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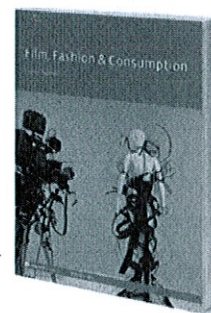
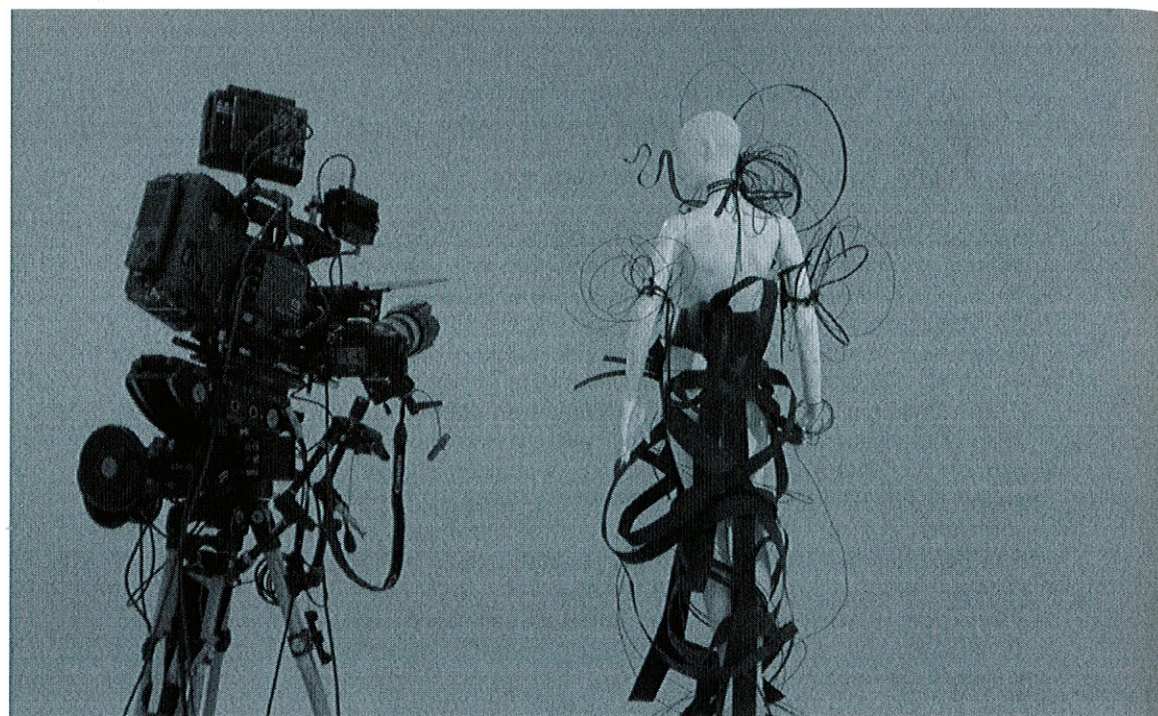
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ROSIE FINDLAY
University of Sydney

At one remove from reality: Style bloggers and outfit posts

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the outfit post – a defining feature of personal style blogs – has changed the seeing and being seen of dressing. What was once primarily a corporeal and temporal social practice has developed into a performed virtual reality in which style bloggers literally fashion their identity on their blogs. Style blogs thus become both the space in which bloggers realize their own fashioned self and the site at which their readers experience them as stylish. These blogs have become a place for the display of the new and a realization of the imaginary, as well as a site to record 'what I wore'. This article explores the phenomenon of outfit posts, focusing on the interanimation therein between bloggers' styled selves and their clothing. Central to this discussion will be a consideration of the ways that outfit posts are both performative and expressive presentations of self.

