MARK-E0058 SOCIOLOGY OF CONSUMPTION AND FASHION

FASHION AND DIGITAL CONSUMER CULTURE

What is digital consumer culture?

The 'dividual' is semiocapitalist consumer culture

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ABSTRACT

We connect the notion of the consumer as 'dividual' to contemporary automation of consumer culture. By envisioning the issue within a semiocapitalist horizon, we ponder the general affectivity of consumer experience as accelerating but largely veiled processes of desire, incessant accumulation, and intensifying technologies.

KEYWORDS
Dividual; Deleuze and Guattari; semiocapitalism; automation; algorithm; subjectivity; deimosology

Becoming dividual

On the 17th of July, 2021, Sidney Levy sent me a 'friend request' on Facebook. His image as avatar and actor, with no-one stated as acting 'on his behalf'. At this point, Sidney had been dead for over three years. (author's personal encounter)

"This is just a feature of our times" (Best, 2010, p. 19)

UNIQUE ELEMENTS OF DIGITAL CONSUMPTION

- Miscalleneity: Serendipity and Prosthetic Memory
- Reality and virtuality boundaries
- Speed: Instant gratification and contagion
- Free stuff!
- Control
- Play and absorption

From Fashion Cycle to Fashion Feed

Forget the traditional fashion cycle. Some brands and retailers are striving to deliver a near-constant feed of 'buy now, wear now' products.

Dresses from Barneys | Source: Barneys

How Instagram Influencers Fuel Our Destructive Addiction To Fast Fashion

The fashion industry is a big climate culprit, but social media continues to encourage our unsustainable consumption of disposable clothing.

By Lucy Siegle

JOHNNYGREIG VIA GETTY IMAGES

Social media is helping fuel consumerism on an unprecedented scale, especially when it comes to fast fashion, as brands and influencers look to sell us more and more products.

Shoppers are buying clothes just for the Instagram pic, and then returning them

By Hanna Kozlowska • August 13, 2018

REUTERS/STRINGER

Returns=lots of packages.

Refashioning a Field? Connected Consumers and Institutional Dynamics in Markets

PIERRE-YANN DOLBEC
EILEEN FISCHER

We investigate the participation of engaged consumers in the fashion market through the lens of institutional theory. We develop theoretical insights on the unintended market-level changes that ensue when consumers who are avidly interested in a field connect to share ideas with one another. We find that consumers take on some of the institutional work previously done primarily by paid actors and introduce new forms of institutional work supportive of the field. We show that engaged consumers can precipitate the formation of new categories of actors in the field and the contestation of boundaries between established and emergent actor categories. Further, we propose that new consumer-focused institutional logics gain momentum, even while consumers support and promote preexisting logics through their practices. We compare cases where discontented market actors have brought about market changes with our investigation of one where contented consumers unintentionally precipitated market-level dynamics, and we show that the accumulation of consumers' micro-level practices can have pervasive and profound impacts.

Fashion stylists traditionally "curated" looks that would be disseminated within the fashion field by selecting clothing and accessories worn in fashion shoots. Fashion photographers created the images that were disseminated, for example, through the labor involved in creating or selecting the sets where shoots occurred, arranging lighting, choosing lens, selecting images, and photoshopping selected images to create the final product. And fashion editors have supervised the process of creating, developing, and presenting content for traditional or online media (Granger 2007).

