Mask, Mannequin, and the Modern Woman: Surrealism and the Fashion Photographs of George Hoyningen-Huene

Hillary Anne Carman
Brigham Young University - Provo

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Mask, Mannequin, and the Modern Woman:  
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George Hoyningen-Huene

Hillary Anne Carman

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

Heather Belnap Jensen, Chair  
Daryl P. Lee  
James R. Swensen

Department of Visual Arts  
Brigham Young University  
March 2013

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ABSTRACT

Mask, Mannequin, and the Modern Woman: Surrealism and the Fashion Photographs of George Hoyningen-Huene

Hillary Anne Carman
Department of Visual Arts, BYU
Master of Arts

In this thesis I consider photographs of the mannequin by Vogue’s fashion photographer, George Hoyningen-Huene. Little scholarship has been written on Huene, as well as many other fashion photographers of the twentieth century. I examine four of Huene’s works and his appropriation of the surrealist aesthetic, specifically the use of the mask and mannequin, which were directed at female spectators during the interwar atmosphere and development of the identity of the interwar modern woman. These images include Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson (1933), Antoine with One of His Creations (1933), Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans (1934) and Mauboussin Diamond-and-Topaz Corsage Clip, Mannequin by Pierre Imans (1934). I argue that his use of the mask and mannequin legitimates his work as he draws from the artistic milieu of nineteenth and twentieth-century high art.

My survey describes photography’s theoretical affinities with fashion and surrealism, the surrealist aesthetic and Huene’s adoption of it in his fashion photographs of the mannequin, primitivism and Huene’s adoption of high art themes and use of the mask, the interwar modern woman in a consumer society, female spectatorship and Huene’s surrealist images functioning through a female gaze.

Keywords: George Hoyningen-Huene, fashion photography, surrealism, twentieth-century photography, Vogue
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With few exceptions, fashion photographers have been ignored by art historians of the twentieth century. Art historians have, however, studied the connections between art and fashion that developed through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the fashion industry has been addressed as relevant to art history because it is an integral part of visual culture. One example of an art movement influencing the fashion industry was the surrealist movement in the 1920s and 1930s. As the aesthetic of the surrealist movement gained popularity, the use of that aesthetic in popular culture became more evident, especially in fashion publications.

George Hoyningen-Huene, born in Russia to German and American parents, began his career in fashion as a sketch-artist, working for his sister’s dressmaking business. He began working for *Vogue* in 1925 in Paris, and it was there that he developed his talents as a photographer, becoming French *Vogue*’s leading photographer in the late 1920s and early 1930s. *Vogue*, the first illustrated magazine, featured photographic publications that resembled portrait painting, setting for itself a precedent of referring to high art in order to establish legitimacy. Much of Huene’s fashion work uses what seem to be classical Greek sculptures and Roman-like busts and portraits placed next to live models striking elegant poses in an attempt to legitimate his work. In this thesis, I will examine four of Huene’s works and his appropriation of the surrealist aesthetic, specifically the use of the mask and mannequin, which was directed at a female audience during the formation of the identity of the interwar modern woman. These images include *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson* (1933), *Antoine with One of His Creations* (1933), *Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans* (1934), and *Mauboussin*.

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1 Charles Frederick Worth, the father of haute couture, conflated the boundaries between fashion and art when he said, “I am a great artist; I have Delacroix’s sense of color and I compose. A toilette is as good as a painting.” Quoted in Marie Simon, “Art and Fashion,” in *Fashion in Art: The Second Empire and Impressionism* (Paris: Philip Wilson Publishers, 1995), 128.
Diamond-and-Topaz Corsage Clip, Mannequin by Pierre Imans (1934). I will argue that Huene’s use of the mask and mannequin legitimates his work as he draws from the artistic conversation of nineteenth and twentieth century modern high art, and that mask and mannequin are representative of desire – not only of the female body in art, but other kinds of desire, as well.

Little scholarship has been written on George Hoyningen-Huene save for one thorough biographical book by William A. Ewing.5 Huene is mentioned in several articles, which note his fashion photography, his portraits of socialites, and his documentary-style photographs of Africa and Greece. The deepest analysis of his photographs remains superficial overall, focusing mainly on his elegant, classically inspired photographs. However, no one has of yet dealt with his few photographs of the strange mannequin heads, works which seem out of place in Huene’s oeuvre. The lack of theoretical analysis of his work in general, and the absolute dearth of discussion of his mannequin and mask imagery, inspired this research, which will add to the growing academic investigation into the relationship between art and fashion photography.

