, however, concerns the purpose and future of the fashion show itself. Tom Ford has repositioned his show at the start of the standard New York Fashion Week calendar for September 2017, remarking that 'see now buy now' is problematic as shipping timetables dictate that clothes arrive in stores even *before* the fashion show (Foley, 2017; Hyland, 2017) – in essence that instant fashion is too instant. In her review of Ralph Lauren's Fall/Winter 2016 'see now buy now' fashion show, held outside his Madison Avenue store, Horyn (2016b) posits that mid-price brands can make 'see now buy now' work because their lines are not supposed to be *as* exclusive, while luxury brands cannot become too accessible for risk of losing

their niche: the same argument that Ford put forth six years earlier. Still, mid-price brands – here brands whose pieces cost in the hundreds, not thousands of dollars – are more accessible, period. At the same time, the sheer cost of offering instant fashion season after season makes the model prohibitive for most companies – even an established brand like Ralph Lauren has not been immune to the financial troubles plaguing US retailers. While most companies find legitimacy and security in sticking to official Fashion Month schedules others such as Chanel, Saint Laurent and Louis Vuitton have chosen to show in alternative and even exotic locales. The end result is that Fashion Months persist, while certain companies rebel and produce shows on their own time – often prior to or overlapping with official Fashion Weeks. These companies, however, can afford to take the financial risk and are guaranteed coverage no matter where their shows are situated. A bolder move still is to refuse to produce a fashion show at all. In June 2017, fashion provocateur Demna Gvasalia of the brand Vetements announced his withdrawal from Paris Fashion Week, stating that no presentational model can preserve a broken system:

Fashion shows are not the best tool. We did the show in the sex club, the restaurant, the church. We brought forward the season, we showed men's and women's together. It's become repetitive and exhausting. We will do something when there's the time and the need for it. It will be more like a surprise. (Mower, 2017, para. 1)

While the fashion press has thus far applauded Gvasalia's move as a rebellion, it remains to be seen what the brand's next promotional move will be; rather, I read Gvasalia's decision as a performative act that stakes his brand's claim to industry attention through a calculated absence.

Despite all of this discussion, reevaluation and restructure, the fashion show *remains* as a material, promotional, informational, industrial and even sometimes explicitly theatrical event. The mediatization of fashion has, however, raised the question of for *whom* does the fashion show remain: for the members of the field of fashion, for the brands as a promotional tool, or for the consumers that demand and are fed ceaseless content? Uri Minkoff, CEO of Rebecca

Minkoff (and the designer's brother) claims that the direct-to-consumer model has resulted in a 64% sales increase each season (Hyland, 2017, para. 3). He predicts that consumer-oriented fashion shows could become the new trend and draws from the tourist practice of theatre attendance as a comparative illustration: "Wouldn't it be fun for consumers to be able to come to New York and see three or four fashion shows rather than saying, 'I'm going to see a Broadway show?'" (Hyland, 2017, para. 7). Minkoff's vision locates the fashion show as a competitor to professional Broadway theatre: an event for which the commodities and the cachet of attending a 'real' fashion show are the theatrical hook. It remains doubtful, however, that these fashion shows would be the same ones on the official calendar but rather separate "consumer fashion shows" (Hyland, 2017, para. 7), produced for shoppers or *fashion tourists* (see Craik, 2013). It is also doubtful that celebrities would want to attend public fashion shows, at least without additional compensation. Department stores too are offering more promotional consumer experiences on behalf of individual brands (Hyland, 2017). Horyn (2016b) reiterated that the department store fashion show, of which the Ralph Lauren show was reminiscent, is a more accessible but far less *luxurious* affair (para. 5). The production of consumer desire thus remains dependent on the establishment of barriers to immediate access and a class of consumers that obtains that access *before* others in both the spatial and temporal senses of the word.

Within Fashion Week mandates, most stakeholders still consider the fashion show to be an efficacious communication platform, even as companies struggle to consider alternative, more direct and cost-effective forums. The 2016 CFDA report found that respondents supported the continuance of fashion shows and in-studio retail and press appointments but called for these events to be more "intimate and exclusive" (p. 6). The report then recommended the parallel creation of additional "consumer-relevant activations" to be implemented close to Fashion Week

and/or in the “several months” in between: these could include but are not limited to fashion shows and could instead be other forms of creative and even digital presentation (CFDA, 2016, p. 6). While the nature of these activations remains open to interpretation, this lack of concreteness threatens to undermine Fashion Week as a scheduled event. What remains so ironic about the fashion show’s nature as a one-off live performance is that while it is now tailored for mediatized transmission, as a contained event, it has not been altered *as such* to fit fashion’s communicative structures: rather, fashion’s media processes have been re-formed around the performance. Furthermore, both industrial enactments and core business models have been built and rebuilt around the event. The lack of definition around what constitutes “brand activations” exposes that stakeholders seek to produce fashion shows not because they are cost-effective but because the fashion show model is so entrenched. At the same time, the material and temporal natures of the fashion show have become fragmented, as critics claim that fashion shows exist with the sole aim to feature *certain items* or *moments* to be shared as photographs, GIFs and memes: a series of what Alec Leach terms *shareable moments* that include collection pieces, installations and snapshots of celebrities (2017, n.p.; see also Gordon, 2017). The mediatized spectacle, of which the fashion show remains the core, resides, however, in an accumulation and surfeit of *shareable moments* rather than in individual units. Still, in this formulation, the fashion show is a conduit for content rather than an event, and is rendered immaterial.^{cxcix}

The conversations that have persisted, but not been solved, pertain to whether this now pervasive, mediatized presentational model is sustainable, not just in terms of financial and environmental costs but also of human and creative labour. It is possible to consider a future in which Fashion *Week* is obsolete while companies produce shows in disparate international locations, and the industry appears to be moving towards this model. While the CFDA report

mentions creative burnout and a lack of time for proper conceptualization as central stakeholder concerns (2016, p. 4), the press has not considered the environmental impact of personnel travel since earlier debates around the efficacies of fashion film (see Menkes, 2010). The need to decrease fashion's environmental footprint and address labour concerns would support the continuance of the Fashion Month model and a concentration of smaller-scale, more exclusive in-studio presentations. Based on the observations that I have made, I can predict a simultaneous retreat from the production of mediatized fashion shows to events that are more exclusive and smaller-scale, combined with increased efforts in digital creative production and communication. In essence, this would mean the simultaneous production of *live* fashion shows for insiders and more edited or considered virtual content built *around* that performance – more calculated product teasers and short films or film reels. While the fashion show remains as a material event primed for mediatized transmission, the material aspect of the fashion show has become occluded. Fashion shows' theatrical elements must be used, if at all, in a subtle, potent manner not intended for mass mediatization but rather for the immediate audience; in a similar manner, I predict a return to material stimulation and installations in retail stores in order to reiterate the tactile nature of commodities. The concurrent production of media content should not just be a virtual incarnation or live stream of the fashion show, or a social media initiative in which consumers' content is assimilated under the brand, but rather that which has its own material properties and modes of interaction. In brief, I offer a reminder that fashion and the fashion show are on a fundamental level *material*, and that while the possibilities of virtual interaction are manifold, the clothes themselves are *real* items that demand more immediate forms of interaction and attention to the role of embodiment and labour in their creation, showcase and dissemination.

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ⁱ It-personalities are not celebrities per se but are recognized as having an attractive, indefinable allure – what performance theorist Joseph Roach (2007) describes as *It*. The expression ‘It-Girl’ was first used in the 1920s by writer Elinor Glyn to describe the actress Clara Bow and took on instant use in Hollywood discourse (Roach, 2007, p. 6-7). While ‘It-Girl’ remains a popular term and most of these influencers are women, I use “personalities” to indicate the increased presence of male influencers such as Cameron Dallas, Lucky Blue Smith and Luka Sabbat.