We support the claim that consumers are now sharing such institutional work first with a visual image that illustrates a consumer who has engaged in both curating a look and creating an image in a manner directly comparable to that typically done by stylists and photographers.
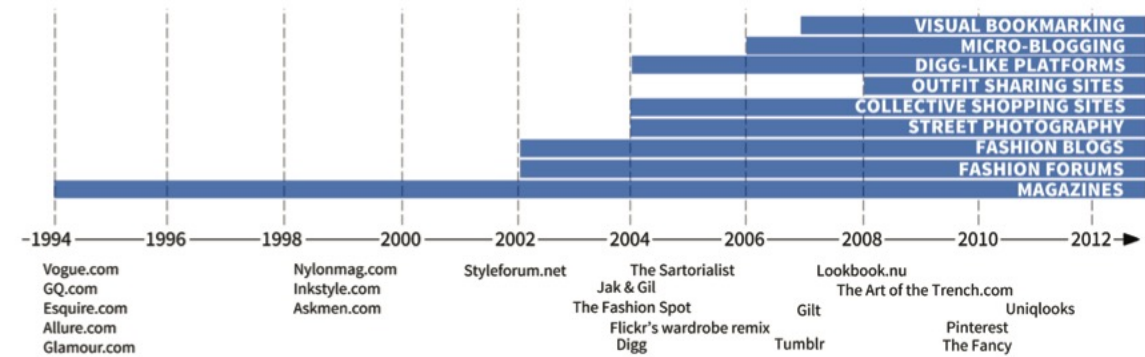
FIGURE 1

A TIMELINE OF THE ONLINE FASHION WORLD

FIGURE 2

A LOOK CURATED BY A CONSUMER ON *LOOKBOOK.NU* VERSUS A LOOK CURATED BY A PROFESSIONAL

NOTE.—*Left*, a look curated by a consumer, *lookbook.nu*, September 2012. *Right*, a look curated by a professional fashion editor, *iD Magazine*, Fall 2012.

DOWN WITH THE GATEKEEPERS

Neiman Marcus and Vogue blame fashion's woes on bloggers: "You are heralding the death of style"

BLOGGERS & DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS FOR BLOGGERS AND DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

Due to the high volume of applications we receive each season, the British Fashion Council asks that each blogger or influencer provide specific information in order to be considered for accreditation. To apply please provide the following evidence for your primary publishing platform:

Instagram
Fashion-related content with a minimum of 35K followers

YouTube
Average of 50K views per fashion-related video, and a minimum of 80K subscribers

Blog
Over 15,000 Monthly Unique Visitors – please provide clearly dated statistics from the last three months from Google Analytics or a similar source.

INDY/LIFE

Getty Images

LONDON FASHION WEEK 2018: FIVE INFLUENCERS TO FOLLOW

The bloggers you need to know about ahead of this season's proceedings

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UK ▶ UK politics Education **Media** Society Law Scotland Wales Northern Ireland

Magazines

Vogue editors accused of hypocrisy after declaring war on fashion bloggers

Editors told to get back to their Werther's Originals after criticising 'pathetic' fashion bloggers 'in borrowed clothes'

Alexandra Topping
Thu 29 Sep 2016 09.53 BST

f 🐦 ✉   ⤳ 2,667

⏱ This article is over **2 years old**

▲ Fashion blogger Susie Lau at London fashion week this month. Photograph: David M Benett/Getty

They have ruled the fashion world for generations, but the formidable gatekeepers of Vogue have been branded "jealous, catty and hypocritical" by young fashion bloggers and fans after editors criticised the new breed of social media fashionista.

Four US Vogue editors have been told to "get back to their Werther's Originals", after complaining about the presence of "pathetic" and "desperate" fashion bloggers at Milan fashion week, the Times reported. The senior staff members criticised bloggers for changing their outfits every hour.