It is the middle of a Tuesday afternoon and I am standing in my garden in fuchsia rubber gumboots by Hunter and a vintage silk chiffon dress, trying to decide which pose to employ. My mind is flicking through a catalogue of those seemingly arbitrary poses that have almost become stock in trade on the style blogosphere. The are-they-my-shoes? downward gaze. The mid-street crouch in heels. The statuesque stare into the sunset. The self-timer on my camera is beeping now, telling me I have mere

KEYWORDS

style blogs
outfit posts
fashion
style
fashion photography
online embodiment

1. An example in which this removal from context makes bloggerisms seem bizarre is on the satirical French blog *Le Petit Echo Malade*, <http://lepetitechomalade.com>. Lorenzo Papace and Vincent Pianina, the bloggers behind this site, parody the photographs of French-style bloggers to an extremely humorous effect. They imitate the visual style and outfits of various bloggers while their bearded, solemn faces belie the fanciful photographs they recreate on their own blog.

2. This article was originally published in French; I am grateful to Amy Ireland for her translation.

seconds to fold myself into a shape to show this eccentric garment to its best advantage. Okay, okay: got it.

*My palms enclose my waist as I suck in my stomach as tightly as I can whilst sticking my elbows out at right angles from my torso. As I hold my *Gone With The Wind*-worthy hourglass together with my hands, I stretch out my neck and laugh into the middle distance so that my face looks animated, trying in some small way to counteract the bizarre arrangement of the rest of my embodied self. I call this pose the 'my-hands-are-a-corset-which-makes-me-laugh ... over-there.'*

I hold this position as my camera silently flashes three times. As soon as the sequence is over I breathe out in relief, striding past the props I've scattered around the place towards the tripod to review the shots. I scan each image, checking the focus and framing as well as their detail – how clearly the garments can be seen, how interesting the image is, and (I'll be honest) how nice I look. I am relieved: they are good enough. I fold up my tripod and pull my earrings out as I walk inside, ready to connect the camera to my laptop and upload the best of these photographs onto my blog.

This article provides a brief definition of outfit posts, by mapping the ways in which these facilitate public, informal and creative means for bloggers to interact with fashion. It will outline some of the criticism levelled at style blogs – namely the alleged narcissism of bloggers displayed in the practice of taking photos of themselves – and offer a reading of why engaging in this practice is rather both a meaningful activity for bloggers and one that is congruent with the fashion media's established means of communication of the fashion product. This article will also examine an outfit post by fashiontoast's Rumi Neely to demonstrate the ways in which such sites are texts wherein fashion's image blurs with the embodied selfhood of style bloggers.

It is a strange thing to do, and I am conscious of this every time I fold my body into the same familiar poses. Superblogger Susie Bubble calls them 'bloggerisms' (2010) and they are instantly recognizable to anyone who has seen a style blog. They are an embodied means of displaying one's clothes on the style blogosphere, a stylized display of dressed selfhood that seems arbitrary and wooden when exhibited outside the context of a style blog,¹ but which can be understood as a metaphor for the practice itself – a simulacrum of the conventions of the established fashion media (in this case, posing for a kind of fashion photography) subverted by the central presence of an amateur, highly individualized subject, the style blogger.

Style blogs are a particular kind of fashion-based weblog, an online platform for the regular publication (or 'posting') of short texts, images and videos, created and maintained by an individual (a 'blogger'). Due to their conversational tone and highly personalized design, blogs have become identified with highly individualized, informal, subjective and publicly expressed perspectives; it is a 'genre of "chatter", the "little stories" proper to postmodernity' (Maffesoli cited in Rocamora and Bartlett 2009: 106).² Most blogs have a central identifying theme around which the majority of the content is organized, be it politics, food, motherhood, music, the daily life of the blogger or, in this case, fashion and personal style.

The focus of this article is the blur between reality and the imaginary, between bloggers and their clothes, at work on style blogs. This 'interanimation' (term from Basso 1996: 55) is of fundamental importance on blogs such as these, primarily concerned, as they are, with a blogger's personal style and their individual perspective on fashion as constituted in their own life; or at least that life as represented on the blogosphere. I will position outfit posts in relation to the wider field of fashion photography and demonstrate how

bloggers have created a personalized space, reading their practice as an embodied, highly manipulated, public, speaking into style.