ⁱⁱ The firm KCD, which handles “public relations, production and strategy” for brands and coordinates “dozens” of the most high profile Fashion Month shows, is considered to be the most dominant of these outfits (Sherman, 2016, para. 5; see also Associate, 2017)

ⁱⁱⁱ Cost breakdowns for fashion shows on the ready-to-wear calendar estimate expenditures in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. New York Fashion Week venue rentals alone cost \$100,000; fees paid to A-list celebrities to sit front row can run from \$50,000 to \$100,000; and technical costs for live streaming are estimated at \$20,000 to \$50,000 (Aslanyan, 2016). The celebrities that attend are often represented by the same agencies that produce Fashion Weeks and are offered seats in order to enhance producers’ corporate profile. The coordination of New York Fashion Week under WME-IMG (the unification as of 2013 between William Morris Entertainment and the International Management Group) offers a case in point (Friedman, 2015).

^{iv} It is difficult to determine the first use of the term Fashion Month: it appears in an offhand, informal manner in books and magazine articles from the mid-2000s onward, while the use of capitalization in books on fashion seems to come within the last two years (see Zee, 2015). *Style.com* started to refer to its *street style* photographs as Fashion Month albums around 2014.

^v Moreover, personnel can obtain detailed information on collections from interviews and showroom visits conducted in companies’ studios prior to or after the fashion show – which permits them to see garments up close and touch the materials (Bradford, 2015; Entwistle, 2009).

^{vi} Rocamora (2001) notes that, as early as 1996, the French media feared that online media and global distribution would dilute high fashion’s cultural status (p. 135).

^{vii} While seasonal trend features appear in magazines in tandem with the retail calendar, most publications have monthly print runs, though this schedule too has fluctuated in the online era.

^{viii} Although Rocamora labels time here as a “social construct,” *fashion time*’s permutations nonetheless inform “actual practices” and have material effects (2013, pp. 61, 74).

^{ix} On the social and industrial impact of the proliferation of ready-to-wear or mass-market fashion, see Gaines, 1990; Marcketti & Parsons, 2016; Schorman, 2003.

^x Georg Simmel, writing at the turn of the 20th century, conceptualizes fashion as class-based but describes classes as social spheres rather than as hierarchies. For Simmel, fashion demonstrates inclusion: he uses the metaphor of the frame as that which demarcates the boundaries of a social class and identifies those within and without (2000, p. 189). Fashion straddles humans’ dual desire both to conform to social tendencies but also to assert “individual differentiation” (Simmel, 1957, p. 544). While Simmel characterizes fashion as more mobile, social inclusion remains dependent upon economic means. Trends take root in the upper classes, while the lower classes purchase “*cheap* products” of similar appearance (Simmel, 2000, p. 555, author’s emphasis). The upper classes then promote new trends to reinforce social boundaries (Simmel, 2000, p. 545).

^{xi} For an overview of Bourdieu’s theories and scholars’ criticisms, see Lury, 2011, pp. 94-101.

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- ^{xii} Mass-market fashion did not “shatter class barriers,” but rather, “the production of a single design in a range of prices and qualities resulted in a relative blurring of the social distinctions that fashion had traditionally served to *accentuate*” (S. Berry, 2000, xiv, author’s emphasis).
- ^{xiii} Moeran (2006b) cautions that the term “aesthetic” threatens to occlude fashion’s multifarious markets, personnel’s areas of expertise and consumers’ culturally-specific reception processes.
- ^{xiv} On Bourdieu’s habitus as embodied, see also Entwistle & Rocamora, 2006; Featherstone, 2007; Lury, 2011.
- ^{xv} Fashion Week’s boundaries realize Simmel’s frame as that which “severs all direct relations with the surrounding space” while maintaining the work of art as “coherent” (p. 2000, 189).
- ^{xvi} For a semiotic approach to theatres as architectural structures and their social implications, see Carlson, 1993.
- ^{xvii} Tomlinson defines a like state of *telemediatization*: “the increasing implication of electronic communications and media systems in the constitution of everyday experience” (2007, p. 94).
- ^{xviii} That said, fashion studies scholars appear more willing to look back to historical precedents and contexts for comparative democratizations of fashion and communication media, than are new media scholars that tout its “disruptive and discontinuous character” (Turner, 2010, p. 99).
- ^{xix} Not to mention the media focus on *women*’s fashion on the Oscars red carpet, and the display of a dominant *masculine* athleticism, not to mention militarism, at the Superbowl.
- ^{xx} These examinations have tended to focus on reality television competitions such as the *American Idol* and *Big Brother* franchises and the modes of active audience involvement that these series incite (see Couldry, 2012; Jenkins, 2006; Turner, 2010).
- ^{xxi} Turner is reflecting here on a conversation with celebrity scholar Chris Rojek.
- ^{xxii} Turner derives *celebrification* from Chris Rojek. Rojek (2001) coined the term to describe both the “processes” through which individuals become celebrities and the manner in which “celebrity culture” influences our self-perception and modes of “social interaction” (pp. 15-16).
- ^{xxiii} Pamela Church Gibson (2012) identifies *fashion celebrities* as individuals who possess industry connections that are as familiar if not more so than their work in other media forums such as film and music (p. 23). These (often female) creatives do brand collaborations, act as ambassadors and models, and attend fashion shows (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 23).
- ^{xxiv} The fashion show’s mediatization has also infiltrated retail stores, as middle-market and fast fashion retailers install “plasma TV screens that showcase the fashion show of the latest collection” to “enhance the atmosphere” and status of environments (Okonkwo, 2007, p. 100).
- ^{xxv} Brands and fashion houses with whom de Bétak has worked include Berluti, Christian Dior, H&M, Hussein Chalayan, Jason Wu, Michael Kors, Miu Miu, Rodarte, Viktor & Rolf, and, as I will mention later, Victoria’s Secret (Anaya, 2013, n.p.).
- ^{xxvi} The one-time-only, mediatized fashion show adheres to processes of *ephemerality*, *seduction*, and *marginal differentiation* that Lipovetsky (1994) identifies in the state of consummate fashion.
- ^{xxvii} Thanks to Marlis Schweitzer for her keen observation that the phrase “to be in the room” can be read as a reference to the musical *Hamilton*, which renders this a *musical* metaphor.
- ^{xxviii} Karenza Moore’s (2012) examination of affect and nostalgia in online posts related to British club cultures shows how Ahmed’s work can be applied to consumer discourses and communities and direct textual responses to screen-based stimuli.
- ^{xxix} The ‘natural’ look and the work and commodities needed has roots in early-1900s cosmetics and skincare advertisements that featured stage performers (Schweitzer, 2009b, pp. 133-137).

^{xxx} Wissinger derives this term from Malcolm Gladwell's phrase the "age of the blink" to describe mediatized condition and its characteristic speed. Her term adds to Patricia Clough's *regime of representation* "that enforces particular social and cultural practices" (2013, p. 133)

^{xxx1} Wissinger's description of glamour labour as a product of media logics parallels studies in celebrity culture and cinema as impacted by media uses (Church Gibson, 2012; Rojek, 2001).

^{xxxii} Media scholars employ the term *user* to describe human actors that interface with new media (see Bolter & Grusin, 2000). Michele White (2006) proposes the term *spectator* to account for the Internet's multi-directional interactions and users' diverse positionalities (pp. 5-11). I use *online spectators* to differentiate between those individuals that access fashion shows online and the audience members in the event space. I also use *consumer* to emphasize that companies and media outlets seek to fuel the desire to purchase commodities. Film analysis predicated on psychoanalytic theories remains applicable to Internet studies, as content is transmitted via screen interfaces that prescribe, facilitate and resist modes of "looking" and produce desire, fulfillment and denial (M. White, 2006, pp. 5-11). Michele White's (2006) application of film analysis to Internet spectatorship attends to the interface between live event and consumer, as well as to my embodied position as researcher. Scholars have examined fashion show footage in terms of this same cinematic manipulation of eroticized and aspirational consumer spectatorship.

^{xxxiii} The "Battle of Versailles" was co-organized by Versailles curator Gerald Van der Kemp and American publicist Eleanor Lambert, who had founded New York Fashion Week.