The Megaphone Effect:
Taste and Audience in Fashion Blogging

EDWARD F. MCQUARRIE
JESSICA MILLER
BARBARA J. PHILLIPS

The megaphone effect refers to the fact that the web makes a mass audience potentially available to ordinary consumers. The article focuses on fashion bloggers who acquire an audience by iterated displays of aesthetic discrimination applied to the selection and combination of clothing. The authors offer a theoretical account of bloggers' success in terms of the accumulation of cultural capital via public displays of taste and describe how the exercise of taste produces economic rewards and social capital for these bloggers. The article situates fashion blogging as one instance of a larger phenomenon that includes online reviews and user-generated content and extends to the consumption of food and home decor as well as clothing. In these instances of the megaphone effect, a select few ordinary consumers are able to acquire an audience without the institutional mediation historically required.
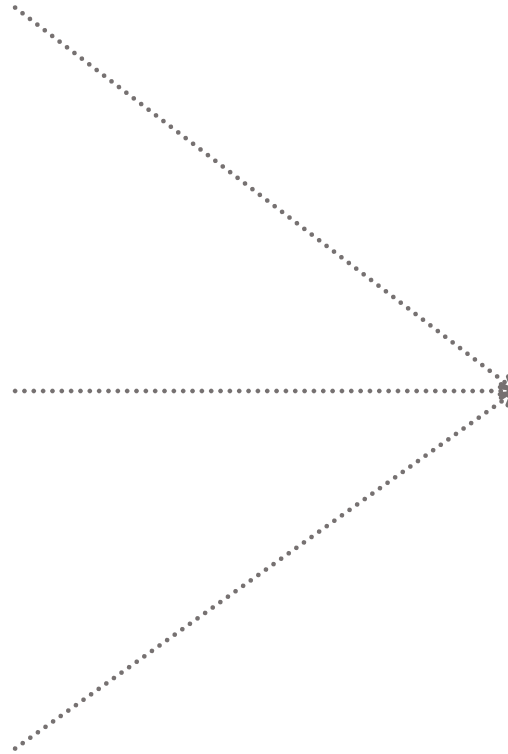
Cultural capital
- "What you know"
- Embodied knowledge of what is important in the field
- "This-over-that" tacit intuition

Social capital
- "Who you know"
- Field connections
- Name recognition in field

Economic capital
- "What you own"
- Money, possession of value field artifacts

Symbolic capital
- Particular forms of social/cultural/economic capital can become legitimate markers of prestige, respect, or authority in the field

reminder

1. From journal to taste display

2. From community to audience

3. From curating to modeling

4. From snapshots to professional images

5. Practices of misrecognition

Small exercise to try on your own after class:

1. Pick a fashion blog or fashion Instagram account.

2. Describe how the style has changed since its beginning.

Dolbec and Maciel (2018) In or Out? How Consumer Performances Lead to the Emergence of New Tastes

May 2018

In book: Taste, Consumption, and Markets · Publisher: Routledge

Project: Taste & Masculinity

Andre Maciel · Pierre-Yann Dolbec

Overview   Stats   Comments (2)   Citations   References (30)   Related research (10+)   Download

Small exercise:

1. Please identify a style that has recently emerged through fashion blogs and how it has changed!

StyleZeitgeist

Clothes and other relevant
props that define a style

Objects

The organization of
a taste regime

How to wear the
clothes, in which
geographic or
cultural settings,
in what poses...

Doing

Meanings

How the clothes
are coded, what
types of emotions
are they supposed
to convey

Problematization

Continuous questioning of alignment of objects and meanings

OBJECTS

Coats, Shoes
Keys
Mail

DOINGS

Taking off
Filtering
Sorting

MEANINGS

Home
Calm
Ordered

Ritualization

Establishment of ritualized
behaviors that align
objects with doings

Instrumentalization

Enrolling objects and
doings to actualize
meanings

Taste regime *convergence*

Taste regime *extension*

Taste regime *normalization*

PARADIGMA AND SYNTAGMA: DIFFERENCE AND THE TWO AXES

reminder

- **Paradigma:** a class of objects or concepts

- **Syntagma:** an element which follows another in a particular sequence

Edward: I particularly like the scarf and the boots underneath the pants! I normally don't like it, but the slim shape of the toe just seems to make everything flow nicely, and your legs look crazy long. The sharp lines in the coat are brilliant too!

Tomorrow: Love the fit of the trousers, goes really well with the devoa

*DoD:* Really nice. Best way to wear grey is lots of it and in variation.

