

Exhibiting Fashion and Art in Post-war British Fashion Magazines: ‘Art Patronage – Modern Style’ and a ‘Cocktail Party Receipt’¹

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‘To a sophisticated suit or a dress of distinction add the sparkle of jewellery, the subtlety of right accessories; top with an elegant hat’.

(‘Cocktail Party Receipt’, *British Vogue*, February 1948a: 61).

Introduction:

In its 1948 February issue *British Vogue* enquired of its readers, ‘Yourself As an Art Collector? Have you ever thought of yourself in that light?’ it continues to inform its reader that:

if you [the reader] become a member of the Contemporary Art Society your annual guinea buys pictures which become part of our Galleries – in short, yours. Maurice Collis (p.62) tells you more about this society and also gives news of the Institute of Contemporary Art which, with your help, may one day become England’s Museum of Modern Art.

(*Vogue* ‘Vogue’s Eye View’ February 1948a: 33).

This paper examines the relationship between art and fashion through an analysis of art’s representation within selected British fashion magazines. The title, ‘Art Patronage – Modern Style’ and a ‘Cocktail Party Receipt’, are the headings of a feature article and an accompanying editorial photo-spread to which ‘Vogue’s Eye View’ refers to above. ‘Art’ and ‘Fashion’ in the immediate post-war years are fused together within this instance of ‘fashion media discourse’ (Rocamora 2009: 58).

‘Art’ and ‘Fashion’:

I will first outline the ways in which this analysis has approached the subjects of ‘art’ and ‘fashion’. Drawing upon Pierre Bourdieu’s work in *The Field of Cultural Production* ([1983] 1993) and *The Rules of Art* ([1992] 1996) I examine ‘art’ and ‘fashion’ as fields within culture that are sites of material and symbolic production. These fields are maintained through the visible and invisible networks or structural relations ‘between social positions’ of what Bourdieu terms ‘social agents’ which can be ‘isolated individuals, groups or institutions’ (Bourdieu ([1983] 1993: 29) (see Diagram.1 ‘Field of Art & Field of Fashion’).

Different fields of cultural production also produce, accumulate and maintain what Bourdieu terms as ‘symbolic’ and ‘cultural’ capital. Symbolic capital refers to the

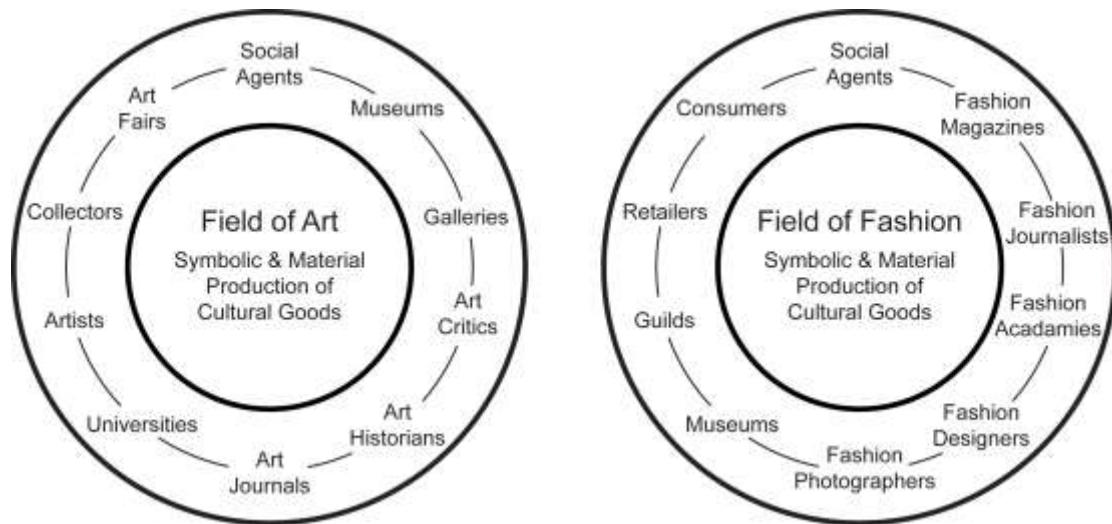


Diagram.1 Field of Art & Field of Fashion.

accumulation of ‘legitimate capital called ‘prestige’ or ‘authority’ (Bourdieu ([1977] 1993: 73) and cultural capital concerns ‘a certain type of cultural accumulation and a certain image of cultural accomplishment’ (Bourdieu [1984] 2010: 17) or cultural knowledge. Although these forms of capital are not reducible to economic capital per se, in the long run and ‘under certain conditions’ they guarantee ‘economic’ success (Bourdieu [1977] 1993: 75). Different social agents – institutions, groups, and individuals – are all endowed with different forms of capital particular to their field. (See Diagram.2 ‘Symbolic & Cultural Capital’). Within a field these dynamics of ‘capital’ bestow cultural goods with certain amounts of symbolic ‘value’.