^{xxxiv} While the Battle of Versailles must of course be historicized within authorial contestations between the Parisian and American fashion scenes, other 'battles' between national industries were happening at this time. One event with an identical outcome to the Battle of Versailles was the Paris Tasting, also known as the "Judgment of Paris," a 1976 wine competition, organized by British wine merchant Steven Spurrier, which pitted established French varietals against wines from the lesser-known California scene. In a surprise upset, the Californian wines beat out the French wines in blind tastings in both the red and white categories: a moment that mortified the French and launched Californian wineries internationally (see Peterson, 2001; Taber, 2005).

^{xxxv} Simons was named Designer of the Year in both the womenswear and menswear categories at the 2017 Council of Fashion Designers of America Awards. In fact, all of the CFDA award winners for this round were immigrants to the United States or, in the case of Ric Owens, were American but maintained their principal residence and practice abroad (Friedman, 2017).

^{xxxvi} The 2015 exhibition *Global Fashion Capitals* at the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York named 23 fashion capitals in addition to the "Big Four" and listed their dates of establishment. These were Madrid (1984), Tokyo (1985), Melbourne (1997/1994), São Paulo (1995), Rio de Janeiro (1996), Sydney (1996), Beijing (1997), Johannesburg (1997), Mexico City (1998), Moscow (2000), New Delhi (2000), Seoul (2000), Shanghai (2002), Rome (2002), Copenhagen (2005), Kiev (2005), Stockholm (2005), Mumbai (2006), Berlin (2007), Barcelona (2008), Istanbul (2009), St. Petersburg (2010) and Lagos (2011). The presence of a Fashion Week was a determinant in the measure of influence.

^{xxxvii} The "models for advanced sales" that couture houses released to American buyers in the 1900s can be considered the earliest form of pre-season collections (see Evans, 2013, p. 33).

^{xxxviii} New York Fashion Week assumed a more formalized structure in the 1990s when then-CFDA executive director Fern Mallis folded the fashion shows under the Bryant Park tents as the sole Fashion Week venue, after "Michael Kors held a show in a Midtown loft and part of the ceiling fell down on the critic Suzy Menkes" (Friedman, 2015, para.) In 1993, IMG purchased

NYFW from the CFDA, and in 2010 NYFW moved to Lincoln Center. In 2015, under WME/IMG, the event holds fashion shows at Skylight at Moynihan Station, a converted post office building, and Skylight Clarkson Square in SoHo, though, as I will elaborate in the final chapter, several designers still choose to show off-site (Friedman, 2015).

^{xxxix} Much of the research predates fashion's digital mediatization and therefore presupposes a spatially immediate audience; it does not address the implications of a condition in which online spectators can view the fashion show, and in which attendees become part of the performance.

^{xl} Historian Erika Rappaport, referencing Christophe Agnew's work on the Medieval marketplace, notes too that Britain under industrial capitalism and mass production developed "an almost obsessive concern with the nature of representation, accountability, and authenticity" (2001, p. 193), which high fashion has perpetuated in order to preserve the market status of its collections. Therefore while theatrical representation enhances the allure of collections, it also holds connotations of fraud and inferior replication.

^{xli} An exception is Schiaparelli's 1952 fashion show in which she "commissioned a film company to transform the courtyard in front of her own home into a fairytale showroom with mannequins who swayed to the samba played by Brazilian musicians" (Evans, 2001, p. 291).

^{xlii} Ginger Gregg Duggan (2001) differentiates between various modes: *spectacle*, in which theatrical constructs or "themes" are utilized in the service of commercial imperatives (p. 245); *substance*, in which the collection and production illuminate a more "abstract" *concept* (pp. 250-252); *science*, in which fabrics, functionalities and capabilities are prioritized (p. 255); *structure*, in which clothing is treated as *sculpture* and the fashion show as industrial practice (p. 260); and *statement*, in which collections and shows render critical or political commentaries (pp. 263-267).

^{xliii} Rick Owens has taken fashion shows to a different, somewhat more material extreme, placing an emphasis on the movement of bodies (see Browne, 2016, pp. 205, 210). For Paris Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2014, Owens he hired a team of step dancers to model his collection; the dancers incorporated frontal poses for the press into their routine. His Spring/Summer 2016 show featured (non-regular) models that carried other models upside down, strapped to their torsos, in an incredible feat of physical labour and athleticism.

^{xliv} Versace's 1991 show can also be considered a citation of the "Freedom '90" music video.

^{xlv} The effect reads as an updated version of McQueen's Spring/Summer 1999 ready-to-wear show, No. 13, in which a pair of robots sprayed paint onto the white dress (and skin) of model Shalom Harlow as she rotated on a wooden revolve.

^{xlvi} In 2009 and 2010, Pugh screened two short films at his womenswear presentations in Paris, which he had produced with Ruth Hogben, a *SHOWstudio* collaborator (see Uhlirva, 2013a, 2013b). In 2010, at Toronto's (then) Fall/Winter LG Fashion Week, designer Nada Shepherd presented her (now defunct) womenswear line NADA as a 3D short film at the Scotiabank Theatre cinema (Halliday, 2011).

^{xlvii} The term also appears in the title of a coffee-table book on fashion shows (Browne, 2016).

^{xlviii} In a similar vein, Malcolm Barnard uses the fable of the Emperor's new clothes to illustrate historical suspicions of fashion's nature as deceitful (2002, p. 3).

^{xlix} I read the title as a spoof of the phrase "100% Cotton" in which the addition of "lost" adds value. However, I could find no mention of the playwrights' intended meaning, other than a reference to an "Egyptian-cotton blanket" in a thematic essay from *The Harvard Lampoon* included in the show program (Wilkinson, 2014, para. 2).

^l For detailed accounts of the “Merry Widow Hat” fashion craze and Lucile’s work with the Ziegfeld Follies, see M. Schweitzer, 2009a, 2009b.

^{li} As Rappaport describes, British theatre criticism “became almost a pure advertisement” with scads of prose dedicated to descriptions of the fashions often “accompanied by photographs or illustrations of sets and costumes” (2001, p. 186)

^{lii} Hoffmann never states whether she herself attended *After Words*, and one assumes that she did not and is thus also reading the production based on available information and records.

^{liii} The look book featured models dressed in red and blue sweatshirts with black trim and beige trousers in front of “vertical blinds and multi-screened computers” (Yotka, 2013, para. 2).

^{liv} Thanks to Samuel Hardwicke-Brown, a MA Fashion student at the School of Fashion at Ryerson University, for alerting me to Hill’s newfound status as a fashion ambassador.

^{lv} The Met also caters to mediatization, streaming its operas in cinemas around the world.

^{lvi} Wang (2014) invoked the classic historical referent for meta-theatricality, calling *100% Lost Cotton* “the Fashion Week version of Hamlet’s *The Mouse-Trap*” (para. 2). *The Mouse-Trap* functions as a play-within-a-play in *Hamlet*, during which fictional characters are forced to watch actors perform representations of them. *100% Lost Cotton* turns real industry ‘players’ into fictional characters. One could consider *100% Lost Cotton* as meta-theatrical within the total enactments of Fashion Week, especially as the ‘real’ designers saw themselves represented.

^{lvii} Such a comment can be read as an implication that the idea of a play as fashion show was so unexpected in a media-saturated climate that journalists forgot that the form had a historical precedent, or that journalists writing for online fashion publications are not as well-read on fashion history as perhaps they could be.

^{lviii} This account comes from the West Coast *Hollywood Reporter*. New York-based attendees might have figured out their location beforehand.

^{lix} Friedman noted, however, that based on the enthusiastic audience reaction she must have held a minority opinion (2014, para. 1-2).

^{lx} A similar ingénue versus impresario narrative is also common in films such as *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), set in the sphere of the fashion press.

^{lxi} After he told the audience not to “social media anything,” Hill added, “But if you have a pager, you can turn it ON at this time” – a possible reference to media devices used in the 1990s.