Brooklyn: very nice Chapeautier...you should think twice about trading or blacking out those gloves...they really enhance the outfit

BLUMER'S RULES OF FASHION

reminder

1. There must be freedom to choose from competing codes

2. These codes are currently not axiologically or hierarchically determined

3. Social power structures exist and contest these codes

4. The codes must be "open" for the idea of "new" from important events, people, or other social changes

- "[Fashion has to be] open to the recurrent presentation of models or proposals of new social forms"
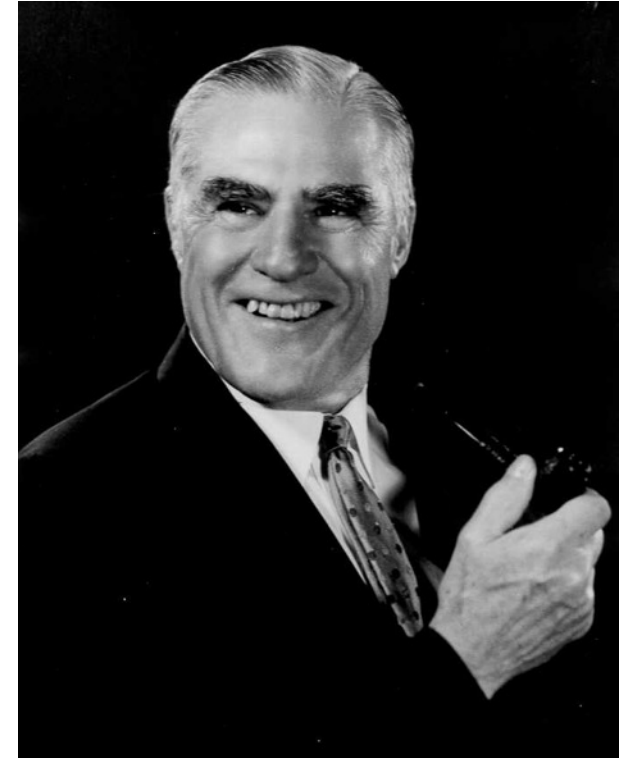
"Based on our findings, we predict that the emphasis of these three micro-processes will change over time, even though they continue to happen concomitantly.

To elaborate on this point, it is useful to introduce the notion of a settled taste regime, when a high degree of consensus exists, and unsettled or emergent, when a low degree of consensus exists."
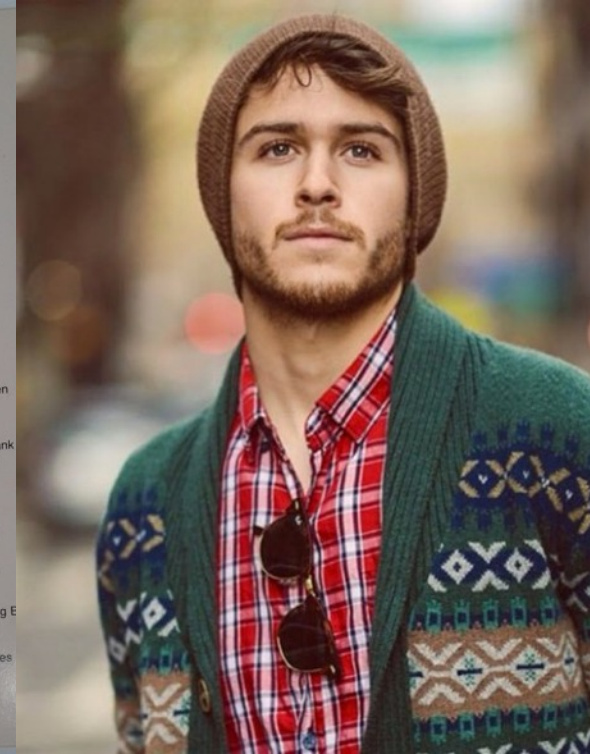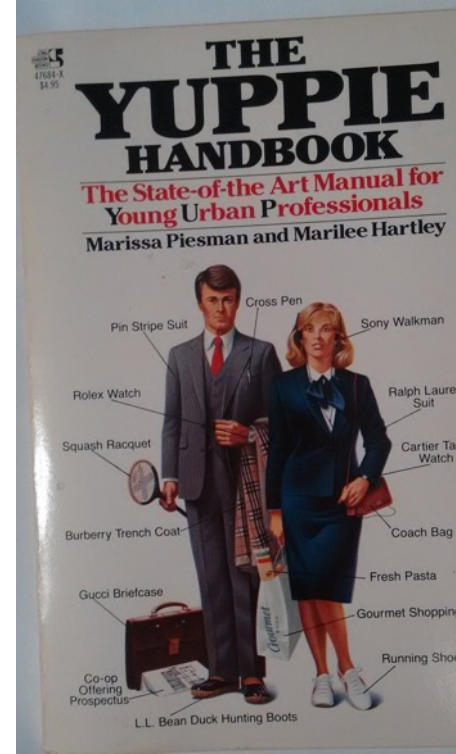
HOME > MEN'S FASHION ADVICE

