

**A Cultural history of fashion in the 20th Century : from the catwalk to the sidewalk**

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## A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th Century

From the Catwalk to the Sidewalk  
Bonnie English

The twentieth century saw the effective end of haute couture, the rise of prêt à porter and, finally, the triumph of street fashion. A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th Century unravels the complexities and contradictions behind these changes to chart the history of modern fashion. What caused the demise of haute couture in the twentieth century? What does the 'democratization' of fashion actually mean? Which key designers bridged the gap between 'couture', with its associations of elite class and taste, and 'street style', a product of tribalism and of popular culture and protest? If fashion imitates art and art imitates life, does life imitate fashion - do we wear the clothes or do the clothes wear us? Setting fashion within its social, cultural and artistic context, A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th Century presents an engaging history of the interplay between commerce and culture, technology and aesthetics, popular culture and pastiche, and fashion and anti-fashion.

### About the author

Bonnie English is Senior Lecturer in Art Theory at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

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“Lively, accessible, highly informative, and drawing on an impressive range of both Eastern and Western examples, this is a unique contribution to fashion history.”

Becky E. Conekin,  
London College of  
Fashion