^{lxii} Keener co-starred in Jonze’s *Being John Malkovich* (1999) and appeared opposite a then lesser-known Hill in Judd Apatow’s *The 40 Year-Old Virgin* (2005). Mitchell directed the films *Shortbus* (2006) and *Rabbit Hole* (2010) but is best known as the creator and original star of the cult musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* and its film adaptation. He has also directed fashion films for Dior (Khan, 2012, p. 236), starring celebrities such as Marion Cotillard and Jude Law.

^{lxiii} Hill stated that the feelings of physical and emotional insecurity the model characters faced were similar to those that actors experience during the audition process (Bernard, 2014).

^{lxiv} On 1990s spectacular fashion as a demonstration of the tiger’s leap, see Evans, 2003.

^{lxv} The late film critic Roger Ebert, whose review reveals him to be a ‘nonfashion’ intellectual, felt that the film “should have gone further and been meaner” in its indictment of fashion, confronting more of the industry’s problems and social ills than it did (1994, para. 4).

^{lxvi} Recent controversies over the treatment of models at Fashion Week show castings demonstrate that this remains a relevant industry concern (see BoF Team, 2017b).

^{lxvii} While this comment is homophobic and meant to shock, it reflects the outdated (Southern US) mindset of Basinger’s character. Forest Whitaker and Richard E. Grant’s characters are

revealed to be a couple, both deceiving their respective assistants, who, it turns out, are also having an affair. The film's homosexual characters are depicted as no more and no less scheming and self-involved than the heterosexual characters.

^{lxxviii} *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994) casts Lauren Bacall as a former editor-in-chief of *US Vogue* and Linda Hunt, Sally Kellerman and Tracey Ullman as editors from competing real-life magazines. *100% Lost Cotton*'s inclusion of Rashida Jones as Lisa Love also recalls Meryl Streep as Miranda Priestly, a character reportedly based on Anna Wintour, in *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006).

^{lxxix} In its final scene, the heroine has left her job in the fashion press and bestowed all of her fashionable clothes upon her rival, and is dressed comparatively down in a leather jacket and jeans. Still, this outfit is far more fashionable than the clothes she wore at the start of the film, before she received her field initiation: “[I]t’s not anti-fashion. For in this film and others like it, fashion itself has become a star, indeed a celebrity – and so must be placated” (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 90).

^{lxxx} The list of celebrities includes Donald Trump, who was less polarizing in 2001 than now.

^{lxxxi} *Zoolander 2*, released in 2016, satirizes the ubiquitous presence of social media in fashion and celebrity culture and the performances of the self that it facilitates. The film featured cameos from pop stars such as Justin Bieber and fashion personas from Hilfiger to Anna Wintour, Marc Jacobs and Alexander Wang. The film's complex promotional campaign was executed across multiple electronic and social media platforms. The film's press announcement took the form of Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson's appearance (in character) as the closers of the Valentino show at Fall/Winter 2015 Paris Fashion Week, a stunt that was circulated on social media.

^{lxxxii} *Glee* aired in the UK and was popular enough that 20th Century Fox lost a trademark dispute from The Glee Club, a chain of four stand-up comedy and live music venues (Quinn, 2016).

^{lxxxiii} Other immersive Chanel ready-to-wear fashion shows have included: shipping an actual iceberg to the Grand Palais's interior for Fall/Winter 2010; transforming the Grand Palais into an art gallery with commissioned pieces that referenced Chanel, modern artists and other famous fashion shows for Spring/Summer 2014 (Cochrane, 2013); replicating a “Parisian boulevard” inside the Grand Palais, on which models enacted a feminist finale protest for Spring/Summer 2015; the creation of a Chanel airline terminal for Spring/Summer 2016; turning the Grand Palais into a “data center” for Spring/Summer 2017 (some models wore robotic helmets) (Stinson, 2016); and installing a rocket ship that “literally blasted off” albeit in a “movie-grade” fashion in the Grand Palais – for Fall/Winter 2017 (Dhillon, 2017, para 4). For the Fall/Winter 2017 couture show, Chanel had a 38-meter replica of the Eiffel Tower built inside the Grand Palais surrounded by a “tree-lined Parisian park” (Sherman, 2017, para. 1). The real Eiffel Tower was visible through the windows, and the juxtaposition made for some Instagrammable shots.

^{lxxxiv} For a comprehensive overview of scholarship on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* and its application to fashion performance, and an analysis of the fashion shows and exhibitions of Bernard Willhelm as a total work of art, or *total work of fashion*, see C. K. Lau, 2016.

^{lxxxv} The fashion show also recalls the 2013 music video for David Bowie's “The Stars Are Out Tonight,” directed by Canadian Floria Sigismondi, in which Bowie and actress (and Chanel muse) Tilda Swinton (who plays his wife) push a shopping cart through a supermarket produce section in a moment that establishes their static suburban, consumerist existence. The video also co-stars models Andreja Prejic, Saskia de Brauw and Iselin Steiro, as a younger version of Bowie. Saskia de Brauw walked in the Chanel Supermarket fashion show.

^{lxxvi} Certain items possessed an ambiguous status that was not made clear until they appeared for sale in the Fall: the brass shopping baskets, woven with calfskin, retailed in Chanel stores for \$12,500.00; the lambskin purse still wrapped in the Styrofoam and plastic was sold for \$3,600.00; and a set of shopping bags “shaped like milk cartons,” with “lait de Coco” (chocolate milk) embroidered in pearls was listed online at a sale price of \$4,800.00 (MailOnline, 2014).

^{lxxvii} While online spectators could see aerial and panoramic shots, the audience had only a partial view of aisles and models. Still, online spectators could never interact with the installation.

^{lxxviii} I think here of the scene in Part One of the series finale of *Sex and the City* in which Carrie Bradshaw trips upon entering the Dior store in Paris. Warner (2014) describes this pivotal moment of mortification, with reference to the “faces of several sophisticated Parisian women who look on disapprovingly as Carrie attempts to recover herself from the floor,” as evidence of “Carrie’s inability to perform appropriate and sophisticated feminine behaviour” (p. 63).

^{lxxix} On the film’s dubious moral lessons and depiction of “conspicuous consumption,” see Church Gibson, 2012, pp. 91-92.

^{lxxx} On the “gendering of consumption” in American press discourses and in retail and theatre practices, see M. Schweitzer, 2009b.

^{lxxxii} I credit this alternative reading to a student in the Women’s and Gender Studies Master’s seminar at the Centro de Estudios Superiores de México y Centroamérica (CESMECA), San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México, to whom I presented this research in April, 2016.

^{lxxxiii} Harvie draws on theatre scholar Adam Alston to define immersive theatre as that which “creates a through-designed environment which surrounds audience members and in which they are generally invited to move about” (2013, p. 30). The Chanel Fall/Winter 2014 fashion show, or at least its interactive sections, would count as immersive theatre under this brief definition.

^{lxxxiv} Beecroft has also introduced fashion into her own performance art: for a performance at the Guggenheim Museum in 1998, which Gucci sponsored, 50 models appeared “clad in Gucci underwear and stilettos” (G. G. Duggan, 2001, p. 244). Ginger Gregg Duggan observes that, “a fashion show is interchangeable with a performance by Vanessa Beecroft” (2001, p. 268).

^{lxxxv} Thanks to Samuel Hardwicke-Browne for making this observation about the live stream.

^{lxxxvi} The coverage devoted to Yeezy Season 3 was comparable to that of Hedi Slimane’s final show for Saint Laurent, held in Los Angeles the night before but covered as part of NYFW.

^{lxxxvii} West’s declaration of ticket sales is similar to the Trump administration’s “alternative facts” about crowd size at the January 20, 2017 inauguration.

^{lxxxviii} West’s insistence that he be viewed as a multi-media artist recalls Poiret’s will to establish a personal *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which, for the couturier, “was less a utopian design ideal than the physical expression of a personal business empire applied to the feminine spheres of haute couture, perfumes, and the decorative arts ranging from textiles to furniture” (Troy, 2004, p. 46).