Style blogs first began to appear on the 'blogosphere' in mid-2003 (Rocamora and Bartlett 2009: 103), and their number has grown exponentially over the past eight years. It is hard to ascertain how many style blogs there are currently, as most studies (such as those conducted by blog surveying and tracking website Technorati Inc.) tend to group all fashion, shopping and personal style blogs in the same category. However, as a means of indicating their volume, Technorati Inc. reported that there were two million fashion-related blogs as of 2006 (Corcoran 2006: 30). Some of the most popular style blogs receive many thousands of hits a day (a 'hit' is the term for when a blog is viewed): Susie Bubble's *Style Bubble* receives approximately 25,000 visitors a day, whereas the *Wall Street Journal* reported that as of January 2011, Bryanboy, the style blog of Bryan Grey-Yambao, attracted up to 140,000 daily hits (Kansara 2011; Yan 2011).

There is a small though steadily increasing body of literature on style blogging, and it tends to range greatly in theoretical focus. Rocamora and Bartlett's article 'Fashion Blogs: New Spaces in Fashion Discourse' (2009) offers a comprehensive framework of fashion blogging. The authors draw out three 'constitutive pillars' of blogging: blogs as texts, bloggers and their readers, as well as analysing fashion blogs as both conversational and commonplace. Other scholarly writing seems to either read style blogging through a lens of media studies – in which style blogs are a form of amateur citizen fashion journalism issuing a challenge to 'the tyrannical fashion message' by virtue of its very existence (Allen 2009: 3) – or of sociology, which analyses style blogs as a space in which teenaged bloggers can constitute different identities to be affirmed by their online peers, enabling them to accrue social and cultural capital, which they parlay into their off-line social lives (see Allen 2009; George 2009; Chittenden 2010). The visual display inherent in outfit posting might also be read as an example of bloggers 'signalling' their knowledge of fashion to one another. This term derives from Pesendorfer (1995) whereby people signify their position in a hierarchy of fashion knowledge by maintaining a level of dress, thus indicating that they have the knowledge and material means to remain at the 'forefront' of fashion. Whilst these perspectives offer interesting insights into style blogging, what is often overlooked by such research is the interanimation between clothing and the online selfhood of style bloggers, an aspect of the practice that is key to the construction and communication of the embodied, styled selfhoods literally at the centre of each style blog.

Style blogs, like the other fashion blogs, 'blend written work with images [...] and privilege a spontaneous tone grounded in subjectivity and irreverence' (Rocamora 2009: 107). Their content usually comprises reposted images produced by the fashion industry (magazine editorials, advertisements for luxury labels and shots of catwalk looks), original images of the blogger dressed in garments of their choice and discussion about their life in general and, more specifically, about their interest in and opinions on fashion. Bloggers make no claim to objectivity; unlike industry-based fashion blogs (such as those run by magazines, labels or fashion critics), their blogs represent only their own opinion. This is evident in the words of self-professed 'fashion geek' Susie Bubble, who said of starting her own blog:

I want(ed) to keep it quite personal. By personal, I don't mean that in a 'Dear Diary' kind of way but I mean *Style Bubble* is about blogging my

own observations, thoughts and experiences in fashion, making use of my daily fashion life, in the shops that I encounter, the trends that I try, the ups and downs of my style, the designers that I come across.
(Independent Fashion Bloggers 2008)

There are other fashion blogs with amateur and personally curated content: for example, 'streetstyle' photography blogs in which often-untrained photographers take images of stylish individuals who they encounter on the street. However, the focus of these blogs is on the person being photographed, rather than on the photographers themselves. While these blogs are organized by the eye of the photographer and it is their sense of style that is being demonstrated as much as that of the subjects in the photographs, the intimacy of personal revelation and representation that is evident on style blogs is not present on those exhibiting streetstyle.