I will analyse the relationship between the fields of ‘art’ and ‘fashion’ in terms of their exchange of symbolic ‘value’. Bourdieu indicates in *The Rules of Art*, that this type of exchange occurs when ‘logical reasons and social causes are mixed together’ thus forming the complex network of necessities ‘that is the basis of symbolic exchanges between different fields’ (Bourdieu [1992] 1996: Endnote 40: 379) (See Diagram.3 ‘Symbolic Value Between Fields’). I will examine this form of exchange through the field of art’s representation within selected British fashion magazines, in doing so I will ask what types of symbolic value does the field of fashion bestow upon the field of art? This type of representation within fashion media may appear to concern a relatively recent phenomenon in Western visual culture, taking into account the increased institutionalisation of fashion and fashion photography as ‘art’ in

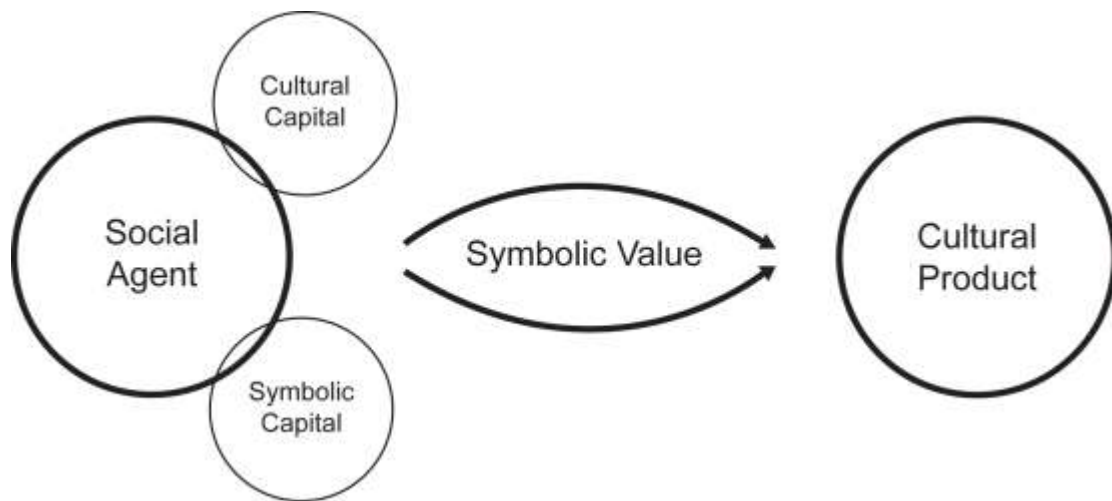
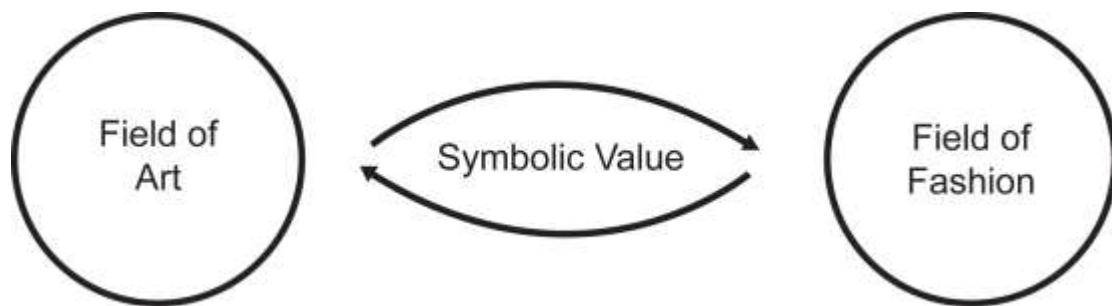


Diagram.2 Symbolic & Cultural Capital

practice and criticism since the 1990s. The so-called ‘blurred’ relationship between the two (Meadvedow & Plaut 2002: T3) can be understood as a blurring of material and symbolic production between these two fields. The rise of art-fashion niche magazines has been credited with bridging ‘the worlds of art and fashion’ (Kismaric & Respini 2004: 19) through encouraging creativity and innovation, fostering ‘an artistic approach to fashion, often interspersing art within the pages of fashion editorials’ (ibid: 20).

The field of art and a number of its own social agents gain a certain form of ‘prestige’ from appearing in various fashion magazines. This is a point also raised by Isabelle Graw in her recent study of the contemporary art market *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*, where she claims that, ‘In the field of art history, it is usually art historians, critics, and curators who contribute to the generating of this symbolic value, although recently this role has also been increasingly performed by lifestyle and fashion magazines’ (Graw 2009: 23). This exchange of symbolic value also encompasses more mainstream British fashion publications, a key example is British *Vogue*’s May 2000 ‘Fashion Meets Art’ issue. Set against the backdrop of the Millennium opening of the Tate Modern, *Vogue* invited a number of young British artists (popularly referred to as YBA’s) – Marc Quinn, Sam Taylor-Wood, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Tracey Emin, Sarah Morris, Gary Hume – to collaborate with model Kate Moss as muse (see Fig.1).