^{lxxxix} Schneider’s argument bears implications for notions of ‘real time,’ outlined in Chapter Four.

^{lxxxix} Lowe let West use the photograph but did not know how it would be incorporated into in the performance aside from promotional materials. He stated that, “the fact that an image that is 20 years old can still resonate today is indicative that there's still a lot to do” (Moakley & Laurent, 2016).

^{xc} West’s presentation happened just four days after Beyoncé’s Black Panther-inspired Superbowl performance, whose semiotics would therefore have been fresh in attendees’ minds.

^{xc} West drew press criticism after his Yeezy Season 4 launch, also produced in collaboration with Beecroft, at which Black models stood outdoors in the summer heat (Contributor, 2016).

^{xcii} The power of social media to circulate and recirculate the celestoid's image troubles the basis for Rojek's distinction between celestoids and celebrities, even as new media platforms can make someone famous in an even *shorter* period of time.

^{xciii} Thanks to Dr. Alison Matthews David, who remarked that Campbell's face on the Jumbotron recalled *The Hunger Games* and prompted me to pursue the comparison. I admit to a personal thrill at the realization that the world's most famous supermodel had just appeared at the first New York Fashion Week show that I had ever attended.

^{xciv} Other fashion intermediaries have made the same *Emperor's New Clothes* comparison.

^{xcv} Alix Browne, however, reads the Chanel Fall/Winter 2014 fashion show as an example of fashion's decision to offer shows less as entertainment and rather as commercial tool (2016, p. 214). I would posit instead that the attempted transmission of the fashion show as entertainment is a means to provoke consumer desire.

^{xcvi} While she does not reference the work of professional illustrators here, Evans (2013) notes that, due to recurring threats of design piracy from copyhouses, sketchers were not allowed to work during the presentations and thus relied on canny memories for detail that one copyist from the time described in hindsight as "photographic" (pp. 172).

^{xcvii} I am indebted here to Jennifer Braun, a student in the Fall 2016 Master's course in Fashion and Popular Culture, who did a collage-based research exploration into popular culture references in Canadian fashion magazines and revealed the extent to which print publications had co-opted social media and app discourses, using hashtags as headers or phrases such as "swipe right" to refer to turning a page.

^{xcviii} I had wanted to conduct semi-structured interviews with retailers and editors in Toronto and New York. However, these personnel were often unavailable, had to cancel at the last minute, and/or left their positions. I did one interview with a source whom I will call an "associate": this person is a brand consultant and has worked behind-the-scenes at dozens of international Fashion Month shows, including the Burberry Autumn/Winter 2015 fashion show, which I discuss.

^{xcix} Tomlinson describes these distinct conditions as a "culture of instantaneity" and a "sense of directness, of cultural *proximity*" (2007, p. 74, author's emphasis).

^c On February 12, 2017, I received an e-mail from the brand Altuzarra that 'invited' me to tune in to its NYFW fashion show live stream on its website at 8:00 PM ET. I opened the e-mail at 8:04 PM ET. I started the "live broadcast" to find the camera placed in a space with odd, neon sculptures. I watched attendees walk around the space for four minutes until the feed froze, and I could not refresh the site. I do not know when the fashion show started, but I was never able to watch the stream. The video was later available on the brand website, running at 38:01, with all of the filler included. An opening screen with the name and date appears until 3:55 when the cameras were turned on in the space. The fashion show does not start until 25:15 and lasts 12 minutes. Often companies edit out the preshow interactions from the archived video.

^{ci} The site also creates composite video shorts that render the fashion show environment in 360 degrees to form a complete (if not immersive) perspective of the space.

^{cii} For reasons of scope, I am limiting this chapter to the examination of live streams or shorter clips insofar as these are transmitted to an online audience. Burberry has also broadcast its live streams on public screens in international cities (Uhlirva, 2013, p. 152).

^{ciii} I am also bracketing out discussion of the use of digital film as an alternative artistic/communication medium and focusing on live and/or enacted fashion shows. Uhlirova (2013b) observes that, “the fashion film doesn’t always blatantly implicate the viewer as consumer and has, generally, a greater degree of autonomy from the fashions it displays or connotes, as it is less concerned with social and psychological processes of identification, persuasion and reassurance than is the case in more conventional advertising” (p. 121). Khan (2012), referencing Manovich, argues that digital fashion films instill a condition of the “permanent present”. Rocamora (2012) also uses Manovich’s “permanent present” to describe the sped-up time of fashion communication. I would posit, however, that fashion shows and live streams have a more advertorial aim and to this end draw from cinematic seduction processes.

^{civ} Sarah Berry (2000) offers a “partial list” of these films: “*On Your Back* (1930), *Our Blushing Brides* (1930); *Street of Women* (1930); *Employees’ Entrance* (1930); *Fashions of 1934* (1934), *Roberta* (1935); *The Bride Walks Out* (1936); *Stolen Holiday* (1937); *Artists and Models* (1937); *Vogues of 1938* (1937); *Artists and Models Abroad* (1938), and *Mannequin* (1938)” (p. 56).

^{cv} The protagonist of *The Devil Wears Prada* works for a fashion magazine entitled *Runway*.

^{cvi} These films represent but a sample of a broader trend in the 2000s, concurrent with and resultant from fashion’s online mediatization, towards fictional and documentary features that depict fashion’s behind-the-scenes realms (see Church Gibson, 2012; Rees- Roberts, 2015).

^{cvii} Short-form journalism was also accompanied by “longer, more thought-provoking fashion writing” (Fulsang, 2004, p. 323), a format also found on certain fashion blogs and websites. Fulsang (2004) also demonstrates that fashion-themed television and ‘lite’ journalism created the conditions via which amateur journalists and attractive faces could infiltrate the field of fashion.

^{cviii} On Jeanne Beker’s affective labour and approachable persona, see Ingram, 2010.

^{cix} Despite the involvement of now famous costumer Patricia Field, articles on *SATC* in the entertainment trade press and interviews with series developers report that the focus on fashion arose in an organic manner and describe the phenomenal cultural reaction to the characters’ clothes as unexpected (Warner, 2014, pp. 33-35). On the monumental role Fields has played in the foregrounding of fashion in both television and film, see Church Gibson, 2012.

^{cx} In an episode in Season Four of *Sex and the City*, Carrie Bradshaw is selected to walk as a “real” New Yorker in a Fashion Week show. While strutting down the runway in heels, she falls and becomes “fashion roadkill” as Heidi Klum (as herself) is ordered to step over her. The spill is a moment of public humiliation and another reminder of the character’s awkwardness in the realm of high fashion: when she enters its environs, she literally falls flat on her face. Several scenes from the television series *Ugly Betty* also take place behind-the-scenes at Fashion Week.

^{cxii} Development in television broadcasts occurred parallel to innovations in the use of film to document athletic events. Leni Riefenstahl is credited with being the first documentary filmmaker to use camera tracking to capture the fluid motions of athletes for *Olympia* (1938) – the film also demonstrated innovations in the use of slow motion (Andrew, 1999, pp. 183-184).

^{cxiii} The 2016 Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show lost the ratings war for December 5, 2016 to a “live semi-final” episode of *The Voice*, which had 9.9 million viewers (Schwindt, 2016, para. 3).

^{cxiiii} I acknowledge, however, that the association between pop stars and fashion’s aristocratic lines is less defined. In addition to the crossovers mentioned already, several pop stars are routine attendees at ready-to-wear and couture fashion shows as well as at visible industry events such as the Met Gala. Both Rihanna and The Weeknd were featured Met Gala performers. In another intersection between fashion and popular culture, the Weeknd performed at the

Victoria's Secret fashion show as his ex-girlfriend, Bella Hadid, strode past him on the runway; her equally famous sister, Gigi Hadid, is at time of writing dating pop star and ex-One Direction member Zayn Malik, who has sat front row at several fashion shows.