The key difference, then, between fashion blogs in general and personal style blogs is that the content of style blogs is in a dialogic relationship with the blogger, simultaneously expressing their interests to their audience whilst reflecting who they feel they are back to themselves. In this way, the content of a style blog metaphorically clads the online selfhood of a blogger even as they depict images of themselves as clad for their followers. Moreover, as well as being highly subjective, fashion on a style blog is reframed within the blogger's personal sphere and acts as an indicator of what they appreciate and who they feel themselves to be. This personal reframing of fashion is most evident in outfit posts.

Outfit posts have been a key feature of style blogs since they began to appear on the blogosphere, and the subjective account at the beginning of this article illuminates some of their conventions. These include a blogger styling a range of garments and accessories from their own clothing (and, increasingly, clothes that are sent to them by labels and promotional companies) and assuming a series of poses for multiple photographs, which they then edit and upload onto their blog. Bloggers often cite the designer or provenance of the garments they are wearing in their images and usually write some brief accompanying text about their clothing style or their recent activities. Originally a catalogue of the blogger's daily garment and accessories, the use of the phrase 'what I wore' or 'today's outfit' in the title or text of these posts customarily alluded to a temporal context. Over time, this quotidian display has transformed into a presentation of a garment styled for the specific purpose of photographing and uploading. They have thus evolved into a discrete genre, less diaristic than presentational. It has also become common for bloggers to not directly mention how the choice of garments related to the day on which the photos were taken, leaving it up to the reader to form a narrative around the images. The photography of outfit posts, then, much like fashion photography in general, is 'a record of fashions but it is not about fashions. It is about appearances that fascinate' (Sontag in Angeletti and Oliva 2006: 210); namely, it is about the appearance of the blogger as styled and inviting our engaged observation.

Perhaps it is for this reason – the undisguised direction of attention by style bloggers to themselves – that outfit posting has been construed as vanity by critics external to the fashion industry and as amateurism by those within it (see Always Sometimes Anytime 2011; Burvill 2011; Fashionologie 2010; Goldsmith 2010; Sozzani 2011). These generally antipathetic sentiments could be summarized by *Vogue Italia* Editor-in-Chief Franca Sozzani,

who called the increasing attendance of style bloggers at industry events an 'invasion', asking on her own blog 'do we need all these bloggers? They don't offer an opinion but only talk about themselves, take their own pictures wearing absurd clothing. What's the point?' (2011). Despite her pejorative tone, Sozzani is correct in identifying that style bloggers 'only talk about themselves'. To answer her question: that itself is the point. For Susie Bubble, her blog is a site at which she can share her 'daily fashion life', and Tavi Gevinson's blog *Style Rookie* provides her with a means to explore her style (2009). The 'point' of style blogging, if a single point can be identified in this complex practice, is to literally dress yourself into view. That is not to say that being seen is the only motivation, but that the practice of style blogging gives bloggers a means to express something of who they are, to share this with readers and, by doing so, to engage with the conventions of modern fashion; that is, to assert a fashionable and specific presence through visual representation. In this way, style bloggers' consciously fashioned selves, as presented in outfit posts, are inextricably bound to specific ideas about fashion; the 'who they are' in the context of their particular blog is not only *framed* by style, but *is* their style.