Exchange of Symbolic Value

Diagram.3 Symbolic Value Between Fields

Art Historian Chris Townsend, commenting upon the publicity of contemporary art in the fashion press claimed:

The engagement with public curiosity that arose from well-publicised artwork and carefully promoted artists led to renewed interest in new art, not so much from fashion designers already cognisant of art and its histories, but from mainstream fashion magazines. Artists, as much as their work, became the subject of regular and extensive features.

(Townsend 2002: 135).²

The representation of contemporary art and artists within fashion magazines is one type of symbolic exchange that occurs between the fields of art and fashion. This exchange can be understood as a type of patronage as forms of fashion media bestow



Fig.1 “Creating Kate” Fashion Editor: Justine Picardie.
(British Vogue May 2000: 158-159) © Condé Nast Publications Inc.

symbolic value upon cultural products pertaining to the field of art, which in the long run may ‘guarantee ‘economic’ success’ (Bourdieu [1977] 1993: 73).

This historical analysis draws upon Michel Foucault’s work on ‘discourse’ in *The Order of Things* ([1966] 2002) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* ([1969] 2002). According to Foucault discourse are groupings of statements, formed through trajectories of shared concepts, theories and rules of function. Discourse constructs knowledge, ‘it defines the possibilities’ of what can and cannot be said about a subject, it therefore ‘gives meaning to a sentence’ and ‘a value of truth’ (Foucault [1969] 2002: 103). According to Bourdieu discourse is more field specific, fashion media discourse operates primarily within the field of fashion, proliferating through various texts – for example in different magazines. It is manifest in ‘fashion features, fashion spreads, newspaper fashion reports or fashion advertisements’; it is a combination of both linguistic signs and visual culture (Rocamora 2009: 59) (See Diagram.4 ‘Fashion Media Discourse’). For Foucault discourse is not limited to one

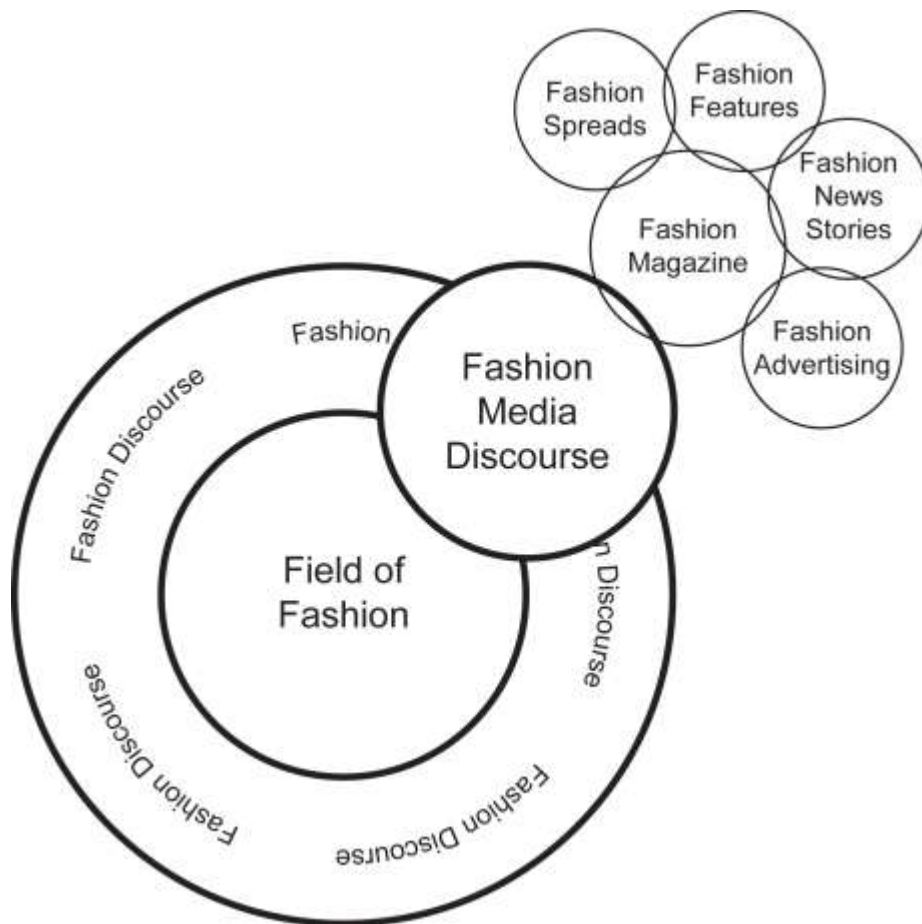


Diagram.4 Fashion Media Discourse

type of text or practice, it is to be found across a range of texts, institutional sites and social practices. Whilst fashion media discourse can be understood as being primarily produced from one field, the statements which group within it are not exclusive to the field of 'fashion', for example the ways in which modern art proliferates within the text and imagery of post-war British fashion media.