^{cxiv} As I describe in the final chapter, the moment in which photographers flock to a featured guest is sometimes subtle when it occurs in crowded, cavernous spaces. The rush of camera flashes and bodies signal that a famous person is present, but it is often difficult to discern who is being photographed. However, none of the celebrities that attended the fashion shows that I did had the international public profile of Alec Baldwin, Jessica Chastain or Julianne Moore.

^{cxv} I watched a Periscope feed from a non-Fashion Month show in which the camera-holder knelt backstage so that the spectator could see the models receive their final check. This did not offer a behind-the-scenes look but instead prevented me from seeing the clothes for more than a split second. The associate speculates that the decision as to where to place the camera-holder is informed by the look that the brand wants to achieve: while more "experienced" PR firms might better calculate this, sometimes brands make decisions "just to be different" (2017). I posit that brands should place the camera-holder closer to the action to show the products.

^{cxvi} Fashion companies' decision to circulate fashion show photographs is not just a product of mediatization but is in fact a fundamental shift in recording practices. Even a decade ago, fashion houses tended not to release more theatrical photographs of their shows and kept them instead in archives, or sometimes did not take them at all (Browne, 2016).

^{cxvii} Burberry's "Art of the Trench" is likely the most famous off-season social media campaign.

^{cxviii} I use "Autumn/Winter" here rather than "Fall/Winter" in accordance with British terms.

^{cxix} The associate was not involved in the planning or implementation of #TweetCam, nor did he notice a difference in the on-site experience at the show, but he did know that there were additional cameras installed in the performance space.

^{cxx} Atwal and Williams characterize live fashion shows in retail stores as an experience of *entertainment* that has a "low degree of customer involvement and intensiveness," while more theatrical fashion shows are preferred (p. 342). Social media initiatives are intended to increase virtual interaction. The fashion show also fits under Atwal and Williams's rubrics of *escapist* and *aesthetic* experiences, both of which demand that consumers "immerse" themselves (p. 343).

^{cxxi} Twitter has also produced feature posts about these London Fashion Week initiatives on its own corporate blog (Macmillan, 2013, 2015).

^{cxxii} While Terranova accounts for instances in which free labour "is not necessarily exploited labour" but is voluntary (p. 48), she notes (in a Marxist critique of network culture) that this labour is nonetheless "exhausted" under late capitalism (2004, p. 51; see also Terranova, 2013).

^{cxxiii} Some designers have launched collections on Instagram (see Parker, 2016). P. Diddy debuted his Fall/Winter 2013 Sean John collection via one photograph posted every 30 minutes. New York-based Misha Nonoo's Spring/Summer 2015 lookbook was cropped into component photographs, like puzzle pieces, and rendered visible on a dedicated account, using a tablet or smartphone turned to a landscape orientation. The event was promoted as a virtual fashion show.

^{cxxiv} A 2014 report on luxury brands' "digital reach and consumer experience" released by Exane BNP Paribas named Burberry an industry leader, while Céline, Fendi, Givenchy, Dior and Prada were cited for their lack of media adoption. Céline creative director Phoebe Philo has eschewed social media, claiming that to do so increases her fashion house's elitist cachet (Kansara, 2014).

^{cxxv} The stream was "beamed live in 3D to five global cities, and streamed to the rest of the world via 73 websites, including *Vogue*, *Grazia* and *CNN*..." (Amed, 2010, para. 1).

^{cxxvi} In 2015, Delevingne had 31 million Instagram followers. The brand success benchmark was considered to be 1 million followers. Topshop had 4.9 million followers, while Burberry had 4.2 million. Louis Vuitton topped the brand success list with 6.5 million followers (Yotka, 2015).

^{cxxvii} It is coincidental too that Cooke started his career at Gucci and the Gucci Group (Diaz, 2013b, p. 18), as Burberry's turn-of-the-millennium rebranding model has been compared to Gucci's 1990s turnaround (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, pp. 1-2).

^{cxxviii} Burberry termed its 2009 3D live stream installations 'Retail Theatres': "a modern and pure brand environment ... exclusive in-store digital events" where customers could "experience the clothes, the music, the energy and the atmosphere in real time" (Alexander, 2010, para. 4-5). Bailey labeled the installations more atmospheric, even as customers watched a virtual event. Diaz (2013a) credits Cooke with pioneering Burberry's in-store "Retail Theatre" show (para. 9). Topshop's Oxford Circus flagship store is itself an immersive retail environment that boasts a hair and nail salon and confectionary (Reingold, 2008, para. 7). Press descriptions of the space recall Wickstrom's (2006) affective experience at the NikeTown store. For Autumn/Winter 2013, Topshop's Google+ live stream was broadcast in the windows (Kansara, 2013, para. 4).

^{cxxix} Burberry's ties to significant 20th century historical events are foregrounded in a short "Festive Film" released in November 2016, entitled "The Tale of Thomas Burberry," directed by Asif Kapadia and starring Domhnall Gleeson, Sienna Miller, Lily James and Dominic West. The film documents the personal life and professional contributions of the brand founder, from his creation of outerwear for Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton's trips to the Antarctic to the invention of the World War One trenchcoat. Thomas Burberry is positioned as a genius auteur, while the short film reads in an unironic manner as an epic, Hollywood movie preview (Burberry, 2016).

^{cxxx} Other components included a name change from Burberry's to Burberry; new womenswear lines; ad campaigns with relevant photographers and models; and the opening of a flagship store on London's New Bond Street, home to other luxury retailers (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004, p. 414).

^{cxxxi} Stockholders voted to reject a "retention bonus," which the press decried as excessive. Burberry could not afford to lose both Bailey and CEO Angela Ahrendts, who had left to assume the role of Senior Vice President of Retail and Online Stores at Apple, Inc. (Amed, 2014). As of 2017, Bailey is slated to step down from his CEO role but will retain shares worth €10.5 million, a number that has caused concern among investors (Treanor, 2017).

^{cxxxii} I also visited Burberry's e-commerce site for information after the fashion show live stream.

^{cxxxiii} The announcement of Ahrendt's move to Apple, Inc. was made on October 15, 2013, mere weeks after this presentation (Miles, 2013a). Ahrendt's departure for Apple, and Cooke's later collaborations with Apple, illustrate the extent to which fashion retail and media corporations' top personnel mix in the same (miniscule) business and social circles.

^{cxxxiv} The *Financial Times* also described Campbell's entrance in terms of its seamlessness: Campbell "appeared in her seat as if by magic" (Ellison, 2015, para. 5).

^{cxxxv} *The Guardian* recorded the show's start time at 1:05 PM GMT (Cartner-Morley, 2015, para. 3): a #TweetCam photograph captured as the houselights fall is time stamped 1:06 PM, while the next photograph – the first to show a model – is time stamped 1:10 PM. In another reference to the disparate time zones and viewing experiences of live streams, *The Guardian* notes that Burberry holds its fashion shows in the afternoon rather than in a more coveted evening timeslot "in order to reach Chinese fans before they go to sleep" (Cartner-Morley, 2015, para. 2).

^{cxxxvi} I note that both brands consider Kate Moss to be the British model *par excellence*.

^{cxxxvii} The brand also invited customers watching at the Oxford Circus store to tweet collection reviews in the hope of winning tickets to the next season’s fashion show, and installed a backstage Vine booth in which models turned for a camera before stepping onto the runway.

^{cxxxviii} Examples included “belted,” “boho,” “checks,” “colourmatch,” “culottes,” “embroidery,” “flares,” “fringing,” “fur,” “lace,” “leather,” “miniskirts,” “modernism,” “paisley,” “pink,” “red,” “romantic,” “stripes,” “velvet,” “utility,” and (hearkening back to the brands’ statement of Britishness) “heritage” (see Stackla, 2016a).

^{cxxxix} Terranova frames the “privatization” of users’ media interactions with corporations as an issue of ownership, compensation and the disproportionate possession of wealth (2013, p. 52-54). Topshop has been embroiled in a scandal over a lack of fair wages paid to its subcontracted cleaning staff for their *material* labour, while its CEO is a noted billionaire (Meaker, 2016).