As previously mentioned, much of the existing scholarly research on style blogs has overlooked the complex ways that these posts allow their creators to construct and publicly present a stylish sartorial identity on the blogosphere. One article that does engage somewhat with the playful multiplicity of identity enabled by outfit posts is 'Posing my identity. Today's outfit, identity and gender in Swedish blogs' by Ann-Charlotte Palmgren. In this article, Palmgren argues that bloggers stage multiple identities instead of a singular identity, and that we, as a technologized society (of which bloggers constitute a part), employ media as a vehicle for defining both personal and cultural identity (2010: 19–20). She writes that on the style blogs she analysed, 'the blogger is the object of the photograph instead of the cloths [sic], at the same time as the choice of clothes can give a picture of the bloggers [sic] identity' (Palmgren 2010: 26). While this indicates an interesting dialectic – that the clothes visually portray a blogger's identity to a reader even as they are obscured by that very embodied identity – Palmgren does not elaborate on the how or why of that dialectic, choosing rather to visually analyse a number of blogs to demonstrate the fragmentary ways that bloggers photograph themselves. The very complex dialectic that Palmgren touches upon bears further elaboration: that it is the garments that bring the blogger into visibility on a style blog even as they, as objects, are subsumed into the style of the blogger wearing them. In other words, in terms of visual representation, where the blogger ends and where the clothes begin is blurred. There is a continuous flow back and forth between blogger-as-clothed-self and the clothes themselves, between the stylist and the style that they have created on themselves for that post.

The focus of this research, then, is the interanimation between clothing and embodied selfhood so often apparent in outfit posts. The term 'interanimation' is taken from Keith H. Basso's essay 'Wisdom sits in place: Notes on a western apache landscape', and is a term that he employs to describe the reciprocal flow of sentiment and perception between a person and the place that they apprehend. For Basso, 'as places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed' (1996: 55). In a similar way, the clothing someone wears is animated by the style and embodied selfhood

of the person within them even as that person is also animated as a result of being dressed in those particular clothes. The flow between interiority and exteriority that Basso explores in this article presents a striking parallel to the felt experience of wearing fashionable clothing, as evoked by Tavi Gevinson, when she wrote on her blog that,

I love it when I love my outfit and I walk from class to class and feel like I'm practically floating [...] And it makes me feel good, and being creative makes me feel good.

(2009)

I suggest, then, that rather than reading the blogger as anterior to their garments, it is useful to approach the depiction of clothes and blogger-in-clothes as an articulation of how they wish to be seen. The 'who they are' in an outfit post is inextricable from what they wear, because the only 'them' we as an audience can access on a blog is their clothed self as thus rendered visible to us.

This manner of visually presenting one's clothing is consistent with the fashion industry's preferred means of communicating knowledge about their product, which has traditionally favoured imagery over text. This primacy of the visual is evident in the way that new collections have always been revealed to consumers through various forms of visual media. From sketches of designs from Paris in the earliest fashion magazines to live catwalk presentations to fashion photography, pioneered by *Vogue* magazine (see Angeletti and Oliva 2006). The accompanying text often supports the image by giving detail about it – from a description of what is not visible in the image, such as in the early days of *Vogue*, to more contemporary proliferations: a programme for a catwalk show, which gives a brief context for the inspiration behind the collection and the name of each item, or a fashion magazine's exegesis of a collection or trend, which briefly outlines why it is the 'look' of the season and how it should be worn.

The aesthetics of 'outfit posts', although greatly varied, are visually contiguous with the conventions of these more established communications about the fashion product. Some bloggers emulate the photographic style of a 'look-book' (a selection of photographs presented together in a folio or booklet to show off a collection or model) by posing against a blank wall in their home or neighbourhood, mimicking the commercial conventions of the industry that would be familiar to them from accessing lookbooks in stores or online. Other bloggers engage in photo shoots on location in the style of a fashion editorial. Natural settings such as fields, woods or beaches are popular for these shoots, as are deserted urban landscapes like the middle of the street or a factory lot; as Susie Bubble jokes, there's 'nothing like a dose of natural light to show that outfits live beyond the walls' (2010). While the choices a blogger might make in terms of location, garments and accessories, lighting and so on are virtually endless, each outfit post features the same key components: a style blogger, clothed and positioned before our gaze. Of paramount importance on style blogs, as in fashion at large, is being seen. The implicit agreement operating throughout style blogs is that the blogger has an interesting personal style that we as the reader want to see, and which they as the blogger want to share. When style bloggers step in front of the camera, what they are showing us is 'them-in-their-clothes', an expression of self literally made material by their clothing.