For Foucault the 'meaning' and 'value of truth' spoken by discourse – both textually and visually - is to be understood within a specific historical context, he argues that in an analysis of historically situated discourse 'we must therefore avoid a retrospective reading of these things' (Foucault [1966] 2002: 18). The relation between the field of fashion and art, in the cultural production of fashion media, remains relatively undisrupted – in the history of high-end fashion periodicals there is no real beginning or end point to their mediation of 'art' – there are only differences between the socio-historical moments in which the discursive statement is made. 'Meanings' and 'values' in themselves, within and between the fields of art and fashion are neither continuous nor consistent, rather they alter according to the discursive formations that prevail at particular points in history.

Moments of Synergy *between* 'Art' and 'Fashion':

Reflecting upon the prolific exchange that occurred between the fields of 'art' and 'fashion' throughout the 1990s, Charlotte Cotton argues that one of the misunderstandings about this relationship during this period was that the two fields had 'cross-fertilised', she claims:

Contemporary art was more fashionable than fashion at that moment, and although many commercial shoots were scheduled in museum galleries with real art as the backdrop and a few art photographers were having fun on big-production fashion shoots, I doubt if we'd still consider this a genuine fusing of the two-worlds [...] There was an increasing synergy between the slow and solent absorption within the pages of a magazine and the gravitas of a gallery space.

(Cotton [2008] 2010: 232-234).

Through looking at the representation of art in post-war British 'glossies' *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*, this paper will address another moment of *synergy*³ that occurred between the 'two-worlds' of 'art' and 'fashion'. Focusing upon the immediate post-war years of 1945-1948, I will specifically examine the ways in which the Contemporary Art Society and the 'up and coming' Institute of Contemporary Art

(ICA) were promoted through the combination of visual and textual representation in the February 1948 issue of British *Vogue*.

Returning to *Vogue*'s introduction to these two art societies, 'Yourself As An Art Collector? Have you ever thought of yourself in that light?' (*Vogue* 'Vogue's Eye View' February 1948a: 33) I will look at how this question could be posed within contemporary discourse of post-war Britain. As indicated by art critic John Russell, the field of modern art in Britain at that time was in the beginning stages of establishing itself on both a home and international front, 'In 1945 [...] our artists had a merely local reputation. Our closed and empty museums were in charge of caretakers [...] the beginnings of that world [of modern art] had been ignored in the 1930s and only later, in a world transformed, did people begin to get the point' (Russell 1965: 6). The Second World War had not exactly halted a cultural movement of modernity within the arts, but its after-effects did place momentum behind a renewed interest in achieving a new one. The election of the first majority Labour government in 1945, with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister, was one of the key factors that instigated a number of dramatic changes to the economic and social landscape of post-war Britain (de la Haye 1997: 16). Alongside the new social welfare state, from the already established British Council, the Arts Council was formed. Acting as a state patron of the arts on behalf of British society – it purchased and continuously exhibited art for the benefit of the wider 'public', as it was the 'public' who were indeed paying for it.

The Arts Council actively encouraged growth in the art market through systems of private patronage and purchasing of art, both at home and abroad (an interesting example is the series of *Sculpture in the Home* exhibitions that toured Britain during the 1940s and 50s; see Burstow 2008 & 2009). Renewed interest in Art and high culture formed a complex contingency with other aspects of society as art historian Margaret Garlake points out, 'After 1945 it became clear that with greatly diminished coercive power, national status would increasingly be defined by culture' (Garlake 1998: 17). In post-war Britain the field of fashion was equally 'eager to assume a dominant position in future world markets' (de la Haye 1997: 16). The question posed by fashion journalist Alison Settle in *Picture Post* in 1945 'London: Can it Become a World Fashion Centre?' (Settle 1945: 19-21) was also being applied to the field of art. Garlake argues that 'Cultural creativity, manifested by the modernity of contemporary art forms, was a crucial indicator of national survival and continuing vitality after the

ravages of war' (Garlake 1998: 17), this sense of 'cultural creativity' can also be understood as a type of national 'symbolic value' that could be accessed through the status of one country's national and cultural products – such as those produced by the field of art and fashion. The initial drive into a possible renaissance of both contemporary art and fashion design was an investment in both national culture and international power, on a number of symbolic and economical fronts.

