Programme

Fashion Photography: A Visual History

6 Weeks, Thursdays, 26th September – 31st October 2024. Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until Thursday 12th December 2024.

Overview

Fashion photographers have continually pushed boundaries and the tension between artistic and commercial demands has generated great creativity and technical innovation. The emergence of fashion photography as a distinct genre goes hand in hand with the burgeoning illustrated magazine industry. Publications such as Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar employed some of the period’s most celebrated photographers in the realm of fine art to capture couture. Today, artists have documented the ever-changing landscape of streetwear, celebrating self-made garments and individual expression. As editorial shoots or advertisements, fashion pictures have helped to shape culture and often reflect social changes.

This six-week course will provide a chronological and transnational overview, charting the evolution of fashion photography from the blossoming of the medium in the early twentieth century to the globalism of contemporary image-making. Taught by V&A curators, scholars and magazine creatives – and drawing from original examples and publications from the museum’s collection – this course provides an opportunity to engage more deeply with fashion photography’s multiple meanings and possibilities. From surrealism to streetstyle, we will cover a range of themes each week and explore radical shifts in the medium. You will also gain an exclusive insight into exhibition-making at the V&A, from our very first fashion photography shows to our most recent NAOMI and Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection.
Your course leader

Lydia Caston is Project Curator at the V&A specialising in fashion photography. She was the Assistant Curator of Tim Walker: Wonderful Things and one of the curators of Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection. Recent contributions to publications include George Hoyningen Huene: Photography, Fashion, Film (2024) and Calling the Shots: A Queer History of Photography (2024).

Programme

Week 1 – 26th September

13.50 Welcome
14.00 Dazzling Beginnings: Condé Nast and the Blossoming Magazine Lydia Caston
15.30 Photographer in Focus: Cecil Beaton, Susanna Brown, Curator and Writer with Robin Muir, Contributing editor at Vogue and Curator

Week 2 – 3rd October

14.00 Pre-war Paris: Neoclassicism and Surrealism, Susanna Brown, Curator and Writer
15.30 Styling in Focus, Christine Checinska, Senior Curator, Africa and Diaspora: Textiles and Fashion, V&A

Week 3 – 10th October

14.00 The Colour Revolution, Lydia Caston
15.30 Jewellery in Focus, Rachel Garrahan, Project Curator, Decorative Art and Sculpture, V&A

Week 4 – 17th October

14.00 Swinging London: A Fresh Perspective, Lydia Caston
15.30 Set Design in Focus, TBC
**Week 5 – 24th October**

14.00  “Something more pathological”: Pushing Boundaries, **TBC**

15.30  NAOMI: In Fashion, **Elisabeth Murray**, Exhibition Project Curator, Performance, Furniture, Textiles and Fashion, V&A

**Week 6 – 31st October**

14.00  Contemporary Image-Making, **Lydia Caston**

15.30  Astonish Me! Alexey Brodovitch, **Katy Wan**, Managing Curator, D. Daskalopoulos Collection Gift, Tate Modern

*Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.*