SECRETS TO DRESSING LIKE A BERLINER WHEN YOU'RE NOT ONE

Where urban rebellion meets sharp styling.

Benjamin Fitzgerald | Wednesday 16th January, 2019

6 PHOTOS

Do algorithms influence fashion and how?

Can you describe, say, your Instagram feed—what kind of fashion brands or even influencers are being pushed to you, and why?

"gaming the system" or "playing the visibility game"?

What are the consequences for the dispersion of fashion?

Playing the visibility game: How digital influencers and algorithms negotiate influence on Instagram

Kelley Cotter iD
Michigan State University, USA

Abstract

Algorithms are said to affect social realities, often in unseen ways. This article explores conscious, instrumental interactions with algorithms, as a window into the complexities and extent of algorithmic power. Through a thematic analysis of online discussions among Instagram influencers, I observed that influencers' pursuit of influence resembles a game constructed around "rules" encoded in algorithms. Within the "visibility game," influencers' interpretations of Instagram's algorithmic architecture—and the "game" more broadly—act as a lens through which to view and mechanize the rules of the game. Illustrating this point, this article describes two prominent interpretations, which combine information influencers glean about Instagram's algorithms with preexisting discourses within influencer communities on authenticity and entrepreneurship. This article shows how directing inquiries toward the visibility game makes present the interdependency between users, algorithms, and platform owners and demonstrates how algorithms structure, but do not unilaterally determine user behavior.

Perusall comments: Visibility game

- Playing the game, tactics of mistakes

- Frustration at changes (that are still not reversed)

- Influencer authenticity

  - Through the Dramatisation of real-life, pervasive closeness,

    - Selective sharing, avoidance of sensitive issues

Screenshot 1 (B2C / wishpond)

DIGITAL & SOCIAL › INSTAGRAM

Instagram Engagement Strategies to Beat the Algorithm

Farahnaz Mohammed — October 2, 2019

Instagram Engagement Strategies to Beat the Algorithm

wishpond
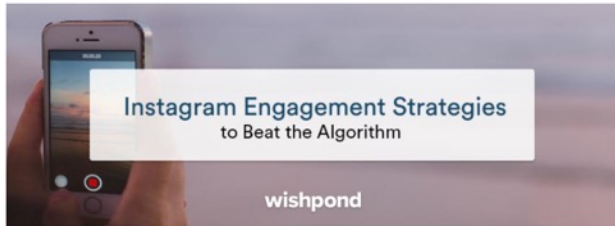
Noticed your Instagram engagement plummeting recently? Likes not coming as easily as they used to? Comments less frequent?

You're not the only one. Across the board, influencers and social media managers have reported that their accounts have been seeing lackluster metrics, despite no changes in steady strategies.

This might be because of many things. With the discover feed feeling more like advertising space, Instagram experimenting with hiding likes and offering little guidance for companies, the platform has become a guessing game for marketing professionals.

Luckily, there's something that is algorithm-proof: genuine connection with your audience. Here are a few Instagram engagement strategies to get your stats back up and climbing.

Screenshot 2

INSTAGRAM, MARKETING

This is How the Instagram Algorithm Works in 2019

Lexie Carbone
@lexiecarbone
June 7, 2019

How does the Instagram algorithm *actually* work?

