

Laura Gardner &
Daphne Mohajer va Pesaran (eds.)



radical
fashion
exercises

a workbook
of modes
and methods

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Fashion objects are generally sold using imagery. Evocative images of fashion and the smooth, perfect objects they feature elicit individual desires and distance a consumer from the real conditions of production. The garments we wear are mystified as a result of the multiple industrial processes, from manufacturing to advertising. How can a consumer take responsibility for ethical design, while specific details of how garments are produced in the industrial fashion system are generally suppressed (or at the very least, styled) by fashion images and media?

Exercises in 'Re-viewing Images' examine the fashion image as the primary medium for communication in fashion. This is often where we, as consumers, first encounter a garment. This theme includes exercises that analyze and critique the 'fashion image' as a distinct phenomenon. Beata Wilczek's 'Fashion Image Questionnaire' audits the fashion image using a 'questionnaire as a tool for poetic, abstract, and situated knowledge production'.

The fashion image often bears distinct features—a model's pose, casting,

lighting and framing—that generate desire. Exercises in this theme interrogate the smooth, high-production, digital facade of the contemporary fashion image via its key ingredients. For example, Chet Julius Bugter's 'Re-enacting the Fashion Image' places us in the body of the fashion image via the familiar trope of the fashion pose, producing a bootleg version by the participant. Saul Marcadent and Federico Antonini's 'Bootleg Magazine' also explores the radical act of 'bootlegging' by copying an entire fashion publication as a way to closely interrogate its form and content.

The image is also a fundamental element in the styling and creation of fashion editorial, which can lead to a system of self-perpetuation. Mary-Lou Berkulin's 'The Elusive vs. the Everyday' offers a method for breaking the mould of fashion image-making by making a communal mood board of found images. And Sanne Karssenbergs method, 'Wearers Past and Present' dives into a photograph as the starting point to research and write about garments and their social history, giving us a tool to rediscover things forgotten in the past.

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bootleg magazine



1. Get hold of a physical copy of an editorial object such as a magazine, a fanzine, a catalogue, a lookbook, or brochure. Analyze the visual and textual contents, the editorial style, the graphic design and typography, the paper stock, the circulation figure, the cover price (where suitable), and the distribution. This enables you to talk about the object, but also about the context and the processes that generated it.
2. Produce an altered, bootlegged, parasitic, evil-twin version of the chosen object through additions, margin notes, cuts, deletions, alterations, disassembly, removals, overlays, overprints, scans, and photocopies. Create your bootleg in assonance-dissonance with the original contents. In this phase, it is important to consider the objects for their three-dimensional value.
- 3 Consider how your interventions might be reproduced in a series: every action must face the conditions and constraints of editorial design, readership, commerce.

There are multiple ways to channel strong conceptual processes, overturning the original content, even using mundane production techniques. In the second step, it could be useful to work with a printer or a graphic designer to reflect on the difference between typography, copy shop, screen printing, and bookbinding. You are encouraged to consider performative approaches.

A fashion image is not just a question of fashion, but an abstract, undecipherable, and unformulated bond between things, people, their allures, and their desires. Starting from this thought, this exercise ignites reflection on the printed image of fashion as it appears on the page. It also proposes a way of reactivating fashion printed material and bringing it back to circulation.

Note: This exercise was developed within the context of the Publishing Atelier at IUAV University of Venice.

Editors:
Laura Gardner &
Daphne Mohajer va Pesaran

Editorial advice:
Line Arngaard
Astrid Vorstermans

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Liana Simmons

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Daphne Mohajer va Pesaran

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Over one hundred tried, tested, and speculative exercises that expand the way we look at fashion, how we are part of its system, and how we can practice fashion otherwise.

Radical Fashion Exercises contains a copious collection of bottom-up activities, prompts, and workshops designed by contributors (from all around the globe), who explore fashion in an expanded field. Designers, curators, artists, educators, fashion practitioners, DIY sewers, students, and other creatives responded to the book's open call with contributions that challenge how to practice fashion and reflect on its systems, politics and economics. The exercises collected in this book embrace interdisciplinarity, experimentation, and aesthetics and widen fashion's horizons as a medium for expression, embodiment and sociality.

The exercises are gathered under the following themes: Imagining and Dreaming; Going Outside; Using the Body; Working Together; Reading and Writing; Making, Finding, Tracing; Re-viewing Images; Digging Deep; and Sourcing and Re-sourcing.

Radical Fashion Exercises assembles methods for learning and practicing fashion in meaningful, radical and responsible ways. The book is an inspiring tool for design students, designers, writers, and practitioners of diverse disciplines to challenge fashion as a commodity and polluting structure in these times of uncertainty and upheaval.



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