When *Vogue* asks its readers if they have ever thought of themselves as Art Collectors, this idea has already been placed and circulated within a wider societal discourse of 'Art'. In a new cultural idyll the notion of 'private' ownership was reframed and presented in the rhetoric of 'public' appreciation. Within the glossy pages of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* this particular subject had been addressed in a number of feature articles. In November 1945 'Museum Revival', written by John Steegman, the then newly appointed keeper of the Department of Art, in the National Museum of Wales, introduces the *Vogue* reader to a post-war culturally infused Britain where there was 'A better opportunity than ever before for Museums and art Galleries to Attract the Public' (*Vogue* November 1945: 42). Advocating the new and more visually appealing ways that museums and art galleries would attract a wider audience Steegman writes, 'Now the fashion in [museum] display has changed, though the buildings must remain. Moreover, there is a larger public ready to be interested in museums and art galleries than ever before' (Steegman 1945: 42). In his conclusion he predicts that, 'the future tendency will probably be to appeal first and foremost to the eye. This will be done by drawing the eye of the spectator at once to the setting and then to attract him to the object within the setting. In other words there may be less of the lecture-room and more of Bond Street' (ibid). Steegman's argument for more attractive and enticing ways of displaying culture is, on one hand equating wider public appeal with a mass consumer audience which fits with the general rhetoric of 'Museums must serve and please the public, because they are paid for by the public' (Steegman 1945: 86). On the other hand Steegman is also directly appealing to a particular facet of that consumer market, that is the 'imagined' *Vogue* reader to whom he writes, a member of the 'public' who window shops on Bond Street rather than other areas of London's West End.

In an article for the Summer issue of *Harper's Bazaar* in 1947, 'Paintings and People', art historian Bernard Denvir employs a similar rhetoric in his celebratory commentary upon the creation and subsequent work of the Arts Council. In this new

system of art patronage, Denvir argues ‘this is the age of the common man, and it is to the common man that the artist must look for support and patronage’ (Denvir 1947: 49). The deployment of a previously private and elite system of art, in Denvir’s view, becomes a matter of public and more pointedly ‘common’ appreciation. Using the examples of recent Arts Council exhibitions such as “Clowns and Comics”, “Design in the Home”, and “Sculpture In The Home”, Denvir claims that public displays have ‘pressed home that art is an essential part of daily life’ and therefore, ‘show the relevance of beauty in the life of every single person’ (Denvir 1947: 80). These exhibitions, acting as programmes of ‘public’ education, were seen to be vital to the development of *taste*, as Denvir assures the *Harper’s* reader ‘the development of *good taste* is not an impossible task’ (ibid emphasis added). In Denvir’s view the Arts Council was therefore, ‘helping people to form their own tastes’ (ibid) albeit their own *good* taste, which in the rhetoric of the article would be akin to the already embedded good taste of the imagined *Harper’s* reader.

Whilst these articles were clearly stating the aims and preliminary achievements of a new and modern age in post-war British culture and art, they were also written for a particular consumer audience, an imagined readership of ‘glossy’ fashion magazines – a figure named by Roland Barthes in *The Fashion System* as ‘The Woman of Fashion’, who is ‘simultaneously what the reader is and what she dreams of being’ (Barthes [1967] 2000: 260-261). The field of art and its agents were appealing to the readers of high fashion, high culture and good taste – whether real or imagined. As much as the field of art worked to enlighten and educate the ‘common’ man in his new role of public art patron, it simultaneously appealed to another kind of potential art patron: one who was already educated and visually literate, and who could shop down Bond Street, one who, importantly, was able to discern between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ taste through an impeccable knowledge of fashion, society and culture (much like was the ‘imagined’ reader of British *Vogue* in February 1948).

‘Art Patronage – Modern Style’ and a ‘Cocktail Party Recipe’:

Maurice Collis’ article ‘Art Patronage – Modern Style’ not only informs the *Vogue* reader of two British art societies, the Contemporary Art Society, and the ‘up-and-coming’ Institute of Contemporary Art, it also invites the reader to patronise them. The funding of art through public means takes prominence within the article, Collis writes ‘These societies are not only of great assistance to artists, but make the

members of the public who support them with their subscriptions feel that they, personally, are helping art. Becoming, in this way, buyers of works of art, they are real patrons' (Collis 1948: 62). This discourse suggests that there is not simply one type of 'public' but rather there are diverse variations of 'public'; in this instance there is a wider 'public' made up of the 'common' man and then there are the members of a 'public' who support the arts through additional symbolic and economic means such as becoming members of 'private' art societies. The 'modern style' of art patronage was arguably a restructuring of an established one – the field of art in post-war Britain may have been seeking a wider and more diverse audience to participate within it, however its validation for this – economically, symbolically and politically – was still sought from a social elite, a facet of which were the 'imagined' readers of *Vogue* or *Harper's Bazaar*.