It's a question that's caused a lot of confusion (and frustration!) for business on Instagram since the controversial move away from a chronological feed.

It seemed the Instagram algorithm was making it harder than ever to reach target audiences, get more followers, and improve engagement on your posts.

But the good news is that once you understand how the Instagram algorithm works, you can use it to build a killer Instagram strategy, and continue to grow your account!

We're demystifying the rumors and covering everything you need to know about the Instagram algorithm in 2019 — it's time to take back control of your Instagram marketing strategy this year!

Screenshot 3 (BBC)

YOU'RE READING

How turning 'likes' invisible is changing Instagram

● INFLUENCERS
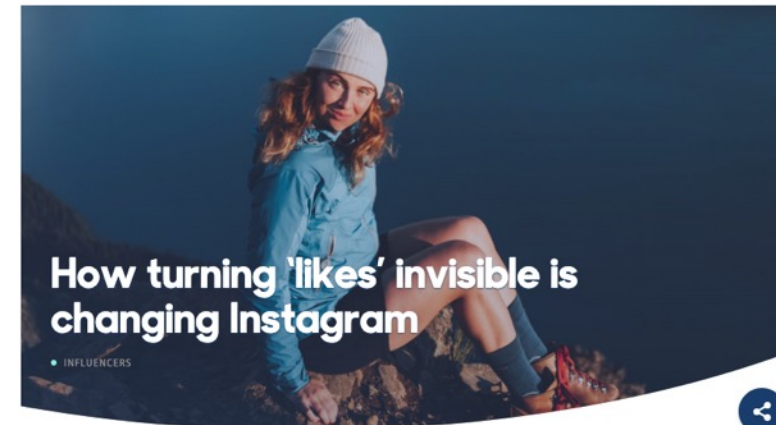
By Celina Ribeiro
BBC WORKLIFE
23rd August 2019

We're several weeks into Instagram's new initiative of hiding 'likes' to users in certain countries. How have influencers reacted, and does it do anything good for their mental health?

DIGITAL CONSUMPTION:
The future of fashion?

RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY

Digital future of luxury brands: Metaverse, digital fashion, and non-fungible tokens

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Abstract

Leading luxury brands have incorporated technologies to recreate brand images and reinvent consumer experience. The fashion industry is experiencing a historic transformation thanks to emerging technologies such as blockchain and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) along with impactful technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and virtual reality (VR). With metaverse as a new social platform around the corner, academics and industry alike are querying how these new technologies might reshape luxury brands, reinvent consumer experience, and alter consumer behavior. This research charts new academic territory by investigating how newly evolved technologies affect the fashion industry. With practical examples of luxury brands, this article has theorized the irreversible trend of digital fashion: the attraction of NFT collectibles. It then proposes intriguing questions for scholars and practitioners to ponder, such as will young consumers, essentially living online, buy more fashion products in the digital world than in the real world? How can the fashion industry strategize for the coexistence of digital collections and physical goods?

Perusall comments: Digital future

- NFTs and authenticity

- Huge amount of collaborations and examples between fashion houses and "metaverse" or digital spheres.

- Another market for consumption (looking fashionable both in real-life but increasingly online too?)

  - A big reason for the excitement and why companies push the metaverse.

- Digital fashion (Crypto technology, metaverses) and sustainability

- Critical views and skepticism

- Data, privacy and surveillance issues

- The privilege and base-line material conditions met in order to participate

- Accessibility of fashion (democratisation) vs authenticity creation

"Because human interaction is itself a luxury commodity, insofar as customers receive direct attention dedicated to identifying and meeting their needs, digitized consultants are used sparingly."