^{cxl} Cooke since founded the application Tunepics, which lets users attach 30-second song clips to photographs, mediating affective reception. Users can select clips or use a rainbow “emotion wheel” tool to find recommendations, and can purchase music from iTunes (Carvell, 2014).

^{cxli} Examples include documentaries such as *The September Issue* (2007) and *Dior and I* (2014), which profiles Raf Simons’s first collection for the couture house. While *Dior and I* illustrates the labour behind couture, the Topshop Unique preshow refrains from depicting labour, save for shots of staff preparing models’ looks on the racks and scenes of hair and makeup artists at work.

^{cxlii} Cassen drew upon his experience in feature film to create narrative, reinforcing the idea that the affect of the live performance is mediated via cinematic techniques (Mullany, 2013, para. 4).

^{cxliii} However, while celebrities can now tweet from the front rows, the circulation of their presence at fashion shows remains tightly controlled. Photographs of celebrities at fashion shows enhance celebrities’ personas as fashionable (see Sill, 2008), and render them conduits through which consumers experience fashion shows from separate spatial positions.

^{cxliv} This exit is the final model walk before the finale. The shot of the lone model (Delevingne, who also opened the show) points to the top of the runway and echoes the earlier shot.

^{cxlv} Ticineto Clough (2012) uses the term in her examination of an online and print exhibition of photographs of female victims of war. See also Harold (2009) on the affective aura of commodities under *aesthetic capitalism*.

^{cxlvi} The combined time of the waiting period and the live stream approximates the 25:26 running time of the preshow. The user that posted a screen shot of the “GET EXCITED” screen does refer to her own excitement, but the message from the brand is nonetheless an instruction.

^{cxlvii} The Burberry Prorsum show happened the day after the Topshop Unique show. In both cases, late celebrities’ arrivals provided more of an affective titter for the live audience.

^{cxlviii} For example, I excluded spam, customer-service inquiries, customers’ outfit selfies, or tweets in which customers boasted about recent clothing purchases from the brand.

^{cxlix} I am thinking here of recent social media debates surrounding whether actors should be expected to meet and take selfies with paid audience members after a show, even if he or she has to ‘come down’ from an emotionally or physically taxing performance. The discussion was sparked by a Twitter letter written by Ben Platt, the Tony award-winning star of the hit Broadway musical *Dear Evan Hansen*, in response to an angry post from the mother of a fan who had attended a performance and did not get to meet him afterwards (Platt, 2017).

^{cl} In July 2015, Ton stepped down from his post at *Style.com*. The move coincided with an announcement that *Style.com* would become an e-commerce site, which was launched in 2016. Fashion show-related information migrated to *Vogue.com/runway*. In September 2015, Ton

launched an eponymous website that features archives of his *street style* photographs. Several photographs overlap with those on *Vogue.com/runway*. *Vogue.com/runway* has since removed the links to several of its older albums; therefore, I have sourced the photographs shown here from *Tommyton.com*. In June 2017, Condé Nast also shut down the *Style.com* e-commerce site.

^{cli} Luvaas (2016) states that income figures for photo-bloggers are difficult to find, as the work resides on a spectrum between amateur, freelance and full-time, and practitioners are reluctant to disclose numbers (I found the same at New York Fashion Week). Schuman and Ton are among the field's top earners (p. 239). Ton "is rumoured to get \$100 an image for ten images per day from *Style.com* for his coverage of the four major fashion weeks ... around \$32,000 per Fashion Month, twice a year, thus producing a total yield of \$64,000 per year" (p. 237).

^{clii} Esther Rosser (2010) notes that because Schuman was based in New York, he started of his own volition to shoot NYFW attendees outside Bryant Park as early as 2005 and 2006 (p. 160).

^{cliii} Oh implies that his fashion knowledge came from hip-hop, suggesting that he had a more subcultural or pop culture background with which to approach street style (Phelps, 2016, para. 3).

^{cliv} Luvaas (2016) remembers 2005 to 2012 as the "'good old days' of street style blogs ... in which bloggers were most performatively autonomous of the fashion industry" (p. 297). Ton's recruitment by *Style.com* would have come at the height of this period.

^{clv} Dello Russo appeared on *The Sartorialist* in the late-2000s. The artist-muse relationship that she developed with Ton was the subject of a 2011 photograph exhibition, *When Tommy Met Anna*, held at the Hudson's Bay Company's The Room store in downtown Toronto.

^{clvi} Magazine websites such as *Style.com*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Women's Wear Daily* and *GQ* document Fashion Month street style in seasonal albums, while the *New York Times*, which had run photographs of 'real' people's street style in the past now devotes a separate album to fashion show attendees. Several street style bloggers have been recruited for magazine websites and print editions. Luvaas (2016) provides a brief list of contributors (in addition to Ton for *Style.com*, which he lists first): "YoungJun Koo of I'm Koo to *New York Magazine's The Cut*, Diego Zuko of The Outsider Blog to *Harper's Bazaar*, Phil Oh of Street Peeper to *Vogue.com*, Michael Dumler of On Abbott Kinney to *NYLON*, Adam Katz Sinding of Le 21ème to a long string of clients including *W Magazine*, Popsugar, and *Elle* (p. 235).

^{clvii} As street style blogs have become popularized, their interfaces now blur the lines between blog and high fashion magazine, as sites such as *The Sartorialist* feature brand advertisements as income-generators and also post collection photographs (see also Luvaas, 2016).

^{clviii} For example, Dick Hebdige (1979) describes how the 1970s Rastafarian subculture that took root in working-class Black immigrant communities in the UK appropriated West Indian celebrations of African-ness. Troubling automatic associations between subcultures and political movements, Kathy Peiss (2011) writes on separate but interrelated manifestations of the Zoot Suit as subcultural articulation within Black and Hispanic communities in the United States.

^{clix} Luvaas (2016) argues that academic research on street style, including Polhemus's curated exhibition, *Street Style: From Sidewalk to Catwalk*, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, helped to reinvigorate street style's associations to youth subcultures as unfiltered and resistant. Still, commercial fashion had incorporated street style by the turn of the millennium (pp. 52-53).

^{clx} For street style in specific cities, see Intellect's *street style* series.

^{clxi} de Perthuis conflates personal style bloggers with street style celebrities.

^{clxii} Thanks to New York photographer Dan Bendjy for providing me with these distinctions.

^{clxiii} The process of photographing attendees upon their arrival outside fashion show venues has also been likened to the approach of paparazzi (Amed, 2011a; Menkes, 2013; Rosser, 2010; Tilton, 2013): an apt comparison, but one that demands more consideration (see Luvaas, 2016).

^{clxiv} Rocamora and O’Neill do not address the whiteness’s racial implications.

^{clxv} When he photographs quotidian subjects ‘on the street’ rather than insiders outside fashion shows, Schuman still prefers to shoot in high-end retail districts (Church Gibson, 2012, p. 137).

^{clxvi} Sinding’s photographs do sometimes use the street as a compositional element in a manner similar to Ton’s, in terms of colours and textures that accentuate fabrics, or a blurred focus. Still, his images are more atmospheric and even avant-garde or “opaque” (Luvaas, 2016, p. 62). He shoots at odd, jarring angles and often crops subjects’ heads in half, undercutting attempts at identification. He notes that the backgrounds he obtains result from his physical position: “I get a lot closer to my subjects than other photographers. I don’t have nearly as much negative space—that’s a response to the environment. Tommy uses a much longer lens than me. I don’t zoom with my lens, it’s fixed focus. Wherever my feet are, that’s the frame” (Phelps, 2016, para. 12).

^{clxvii} With the saturation of street style photographers, it becomes more crucial and harder to set oneself apart using a specific photographic approach or technique (Luvaas, 2016, pp. 274-275).

^{clxviii} In September 2015, Ton launched an eponymous website that features separate archives of his *street style* photographs. Numerous photographs overlap with those on *Vogue.com/runway*.

^{clxix} In contrast with photographs that feature subjects beside outdoor walls, in front of structures or sculptures, or walking in areas that do not contain paved streets (the Tuileries, for example).