This communicative, self-expressive capacity of dress is a fundamental argument of fashion theory. Yet often analyses of the communicative capacity of clothing focus on the ways that clothing speaks outwards to others (see Simmel 1971), or the ways that clothing brings its wearer's interiority into sight. Joanne Finkelstein argues as much when she writes that:

Fashion [...] is a new way of speaking the body, and freeing it from silence [...] It becomes a form of cultural expression, much like writing, which renders the interior exterior. The fashion garment makes the 'inside' the 'right side'.

(1998: 67–68)

The way this cultural expression is manifested in outfit posts, however, is beyond a simple external rendering of a pre-existing, stable interiority. Finkelstein implies here that the unclothed body is trapped and silent, which precludes the many kinds of expression made possible by having an embodied self. An alternative reading of the relationship between a person's embodied self and the dress that they choose is to see dressing as a temporally contextualized, visual foregrounding of aspects of that person's selfhood: a mutable, shifting representation that is as easily shed as donned. This reading derives from Butler's uptake of Merleau-Ponty, that the body is a historical idea gaining its meaning through a concrete and historically mediated expression in the world, and that it is a set of possibilities to be continually realized (1988: 521).

Outfit posts offer a record of this kind of continually realized selfhood in the form of their catalogued visual narrative, in which readers are able to observe and engage with the blogger's changing personal style. The reader shares in the bloggers' experiences as they go through phases of dress, rejecting previous incarnations of self and engaging a mutable exploration of how they want to be perceived – and how they want to perceive of themselves. The following excerpt from the blog *Style Rookie* illuminates these complexities of dress, identity and affect for its blogger Tavi Gevinson:

And I think that (being creative) is all I really want to do, and have ever wanted to do. The idea of being a mad eccentric who is constantly slipping into different skins is so appealing to me. I started this blog because I wanted to explore my style. Now I have more of an idea of what it is and will just continue to try and apply it every day.

(2009)

For Tavi, dressing is an exploration of an aspect of herself – her style – and a moment in which she both defines herself – 'a mad eccentric (capable of) slipping into different skins' – and enjoys her agency, both as she fulfils her desire to be creative and as that fulfilment makes her feel good. The notion of 'different skins' is interesting also as it connotes a shifting identity, a realization dependent on the multitude of factors and feelingfulness that shape how a person feels in a day. For style bloggers, this experientiality is somewhat captured and recorded in outfit posts, whether it is a 'what I wore' or an imaginative sartorial fantasy as they publicly perform their own expression of stylishness.

This public performance is a central feature of outfit posts; if dress was simply a matter of 'render(ing) the interior exterior' style bloggers could

presumably dress however they chose in their private lives and be satisfied. By choosing to upload photographs in the public domain, they move beyond the self-satisfying and temporally expressive potential of fashion to produce and assert themselves as a stylish presence before a potentially vast and engaged audience. In her seminal article 'On Photography', Susan Sontag argues that 'the gestures that create or inspire fashion are defined by camera. It is the photograph that confers celebrity, that makes something fashionable, that perpetuates and comments on the evolving idea – that is, the fantasy – of fashion' (Sontag in Angeletti and Oliva 2006: 211). In photographing themselves, style bloggers are making a claim to have style, and by choosing to upload these photographs in the public domain they move beyond the self-satisfying and temporally expressive potential of fashion to assert themselves as someone stylish to be seen. This is not overtly stated: the written content of the style blogosphere is surprisingly modest for a cluster of people whose work consistently draws the attention of others to their appearance. Rather, it is implicit in the activity itself: they make their image available to a vast, unknown audience, signifying through their command of our attention that the reader should look, that there is something to see.

That is not to say that being seen is the bloggers' only motivation. In response to the question of why she posts pictures of herself online, Grechen from Grechen Blogs wrote that,

(Style bloggers) love showing off (their) latest finds & styling abilities – it's all part of who we are. We are not attention-whores, our love of attention is not what defines us, but it does enable us to do what we do. I do it because I want to be an example for the women who find me online, or see me on the street, to be creative, and look outside the mall or magazine dos and don'ts for inspiration; I try to always wear one thing that will get a reaction. And my blog(s) are very personal – I've always written about what I love, and have been lucky enough to have an audience of women who love the same. It feels only natural to post pictures of myself in that context – how can you really 'know' a person without seeing pictures?