LOUIS VUITTON X LEAGUE OF LEGENDS

Louis Vuitton and Riot Games have collaborated on several fronts for the 2019 League of Legends World Championship Finals in Paris: a bespoke travel case for the Summoner's Cup trophy, prestige skins designed by Nicolas Ghesquière, along with other digital assets.

https://www.voguebusiness.com/technology/fashion-esports-gaming-monetisation

https://eu.louisvuitton.com/eng-e1/magazine/articles/louis-vuitton-x-league-of-legends#

VOGUEBUSINESS

TECHNOLOGY

Fashion's new playground: Esports and gaming

BY ANNACHIARA BIONDI

28 AUGUST 2020

Video games and esports have become key to connect with Gen Z and millennial consumers, but monetisation is also on the horizon for luxury brands.
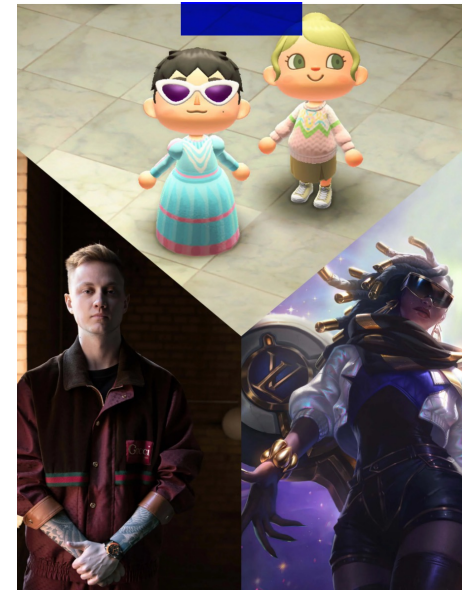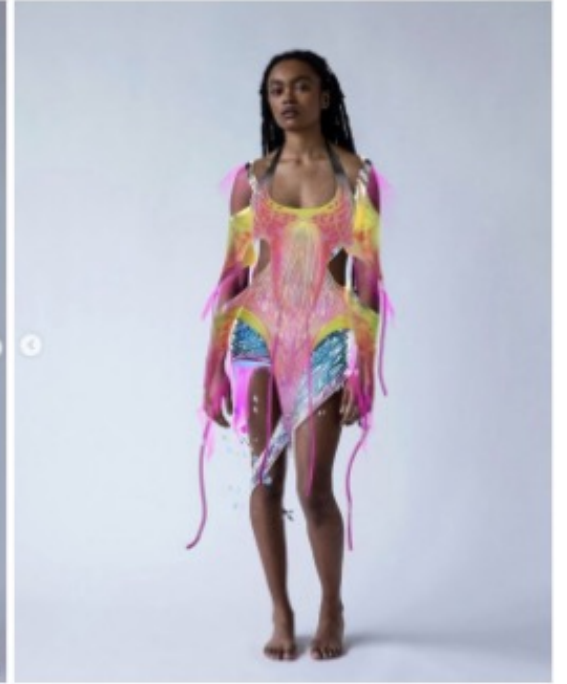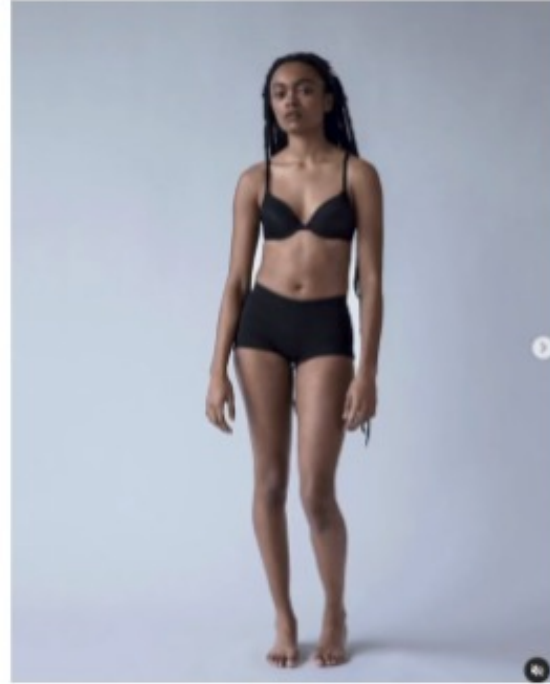
FASHION SHOW
$20,000

THE FABRICANT

DIGITAL FASHION HOUSE

https://www.thefabricant.com/