^{clxx} Viale Umbria has also appeared as a street label on *The Sartorialist*.

^{clxxi} Indeed, Chanel’s Eiffel Tower replica for its Fall/Winter 2017 couture presentation can also be considered simulacral. It was interpreted as a symbol of Parisian clout in an industry that is otherwise geographically destabilized (Sherman, 2017).

^{clxxii} This could be because Ton also worked as the street style photographer for *GQ Magazine*’s site devoted to men’s fashion. Nonetheless, *Style.com* covered men’s and women’s fashion.

^{clxxiii} Several intermediaries work in international markets. Dello Russo started her career at Condé Nast Italia, but is now Editor-at-Large and creative consultant for Japan’s *Vogue Nippon*.

^{clxxiv} On the identifiable patterns, materials and features of luxury products, see Thomas, 2007.

^{clxxv} Fall/Winter Fashion Month occurs in February and March, and Spring/Summer Fashion Month in September and October. *Just* under half of Spring/Summer 2014 photographs feature outerwear despite apparently milder weather.

^{clxxvi} Ton also lists ‘oversized’ as a trend on his website, though this did not inform the coding.

^{clxxvii} These are just the faces that repeat, or are recognizable to those that know current models’ faces. Several other photographs feature women who appear to be models. In some cases, models’ hair and makeup are done up for the fashion show they just walked in.

^{clxxviii} Latin American, East Indian, and Middle Eastern subjects did not appear enough to be considered statistically significant. Several East Asian models appear numerous times.

^{clxxix} Entwistle and Rocamora conducted separate observations of London Fashion Week. Entwistle was embedded with fashion retail personnel, while Rocamora attended as part of her research with journalists. Luvaas made field observations over six seasons, from 2013 to 2015, as a recreational street style photographer at New York Fashion Week beside top practitioners.

^{clxxx} That said, a trio of well-heeled ladies recognized me from the Lela Rose show earlier.

^{clxxxi} The women seated next to me were mother and daughter, and other women in the area appeared to be related. Another woman seated further down, wearing a distinctive red coat, identified herself as a reporter from a fashion magazine in Texas, where Lela Rose was raised.

^{clxxxii} Thanks to Marlis Schweitzer for making this observation and prompting me to pursue the doll metaphor further.

^{clxxxiii} On fashion photographs and fashion films that experiment with fragmentation and fetishization, with reference to Mulvey, see Khan, 2012.

^{clxxxiv} It is possible that some of the Chromat tickets were issued via e-mail, but because I was a last-minute invitee, the publicist asked me to show up to obtain a standing room ticket in person.

^{clxxxv} At Toronto Fashion Week, I note, it is almost expected for audience members to take selfies from the audience risers to document one's presence at the event on social media and as a form of event promotion. The comparative lack of selfies at New York Fashion Week suggested that selfie-taking could indicate that one has less social capital compared *to others in the same space*.

^{clxxxvi} I admit to using this tactic several times as a researcher as well since I knew almost no one.

^{clxxxvii} The antiquated interior décor of Hoffman Hall reminded me of Wickstrom's (2006) description of the Ralph Lauren flagship store as a theatricalization of class-based habitus (pp. 27-39). Hage (2013) comments that, "habitus is part and parcel of an environment where it is capable of generating actions that strive to make us at home" (p. 88). There was a *distinct* sense of antiquated, old-moneyed hominess, and attendees' practiced social enactments can be read as "strategies" that "are both an indication that the human agent is not totally at home and the fact that they are" – both self-conscious and comfortable in this upscale room (Hage, 2013, p. 88). This reading was validated when I later read *Vogue's* profile of the immaculate October 2016 wedding of Ralph Lauren's senior vice president of global store development to his furniture designer husband, for which the reception was held at Hoffman Hall (see Macon, 2017).

^{clxxxviii} Luvaas (2016) also describes a moment in which he spotted SJP as his first real glimpse of a celebrity at New York Fashion Week, pointing to her continued fashion clout (p. 273).

^{clxxxix} Isherwood (2010) muses that attendees hope too to capture a discreet photograph of a VIP: "Editors in the front row blithely whip out cameras to preserve looks as they come down the runway – and the celebrity in the chair across the way, for that matter." In fact, it is difficult to obtain a clear photograph of a celebrity *unless* one is near the front row, as evidenced in the placement of cameras to capture front row celebrities behind models in live streams.

^{cxc} An Internet search later informed me that this was the actress Arden Cho, who appears in the television series *Teen Wolf*. She was one of a host of starlets seated in that section, but the photographers seemed to focus on her, and it was difficult from my row to see the others.

^{cxci} Outside Ralph Lauren, I met a couple from North Carolina that identified themselves as fashion lovers and fans of the brand and told me that they wanted to witness the outdoor spectacle and perhaps see celebrities. The man was tall, Black, and dressed in dapper attire, while his wife was petite and Caucasian with bleached blonde hair. The couple told me that tickets were being sold online to this fashion show for \$5,000 but watching the arrival of attendees, they realized "you need to be approved" to gain admittance.

^{cxcii} Luvaas claims that most street style photographers use a DSLR camera though certain practitioners still use compact cameras, albeit sophisticated, brand-name models, to produce a certain aesthetic (2016, p. 138). A 2011 profile on street style photographers' preferred cameras reported that (among others) Yvan Rodic uses a Canon G12 point-and-shoot, Bryanboy and Scott Schuman both use a Canon EOS 5D Mark II, and Ton uses a Nikon D5000 (Racked Staff, 2011).

This is not however to state that the DSLR camera is a universal choice, as several mirrorless cameras are also available.

^{cxci} For Autumn/Winter 2015, Burberry models wore plaid scarves in a variety of colours. The models were photographed “off duty” in the ‘streets’ afterwards wearing the same scarves.

^{cxci} While most freelance photographers will not earn massive incomes, an evocative photograph or aesthetic can help a photographer “build his portfolio” and earn a reputation (p. 240).

^{cxci} The house offered additional tickets to locals and to students and instructors at FIT and Parsons. Ticket numbers vary: Rocamora lists the number of online tickets as 850 and those for locals at 150 (2016, p. 6), while *DAZED* announced that 820 free tickets would be released, with 280 for fashion schools and 100 for people that lived near the venue (Stansfield, 2015, para. 1).

^{cxci} Celebrities included Erykah Badu, Naomi Campbell, Debbie Harry, Jennifer Hudson, Courtney Love, Nicki Minaj, Christina Ricci, Julia Roberts, Margot Robbie, Amanda Seyfried, Hailee Steinfeld, Uma Thurman and Liv Tyler. Anna Wintour, Carine Roitfeld and Anna Dello Russo also attended (see Mower, 2015, n.p.), as did designers Joseph Altuzarra, Michael Kors, and Lazaro Hernandez and Jack McCullough of Proenza Schouler (Horyn, 2015a, para. 6).

^{cxci} In 2017, Minkoff held an in-season, outdoor fashion show at the retail complex The Grove in Los Angeles. The event was promoted as an “influencer-studded” affair (The Grove, 2017), as models included social media tastemakers, actresses, and supermodel Coco Rocha. Minkoff streamed the show and made the collection available for immediate online purchase. Consumers that attended could purchase the pieces at a pop-up store installed on the premises and at The Grove’s Nordstrom location. Minkoff had debuted the collection at New York Fashion Week in September 2016 in a comparatively “low key” presentation to the usual audience of retailers and press, and the LA collection consisted of items deemed the most sellable based on their feedback (Medina, 2017, para. 5). Minkoff created an additional level of vicarious embodiment as she positioned media personalities in the role of model, while other celebrities were seated front row.

^{cxci} As Tomlinson himself notes, discourses on speed and acceleration have been produced since the modern era, notably in the work of theorists such as Paul Virilio (2007, pp. 58-64).

^{cxci} Or, in Leach’s words, as a material construct “in the age of social media,” the fashion show has become “pretty much pointless” (2017, para. 12).