(2011)

This excerpt reveals the creative pleasure inherent for Grechen in outfit posting, as well as its capacity to foster intimacy with her readers. Implicit in this excerpt is the assertion that to see her is to know her; and on a style blog, to see is to see Grechen as clothed, Grechen *as seen through* her clothes, thus 'doing herself' (Butler 1988) as she presents herself to her readers. Judith Butler's performative account of identity – that the comportment of one's material body is fundamentally dramatic, and so one effectively 'does one's body' in an incessant production of self – is a useful counterpoint to Finkelstein's conception of an interior being folded out. Rather, outfit posting allows Grechen to foreground aspects of her selfhood, as well as enabling her to connect with her readers, a mediated and specific kind of realization of self made possible by having a blog.

Moreover, if the body is a set of possibilities to be continually realized, gaining its meaning through its expression in the world, then these online identities can be read as perpetual realizations of a particular aspect of bloggers' selves. I say 'aspect' because the identity at stake on a style blog is not that of the blogger as a complete individual but rather that of the

blogger as *fashionable*. The way that a blogger chooses to represent themselves through their sartorial choices and style speaks of how they see themselves and how they want others to see them. As such, style blogs are not tell-all journals in which the person of the blogger is metaphorically laid bare, but rather a specific frame through which the reader sees an aspect of their selfhood – their sense of themselves as it relates to fashion and style – and outfit posts are the technological lenses through which these selves become visible.

Having outlined the conceptual underpinnings of style blogs – that to be seen, and seen as stylish, is the concern at work throughout outfit posting – I will now turn to a discussion of one of the most compelling aspects of outfit posts: the blurring of reality and imagination, of blogger and personal style at work in these posts.

There she is, unmistakable in what she will later dub the 'enchanted forest.' Where she actually is in terms of geographical location is a mystery but this is what we can see: Rumi Neely, blogger of fashiontoast, standing in the dappled sunlight, a solitary figure amongst fallen logs, green grass and the petrified fingers of winter-stripped trees which stand in contrast to her youthfulness. She wears short shorts, about half an inch from the high-waisted underwear that stylish girls wore as pants a couple of seasons ago. She also wears a floaty white top, the long sleeves balancing her bare legs. She wears Jeffrey Campbell boots on her feet, their black and sharp shape emphatic against the natural scene. She is anomalous in this environment. Even the short paragraph at the end of her post does not illuminate where she is or how she got there. Rather, it outlines the activities of her week, with no mention of this particular excursion. Her words are brief, in no way matching the detail of her series of images, and making no mention of the clothing she is wearing. Our attention is drawn to the images, her words indicating something of the 'who she is,' the 'she' we came to her blog to encounter in the first place.

This is a typical example of an outfit post. It is rare to find out their production details. The reader does not often learn the location of the bloggers' photographs, the name of the photographer or the bloggers' reasons for selecting a particular photographic location. What the reader is presented with are the images; the figure of a blogger, clothed and moving through a landscape without explanation, as if it is perfectly customary to wander through a wood in five-inch heeled boots and micro-shorts. What is interesting about this is that such occurrences are commonplace in mainstream fashion imagery: it is not unusual for editorials to stretch the possibilities of the human figure or situation in order – to use fashion parlance – to 'make a statement'. This is the manifestation of fashion's imaginary, the ambiguous realm where the disparate entities of fleshly body and ethereal imagery intertwine, and where the social functionality of clothing is separated from the freedom of form. Within the context of a fashion magazine, there is an implicit acknowledgement of the artifice of such spreads. This is evident in the way fashion magazines name the editorial photographer, make-up artist and stylist involved in creating the images, as well as the location of the shoot and the fashion designers. As consumers increasingly access fashion in online environments, it is also becoming more customary for magazines to produce behind-the-scenes footage of shoots, which they upload to further involve the reader in the creation of these fashion dreams.

