

The Women of *Harper's Bazaar*, 1936-1958

Lesson Plan – HDE 114 Styling of Fashion, Food and Home Products for the Visual Industry

Abstract: Using photography from the pages of *Harper's Bazaar* between 1936 and 1958 and garments from The Museum at FIT's collection, this lesson teaches students to analyze fashion photography, identify trends, and observe styling techniques used in the print medium from a historical perspective. Students will visit a museum exhibition, think critically about the objects they see, and create a fashion editorial for a contemporary magazine.

Grade/Level: General High School, grades 9-12

Subject: Visual Arts, Fashion Design, Fashion Styling

Time Required: **presentation:** 5 minutes; **tour:** 25 minutes; **project:** 1 hour **Total:** 1.5 hours

Materials Required: Magazines, paper, scissors, glue, markers

Educational Standards: New York State Learning Standards for Arts Education, grades 9-12 (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/arts/pub/sumart.html>)

- Standard 1: Creating, performing, and participating in the arts
Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.
- Standard 2: Knowing and using arts materials and resources
Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.
- Standard 3: Responding to and analyzing works of art
Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.
- Standard 4: Understanding the cultural dimensions and contributions of the arts
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Lesson Overview: Between 1936 and 1958, the creative collaboration among editor-in-chief Carmel Snow, fashion editor Diana Vreeland, and photographer Louise Dahl-Wolf turned *Harper's Bazaar* into the definitive American fashion magazine, one that Snow memorably described as a publication for, "the well-dressed women with the well-dressed mind." This lesson allows students to think critically about behind-the-scene collaboration at a seminal magazine, to explore the photography and garments highlighted in the magazine during this period, and to creatively present a styling plan for a fashion editorial in a contemporary magazine.

Lesson Objectives:

- Creative thinking about fashion editorials
- Contextualize historical inspirations
- Critical thinking and learning about fashion

Discussion Steps:

- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, December 1952 & Carolyn Schnurer top, 1952. Talk about American sportswear and the ease of casual clothing during this time.
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, June 1945. Talk about the model's pose and her sandals favored by Diana Vreeland.
- At the gallery – collaboration section: Color proof Louise Dahl-Wolfe, *Harper's Bazaar* cover, April 1958. Discuss how the floral hat was created by Diana Vreeland.
- At the gallery – color proofs from Arizona shoot, January 1942, Diana Vreeland styling Bijou Barrington, and resulting cover of *Harper's Bazaar*. Discuss the collaboration on this shoot and the act of styling – what is Vreeland doing? How does she interact with Barrington?
- At the gallery: Playsuit, Carolyn Schnurer. Discuss playsuits and casual American sportswear. Who wore this and to where?
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, May 1946 and Claire McCardell diaper swimsuit. Discuss why this swimsuit was different/noteworthy during the time. How is the model posed in the photograph?
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, 1952 & Claire McCardell “serape” photo and dress. Discuss McCardell's distinctive style and the cultural influences in this garment's fabric.
- At the gallery: color proof November 1947 of model wearing Dior “Mystere” coat and hat and Christian Dior New York coat on display. Discuss how the garment was styled – is the green dress underneath really a dress, or is it made to look as if it is for the desired effect? What creative liberties are taken to create the desired effect in the editorial image?
- Ask the students questions related to fashion styling throughout the tour:
 - What trends are visible in different clothing categories: sportswear, suiting, evening wear?
 - How do you think the stylist and the model and the photographer interacted during a fashion shoot? Is any particular person in charge?
 - Many of the photographs were taken outdoors. How does the location of the fashion shoot influence the overall feeling of the image? How are the clothes styled in different seasons?
 - How would people during this time learn about new fashions?

Activities/Projects: Students will return to the classroom after the tour of the exhibition and will be asked to style a fashion shoot for a contemporary magazine using cut outs from assorted contemporary magazines. Students should reflect on the techniques they observed during the exhibition tour, such as lighting, setting, and accessories.

Assignment:

- Students must decide which magazine they imagine would feature their editorial
- Students will style a photo shoot, considering:
 - Garments
 - Accessories
 - Hair
 - Makeup
 - Background image/setting/location
- Students will create a collage/mood board presenting their ideas

Assessment:

- Students will present and discuss their mood board in class and will discuss:
 - What magazine did they choose for their editorial and why?
 - Why they chose the setting – indoor/studio or outdoor?
 - Why did they choose accessories and hair and make-up?
 - Which models would be used in this photo shoot and why?