Huene was part of an increasing contingency of photographers engaging in the modernist aesthetic. Huene’s work, owed something to Edward Steichen, an American photographer who worked for Vogue the previous decade.6 American artists like Steichen, Alfred Stieglitz, and Charles Sheeler propagated the modern aesthetic in their photography and Steichen not only influenced Huene directly, but Man Ray as well. Before Man Ray moved to Paris in 1921, he was in New York where Stieglitz’s Gallery 291 played an important part in the construction of modern art and aesthetic and a setting that featured much of Steichen’s photography. This was a

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5 It is also important to establish that there is no online, accessible archive for French Vogue, specifically. It is acknowledged, however, that there was a great deal of exchange between American, British, and French Vogue and that Huene was the chief photographer for French Vogue during 1920s and 1930s. Most of the cover designs, for example, were used in all three magazines. William Packer, The Art of Vogue Covers, (New York: Bonanza Books, 1980), 5.
venue where Man Ray saw a great deal of modern photography and was influenced by many of Stieglitz’s shows.7

Although Huene ran in circles of the high art world surrounded by artists of various movements, such as Jean Renoir, Salvador Dali, and André Derain, his most obvious link to surrealism was his friendship with the artist, Man Ray, the American expatriate.8 In 1925 Huene and Man Ray impressed Main Bocher, *Vogue*’s Paris fashion editor, with a portfolio they had made together. Bocher arranged for Huene to interview with Edna Woolman Chase, then the editor-in-chief of *Vogue*, Huene was given a job and he claims to have constantly promoted Man Ray for work there.9

Surrealists naturally adopted photography because of its uncanny nature, manipulating the medium’s capacity for contradicting the viewer’s expectation of reality. Indeed, photographic images are false on the level of perception because they pretend to be something other than they are – an image of a woman is not a woman. It is, in the words of Barthes, a “new form of hallucination . . . a temporal hallucination, a shared hallucination – it is not there, but it has been.”10 In fact, these hallucinogenic images barely scratch authenticity and thus the play between scientific reality and dream-like hallucination make photography the perfect medium for surrealism.

The written word is likewise closely associated with surrealist ideas as well as fashion magazines. Surrealists understood photographs as textual products and therefore utilized

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8 Huene was part of the artistic atmosphere of the 1920s Paris café culture. He was friends with Kiki de Montparnasse, Jean Renoir, dadaists, expressionists, and romantics. He knew painters like Joan Miró, Salvador Dali, André Derain, designers like Paul Poiret, Rik Charell, and Coco Chanel, writers and thinkers like Jean Cocteau, and performers like Josephine Baker and Suzy Solidor. Ewing, 31.
photography as a form of automatic writing. The text associated with photographs is the caption in both surrealist and fashion publications, and scholar Rosalind Krauss states that the caption interprets the “muteness of the photographic sign.”\textsuperscript{11} While Roland Barthes asserts that the caption supports and reinforces the image in advertising, the text does not function in the same way with surrealist photographs.\textsuperscript{12}

While the image as text is important, the actual written text in the fashion magazine became increasingly infrequent during the interwar period. After World War I, there was a huge increase in ad revenue, embodying the shift in woman’s magazines from being a read journal to a visual experience. In this period, the woman’s magazine facilitated in the tying and synchronizing of the industrial sphere with the domestic sphere. The magazine began to construct an “audience of spectators and by extension, consumers.”\textsuperscript{13} This important change in the viewers of art, from spectators to consumers, was a critical shift in the interwar period, and gives a deeper context to the art of Hoyningen-Huene.

Walter Benjamin, German philosopher, contemporary of the surrealists and one of their foremost critics and compatriots, states that photography is transitory and repeatable. Photography captures a fleeting moment in time so the viewer sees an image that once was, but is no longer. Photography is also easily mass-produced and easily reproduced, unlike the auratic original paintings and sculptures that he considered high art. Dreams, a foundation of surrealist theory because of their use in psychoanalysis, are also ephemeral and transitory by nature and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Krauss and Livingston, 25.
\end{itemize}
often repeat themselves. This connection between surrealist theory and photography theory make photography a natural and advantageous medium for surrealist artists.

The concept of consuming a desired object was a common link between surrealist and fashion photography. The photograph is difficult to discuss because it is never distinguished or separated from its referent, and the photograph, according to Roland Barthes, cannot be separated from its referent without being destroyed.\(^{14}\) He asserts that the photograph is always invisible to the viewer because we cannot or do not see it; rather, we see the referent, or the desired object.\(^ {15}\) The photograph itself is consumable, and it can simultaneously refer to an actual consumer good to be purchased or even simply desired. The consumption characteristic of both surrealism and fashion photography (of the female body or of the advertised product) speaks to John Berger’s ideas of ownership over the depicted, two-dimensional object, which is facilitated by the invisibility of the photograph leaving only the object of desire visible.\(^ {16}\)

Because of the photograph’s commodification and its replaceability, photography became the natural medium for fashion publications in the twentieth century. While taking a photo, the camera takes raw materials, or the subject, and turns them into a finished product that possesses exchange value; a picture that becomes a commodity.\(^ {17}\) Similarly, fashion is almost synonymous with change. Styles are constantly adapting and changing with every season, and fashion magazines promote something new in every edition, often published monthly or even more frequently. Fashion is also meant to be reproducible and available to the masses. In these ways fashion and surrealism both naturally adopt photography as a primary medium, taking advantage of its transitory and reproducible nature. This is a world where “only images exist.”

