



Fashion: A Philosophy

Lars Svendsen

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Donatella Versace and Jean-Paul Gaultier, Yves Saint Laurent and Giorgio Armani, Dolce & Gabbana and Gucci: fashion is at once a familiar yet mysteriously elite world that we all experience, whether we're buying a new pair of jeans, reading Vogue, or watching the latest episode of America's Next Top Model. Lars Svendsen dives into this world in "Fashion: A Philosophy", exploring the myths, ideas, and history that makes up haute couture, the must-have trends over the centuries, and the very concept of fashion itself. "Fashion" opens with an exploration of all the possible meanings encompassed by the word 'fashion', as Svendsen probes its elusive place in art, politics, and history. Ultimately, however, he focuses on the most notable type of fashion: clothing. With his trademark dry wit, he deftly dismantles many of the axioms of the industry and its supporters. For example, he points out that some of the latest fashions shown on catwalks aren't actually 'fashionable' in any sense of the word, arguing that they're more akin to modern art works, and he argues against the increasingly popular idea that plastic surgery and body modification are part of a new wave of consumerism. Svendsen draws upon the writings of thinkers from Adam Smith to Roland Barthes to analyse fashion as both a historical phenomenon and a philosophy of aesthetics. Whether critiquing a relentless media culture that promotes perfect bodies or parsing the never-ending debate over the merits of conformity versus individual style, Lars Svendsen offers an engaging and intriguing analysis of fashion and the motivations behind its constant pursuit for the new.

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