Relevant Vocabulary

- **Copper Plate** – copper-based, color photographic printing process patented in 1852, involving etched copper plates for each color (e.g. blue, red, yellow, black), printed onto paper using a graphic press, creating high-quality reproductions at a reasonable cost
- **Kodachrome** – the first widely used color film launched by Kodak in 1935
- **Mood board** – an arrangement of images, materials, text, color swatches, etc. intended to conjure a concept or style
- **Proof** – positive print of a photographic negative, often used to check the content and color of a photograph before it is printed in a publication

See Resources List for Suggested Bibliography for Further Reading

The Women of *Harper's Bazaar*, 1936-1958
Lesson Plan – HFM 060 Fashion Forecasting: Seeing into the Future

Abstract: Using photography from the pages of *Harper's Bazaar* between 1936 and 1958 and garments from The Museum at FIT's collection, this lesson teaches students to analyze fashion photography, identify trends, and observe styling techniques used in the print medium from a historical perspective. Students will visit a museum exhibition, think critically about the objects they see, and create a mood board.

Grade/Level: General High School, grades 9-12

Subject: Visual Arts, Fashion Business, Fashion Merchandising

Time Required: presentation: 5 minutes; **tour:** 25 minutes; **project:** 1 hour **Total:** 1.5 hours

Materials Required: Magazines, paper, scissors, glue, markers

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Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles.
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Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought.
- Standard 4: Understanding the cultural dimensions and contributions of the arts
Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society.

Lesson Overview: Between 1936 and 1958, the creative collaboration among editor-in-chief Carmel Snow, fashion editor Diana Vreeland, and photographer Louise Dahl-Wolf turned *Harper's Bazaar* into the definitive American fashion magazine, one that Snow memorably described as a publication for, "the well-dressed women with the well-dressed mind." This lesson allows students to think critically about behind-the-scene collaboration at a seminal magazine, to explore the photography and garments highlighted in the magazine during this period, and to creatively present a mood board for potential buyers for various womenswear markets.

Lesson Objectives:

- Creative thinking about fashion editorials
- Contextualizing historic fashion trends
- Critical thinking and learning about fashion

Discussion Steps:

- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, December 1952 & Carolyn Schnurer top, 1952. Talk about American sportswear and ease of casual clothing during this time.
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, June 1945. Talk about the model's pose and her sandals favored by Diana Vreeland.
- At the gallery: color proofs from Arizona shoot, January 1942, Diana Vreeland styling Bijou Barrington, and resulting cover of *Harper's Bazaar*. Discuss the collaboration on this shoot and the act of styling – what is Vreeland doing?
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, May 1946 and Claire McCardell diaper swimsuit. Discuss why this swimsuit was different/noteworthy during the time.
- At the gallery: Playsuit, Carolyn Schnurer. Discuss playsuits and casual American sportswear.
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, 1952 & Claire McCardell “serape” photo and dress. Discuss McCardell's distinctive style and the cultural influences in this garment's fabric.
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, 1949 & Mainbocher ensemble. Talk about how the day suit differs from the prior three examples of sportswear. Where would a woman wear such a suit?
- At the gallery: color proof, Louise Dahl-Wolfe, April 1947 & Charles James evening gown. How did the magazine represent the structural elements of evening wear?
- Ask the students questions related to fashion markets throughout the tour:
 - What trends are visible in different clothing categories: sportswear, suiting, evening wear
 - Who purchased these different types of clothes in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s?
 - Where would they buy their clothes?
 - How would people during this time learn about new fashions?

Activities/Projects: Students will return to the classroom after the tour of the exhibition and will be asked to create a mood board for potential clients. A **mood board** is an arrangement of images, materials, text, color swatches, etc. intended to conjure a concept or style. Students will act as a fashion firm, presenting ideas to clients based upon styles they observed during the exhibition tour, such as sportswear, suits/workwear, outerwear, and eveningwear.

Assignment: students will create a mood board using cut outs from assorted contemporary magazines, considering:

- Various markets: sportswear, formal wear: prom, weddings
- Target audience: age, gender, etc.
- Brand identity such as J. Crew, Nasty Gal, Zara, Forever 21

Assessment:

- Students will present their mood board in class
- Students will discuss:
 - What type of person will buy these clothes? What is her age? Occupation?
 - Where will these clothes be worn?
 - Why did they choose accessories and hair and make-up?
 - What historical influences do they see in contemporary fashions used in their mood board?

Relevant Vocabulary

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The Women of *Harper's Bazaar*, 1936-1958
Lesson Plan – HFM 064: The Ins and Outs of Fashion Merchandising

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