In an editor's note that appears at the end of the 'Art Patronage – Modern Style' article the reader is informed that for a subscription and an annual fee they too can become a member of the contemporary art society, entitling them 'to free entry to exhibitions, to private views in private houses and to the society's own soireés' (*Vogue* 'Editor's Note' February 1948d: 97). Participation in this system of art patronage for the *Vogue* reader is sold not only on an idea of cultural elevation but also of sophisticated socialisation. The editorial photo-spread 'Cocktail Party Receipt' appears as an accompaniment to Collis' article, the fashion copy reads:

Photographed at Admiral's House, Hampstead home of Mr. and Mrs Colin Anderson. Loggia panels, sculptured in granite, portray Art and Science. Mr Anderson is the Hon. Treasurer of the Contemporary Art Society about which Maurice Collis writes on the following pages.

(*Vogue* February 1948c: 61).

Importantly it is this double-page spread that *precedes* the written article and subsequent invitations to either join or donate to either of these societies (see Fig.2). The fashion editorial photo-spread in the discursive framework of this issue sets the scene to Collis' article and the very idea of being this type of art collector or patron, becoming either a paid-up member of the Contemporary Art Society or donating to the founding of the ICA. It provides a visual setting to the written article- the representation of fashion within a particular cultural landscape works to attract the reader to an object within it. This does not have to be an 'object' per se – as in a solid or material thing that one can hold – it can also be an attainable idea that



Fig.2 “Cocktail Party Receipt” Photographed by Norman Parkinson
 (British *Vogue* February 1948c: 60-61) © Condé Nast Publications Inc.

presents objectified ideals, or an *idea* of being. Referring to Steegman’s previously quoted views on the post-war Museum display, ‘Cocktail Party Receipt’ presents a similar way of soliciting an audience, by drawing ‘the eye of the spectator [or *Vogue* reader] at once to setting and then [...attracts them] to the object within the setting’ (Steegman 1945: 42).

Outside the Hampstead home of Mr. and Mrs. Anderson the models pose either side the central gutter of the magazine spread. The eye moves back and forth between the muted tones of the two pages, taking in the balanced and mirrored elements of the layout design; the left page is in colour and the right is black and white. The models face the same direction, taking a side-ways stance, both figures framed by the exterior archways of the Anderson’s loggia, mirror one another’s pose between the pages. The left page model also mirrors herself more or less exactly through a distant doorway of the right page image – thus interrupting a linear narrative and enforcing a strong message of design, style and surface intent. They are pictured wearing ‘a sophisticated suit’ in corded black velvet with a gold lame hem and matching blouse by Charles Creed (see left of Fig.2), and ‘a dress of distinction’ in ‘a patterned tie-silk claret-coloured dress with a fitted bodice’ by Bianca Mosca (see right of Fig.2) (*Vogue* February 1948c: 61). Whether entering or exiting a soireé of the

Contemporary Art Society, they have done so in some of the finest fabrics and models of design that London couture had to offer in what was an otherwise ration-ridden era of clothing restrictions and coupons⁴.

The garments featured, designed by British couturiers and members of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers (Inc. Soc formed in 1942), draw upon what was acknowledged to be the ‘revolutionary’ silhouette of the ‘New Look’. Infamously introduced by the house of Dior’s ‘Corolle’ line in the Spring Paris collections of 1947, this was a style of design that favoured rounded feminine contours of shoulders and chest, tightly nipped in waists, and full-flowing skirts in multiple pleats, folds and extended lengths. These types of design would have provided a stark contrast to Utility clothes ‘which still prevailed in Britain’ at this time (de la Haye 1997: 17). The ‘sophisticated suit’ and ‘dress of distinction’ by Creed and Bianca Mosca are not copies of Dior, but rather form part of a high fashion idiom that, within both refined and more general knowledge of contemporary visual culture, would have been understood to constitute the ‘New Look’⁵. The New Look style garments invite new ways of looking, at both the body that wears them and where that body chooses to present them – in an editorial photo-spread that precedes an article about art and modern forms of patronage, the visual representation of these elements proposes an appropriate social setting in which to wear one’s new look fashions.

However there are contradictions, contrasts and repetitions to be drawn from this seemingly harmonious message. The photo-spread playfully repeats itself through its own sets of mirrored doubles both in its graphic layout and the subtle repetition of the model in the black velvet Creed suit. The left-page image, in terms of the space it depicts, combines classical imagery of the carved granite figures of ‘Art’ and ‘Science’ laid in the background wall with a marker of modernity in that of the angular white lines of the chair which is positioned below. The “New Look” clothes, whilst courting both criticism and praise, were generally agreed to invoke a standard of dress that was not truly modern or new. In *The Queen* their Paris correspondent Poppy Richards writes indignantly that these ‘revolutionary designs’ have ‘created this new woman...and have dressed her in retrospective clothes [...] Post war fashion (and it is the only thing) is provocative, extravagant, but it isn’t new’ (Richards September 1947: 24). Appraising the New Look in a *Picture Post* article ‘Paris Forgets This Is 1947’ Marjorie Beckett presents a similar set of criticisms:

Straight from the indolent and wealthy years before the 1914 war come this year's much-discussed Paris fashion. They are launched upon a world which has not the material to copy them – and whose woman have neither the money to buy, the leisure to enjoy, nor in some designs even the strength to support, these masses of elaborate material.

