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fashion and beauty

The contemporary recognition of diversity in feminisms, and the more complex theorizations of femininity that have taken place in recent years have created different, more playful spaces and identities for feminists. Lipstick is no longer the issue. Or is it? *Feminist Review* 71 explores the tension between pleasure and constraint in women's investments in fashion and beauty. It also engages with debates on the relationship between political economy approaches, and those concerned with culture and identity, and considers questions of production as well as consumption.

Both Paula Black and Merl Storr provide accounts of empirical research on women's experiences of the fashion and beauty industries: they point to the complex and ambivalent nature of these social spaces as sites where femininity is constructed, and is also a source of pleasure. In the dialogue section, Rita Rupal gives a personal account of her experience of beauty parlors in India. Rachel Moseley brings into this discussion the role of a female star as fashion icon, with her analysis of Audrey Hepburn's film roles, and of women's responses to them. Responses to the incorporation of 'other' cultures and styles within the fashion industry are explored by Nirmal Puwar in her discussion of a different sense of aesthetics and memory. Pursuing the theme of the aesthetics of the everyday, Joy Gregory's images question the politics and pleasures of being blonde. The dynamics of the fashion industry are addressed by Angela McRobbie, who provides a critical analysis of current trends, focusing on the conflict between the creative economy and neo-liberal globalization. Elizabeth Wilson's review of the 'Radical Fashion' exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 2001 raises the related question of the roles played by haute couture and high street fashion. In her dialogue piece, Juliet Ash gives an example of an attempt to counteract the effects of globalized production by a group of Asian women textile workers in East London. Finally, the review of the 'Stitched Up' exhibition shown in Leamington Spa, UK, points to the questions that need to be asked if production and consumption are to be considered together.

The images and texts that we have brought together here are an original and timely intervention in this crucial area for women and for feminist analysis. One of the particular contributions of this collection is a full engagement with the intersectionality of gender, 'race' and class in relation to experiences and structures of the fashion and beauty industries.

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doi:10.1057/palgrave.fr.9400041