Style blogs, on the other hand, rarely acknowledge the work behind the photography. Readers can assume that the post was planned, as the effort behind a carefully constructed shot is self-evident, yet these images are

presented as naturalized and effortless. This presentation is reinforced by bloggers' reticence to describe the equipment they use to create their posts, rarely mentioning it unless responding to their readers' direct enquiries. I am not suggesting that what is online is 'unreal' in contrast to the supposed 'realness' of off-line experience. Rather, as Jenny Sunden argues, the condition of being online is fundamentally constituted through mediation between an embodied self and a 'textual I'. This 'textual I' is a mythological self, constituted by the intersection of a styled outfit and the person of the blogger (2003). To read fashiontoast is to experience Rumi by the content through which she makes herself visible to the reader. However, the reader does not know the quotidian aspects of her post such as where she was or how she found the time to do such an unusual activity. So this is a styled Rumi separated from the functionality of dress: she is not attired for the practical requirements of the woods in which the reader encounters her. She celebrates the form of fashion: the contrast of her shorts with the green, the play of light in her hair, and the unusual sight of a girl in wedge boots precariously balancing on a log. She thus embodies the fashion image, the blurring between the embodiment and the appearance of clothes, presenting a selfhood that is as much imagined as real.

What is obscured is the contrast between the blogger's off-line lived experience of creating a blog and the online reality that they present. Instead, what the reader encounters in an outfit post is a collapse of temporality and liminality, as the blogger both poses in a 'real' location and evokes, through their photography, a fashioned 'other' place that they inhabit. So Rumi as a blogger who values style as a part of her persona blur with Rumi as a styled and stylish personality in this case study. To some degree, she is brought into being as the reader interprets her presence and style amongst the landscape in which she stands. So too does the material fixity of that very landscape shift and blur as Rumi simultaneously occupies four places. She has been photographed in a specific time at this geographical location, yet she is also an embodied presence in an imaginary setting of which she constitutes a 'natural' part; she occupies the space available on her blog, the empty screen upon which she has uploaded this fantastical expression of herself while she lives another embodied selfhood off-line, away from her blog and the readers who follow her. This is an example of the way that bloggers foreground their own styled image, one that is not constrained by temporality or the social constraints of clothing, but rather one that moves seemingly effortlessly through a landscape of their own imagining.

The alignment of outfit posts with the aesthetic conventions of fashion imagery, as well as the depiction of a self that is a blend of the imaginary and embodied reality, seems to be a new realization of the self-expressive and image-based potential of fashion. This finds unique expression in outfit posts as readers encounter an ambiguous blend of identifiable personhood, fashion fantasy and embodied on- and off-line realities. The outfit post's culmination of these mutable modes of being ultimately takes both bloggers and their readers into a new realm of engagement with fashion, one that is consistent with its self-expressive, fantastical elements, and one that is also intimate, embodied and utterly personal. This, perhaps, is the key contribution of, and opening offered by, the genre of style blogging: it presents the possibility of a mode of presenting one's self that both embodies fashion's imaginary whilst depicting an individual expression of style as felt by the blogger as they literally dress themselves into sight.

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CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Rosie Findlay is a Ph.D. student in the Performance Studies department at the University of Sydney. Her research is based on the intersection of style blogs, fashion and the Internet, and draws from a vast range of theoretical fields including fashion theory, new media studies, phenomenology and cultural studies. She is particularly interested in the interrelation on style blogs between fashion's image and the embodied self of the blogger. She graduated with a B.A. (Adv.) with Honours in Performance Studies from the University of Sydney in 2007. She blogs at <http://fashademic.blogspot.com>

Contact: 47 Ferndale St Newtown, NSW 2042, Australia.
E-mail: rfin3042@uni.sydney.edu.au