(Beckett 1947: 26).

In the immediate post-war years of the 1940s the New Look was new to the visual landscape of Britain in that it was wholly different from the government defined military chic of Utility clothes, yet its restrictive designs and profligate use of fabric harked back to previous eras of haute couture consumption and styles of living. Similarly the new ways in which the field of art was being supported through the 'modern' styles of public art patronage were arguably a restructuring of an established one. The post-war renaissance of high fashion and modern art, continuing to follow familiar hierarchies, was a revival of taste, aspiration, and consumption that coincided with a discourse which privileged notions of a wider 'public' and the 'common' man.

'Art', an accessory to 'Fashion':

The article 'Art Patronage – Modern Style' and the editorial photo-spread 'Cocktail Party Receipt' come from and circulate, not only, within this wider cultural and historical discourse, they are also to be understood within the context in which they were produced. As previously noted the editorial photo-spread precedes the said feature article in the structure of British *Vogue's* February 1948 issue. These are two elements of a whole distinct discursive framework and should not, as Sally Stein states in her own analysis of women's magazines, be 'apprehended in isolation, rather, images, and texts, ads and editorial matter, are each designed to work off each other within the larger ensemble of the magazine' (Stein [1985] 1992: 146). To address this I have constructed a graphic diagram that illustrates the contents of this British *Vogue* issue (see Diagram.5 'British *Vogue* February 1948')⁶. The February issue, within the context of fashion media publication in the 1940s and 50s, is a pre-collections issue – typically news and photographs of the London Collections were published in the March issue and then that of the Paris Collections followed in April (this pattern was repeated in the later half of the year in September and October). In this particular issue British *Vogue* centres upon the subject of Accessories, stating that this issue will be:

a reminder for you to look for craftsmanship in design and finish. Remember

that the skill which has gone into such things as houses, staircases and carpets is the same skill handed down the years to find new outlets in the accessories of today – in your hat, your shoes, your jewels.

(*Vogue* ‘Vogue’s Eye View’ February 1948a: 33).

Looking at Diagram.5 one can see that ‘Cocktail Party Receipt’ and ‘Art Patronage – Modern Style’ appear in the later half of the magazine. At the centre of this issue, and therefore at the top of the internal hierarchy of the fashion magazine, is a six page editorial photo-spread entitled ‘Notes on the basic principles of good craftsmanship, epitomized in two aspects of high fashion: a spring hat and the city of Bath’ (*Vogue* February 1948b: 35) focuses upon, as the title suggests, couture-made hats⁷. Before reaching ‘Cocktail Party Receipt’ and ‘Art Patronage – Modern Style’ the *Vogue* reader, if flicking through the pages of this magazine in an entirely chronological manner, would have been introduced to whole range of fashionable accessories such as ‘Jewellery’, ‘Leather’ goods, ‘Evening Shoes’, ‘Shoes and Boots’ for the day, before reaching the cultural destination of Mr. and Mrs. Anderson’s Hampstead Home, the Contemporary Art Society and the forthcoming ICA (see Diagram.5).

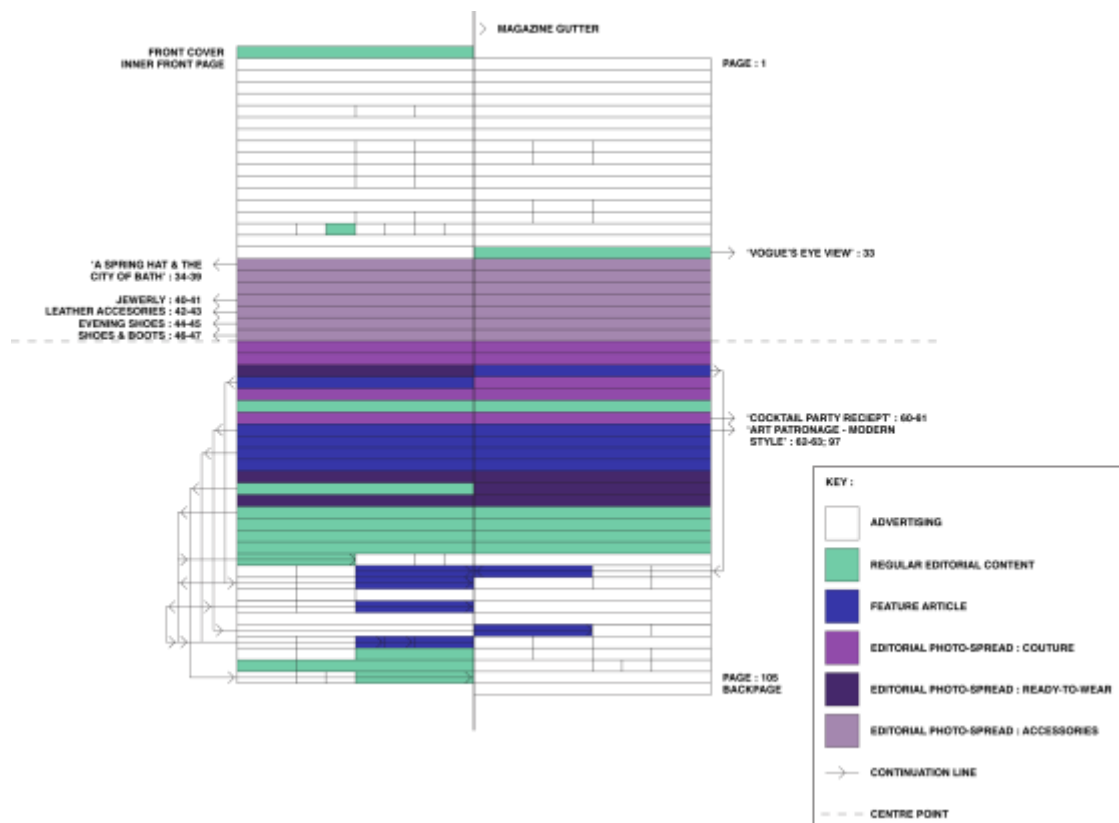


Diagram.5 British *Vogue* February 1948

Conclusion:

In the context of this accessory lead issue of *Vogue*, membership to a society or club that patronises modern and contemporary art is yet another fashionable accessory to be beheld by the *Vogue* reader. This is neither a derogatory position for ‘art’ nor is it necessarily an elevation of ‘fashion’ through the same association, rather within the wider historical and social discourse of post-war Britain this is a visual representation of symbolic exchange occurring between the fields of art and fashion. Contemporary art may gain both symbolic value, through an idea of the fashionable, as well as economically through potential monetary gain in terms of membership and donations. New Look fashions generated from London couture designers are positioned within a cultured backdrop that offer an environment where they may be worn and appreciated by other like-minded members of society. This type of symbolic exchange can also be understood as a beginning moment of synergy that prevailed between the fields of ‘art’ and ‘fashion’, throughout post-war Britain. This was not ‘a genuine fusing of the two-worlds’ (Cotton [2008] 2010: 232-234) but a courtship between the two that existed upon the glossy surface of the fashion magazine page. When the ICA did open its new social space of art and culture a few years later at its first venue on Dover Street *Vogue* was there to photograph the first ‘Signs of Spring’ and ‘Enveloping Coats’ in its March 1951 issue (see Fig.3) providing yet another way to look at the history of art and its continuous association with the world of fashion.



Fig.3 “Signs Of Spring: Enveloping Coats” photographed by Anthony Denney
(British *Vogue* March 1951: 106-107) © Condé Nast Publications Inc.

Notes:

¹ This paper is drawn from ongoing research for my PhD thesis 'A History of Exhibiting Art and Fashion In British Fashion Magazine Photo-spreads 1945-1965'.

² Townsend also addressed the May 2000 'Fashion Meets Art' British *Vogue* publication in *Rapture: Art's Seduction by Fashion* that accompanied the 2002 Barbican Art Gallery exhibition (Townsend 2002).

³ *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* definition of *synergy*: 'interaction or cooperation of two or more organisations, substances, or agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects' (Soanes & Stevenson 2008: 1461).

⁴ Clothes rationing was introduced in Britain in 1941 as part of the War effort. These restrictions continued into peacetime, consumer rationing did not end until 1949 and the Utility clothing remained in production until 1952 (de la Haye 1997: 16).

⁵ What constitutes the 'New Look', in the late 1940s, varied from collection to collection and from one designer to another. For example in fashion reports for the London Spring 1948 Collections *Vogue* comments that in this instance 'The New Look has fined down' (*Vogue* March 1948: 41), similarly *The Queen* reports 'We can say with relief that no revolutionary styles await us, but merely the "New Look" finely developed and beautifully displayed' (*The Queen* February 1948: 29).

⁶ Sally Steins' analysis of American women's magazine *Ladies Home Journal*, 'the Graphic Ordering of Desire' utilises a series of graphs described as "exploding" representations of the magazine, constructed along 'a synchronically viewed series of double pages' (Stein [1985] 1992: 149-151).

⁷ Emma Damon's essay 'Hats' outlines the importance of the millenary trade in post-war British culture, noting 'Although wartime shortages resulted in the standardisation of clothing design, hats remained both unrationed and unrestricted, thus permitting women to make a small fashion statement' (Damon 1997: 139).

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