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\(^{14}\) Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 5-6.
\(^{15}\) Ibid, 7.
images are reproducible and consumable and make photography the perfect medium for fashion. The obvious link between surrealist and fashion in their common use of photography as a primary medium demands a closer inspection of the ways in which the two interact. I maintain that Huene, as a fashion photographer, looked to the style of surrealist photography and the aesthetic that it promotes in order to establish himself artistically.

In general, the surrealist movement was dominated by an aesthetic of the uncanny described by many surrealists as an attempt to reach a deeper truth by tapping into the subconscious. The term ‘uncanny’ developed in the 1770s and meant “not quite safe to trust.” The uncanny is something that is strangely familiar, and yet unfamiliar and as such can create fascination. Freud’s highly influential essay on the uncanny describes it as a tremendously unsettling sense of horror and dread, which is induced by repressed memories, desire, and fear. It is something acutely familiar to the mind, and simultaneously estranged from it due to repression. Therefore, viewers are entranced and fascinated by the sight and feeling of the uncanny, while at the same time repulsed and terrified of it. Early twentieth century fashion photographers, like Huene, Man Ray, Horst P. Horst, Cecil Beaton, Erwin Blumenfeld, and others, indulged in the creation of disconcerting imagery, such as the use of strange perspectives, mirrors, or the play of enigmatic simulacra like the mannequin, often creating shocking juxtapositions, all of which engage the uncanny. The mannequin, in fashion and surrealist

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18 Barthes, Camera Ludica, 118.
21 Ibid, 272.
photography, embodies the unnatural aesthetic of strange glamour. As a result of this attraction to the uncanny, many surrealist and fashion images take on a strange, dream-like quality, both familiar and unfamiliar, that became common during the time. The popularity of the surrealist aesthetic gave rise to its eventual proliferation in the world of fashion.

The mannequin served as the perfect surrealist subject matter because, as Freud himself, declared, it was the most uncanny of objects. The mannequin, confused between the animate and inanimate, male and female, life and death, sexualized and sexless, human and machine, is familiar and unfamiliar. It fascinates and it terrifies. The mannequin represents dismemberment, fetishization and death. On the other hand, the mannequin, being merely a simulacrum of life, does not undergo symbolic death as a sitter does, because it was never alive. Its similarity to the living model is both intriguing and practical for surrealist and fashion photographers alike, as is the dichotomy of life and death, sex and sexless.

Images of mannequins and masks in artistic portrayals, important to the development of the surrealist aesthetic, were not without precedent – they provided the subject matter for several artists and movements prior to surrealism. Paris was a crossroads and the center of art in Europe before and during this period. The Italian metaphysical movement began in Paris as a literary movement. The metaphysical school, and artist Giorgio de Chirico in particular, utilized the mannequin in much of its painting and drawing. De Chirico’s sketch, *The Duet* (1917) incorporates two mannequins with idealized, yet machine-like physiques (Fig. 1). Architectural tools emphasize their objectness while intestines threaten to fall out of one mannequin’s abdomen, revealing their life-likeness. Carlo Carrà’s painting *Il Gentiluomo Briaco* (The

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*Drunken Gentleman, 1916* exhibits a white, sculptural, and elongated head removed from a body, a precursor the Huene’s images and also painting mannequins that resemble dress forms from shop windows (Fig. 2). Modern artists in Paris were known for paintings and sculptures of disembodied and mask-like heads, such as Constantin Brancusi’s *Mademoiselle Pogany*, from 1913, or Modigliani’s many abstracted and repeated female heads in his paintings and mask-like faces in his sculptures from the same period (Fig. 3). Masks and mannequins inherently provide confusion between familiar liveliness and plastic death, and were repeatedly used during the time period as subjects in high art, providing an established tradition from which Huene would draw.

In the twentieth century, masks and mannequins were depicted frequently in European art to make humanity seem strange, unfeeling, and nameless as a commentary on the horror of World War I and its effects. Artists a part of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, or new objectivity, served in the German army, and had experienced the gruesome and shocking experiences of this war firsthand. In the 1920s, artists like Otto Dix and George Grosz created paintings and etchings that revealed the trauma and terror of war depicting mutilated, decapitated, and dismembered bodies, dummies with fractured bodies, automatons, prosthetics, and large, looming alien gas masks. The *Neue Sachlickeit* gives a violent precursor for Huene’s and surrealist images of the body, dummies, and masks depicted in macabre ways to reveal the anxiety of war and trauma.

As this macabre aesthetic became more popular, its presence in popular culture became more obvious. Many artists who were known for their influence in creating what became the surrealist aesthetic were, at various times, directly involved in or influential to the fashion industry. Huene created two photomontages for *Harper’s Bazaar* in 1935 that were obviously inspired by Max Ernst, using clothing by Elsa Schiaparelli, both of whom were important figures
of the surrealist movement. The influence of surrealism on the fashion industry, including fashion magazines, is unmistakable when one inspects the many issues of *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* in the 1930s that featured surrealist-inspired illustrations, and even the work of surrealist artists, such as Salvador Dalí and Man Ray. Surrealist painters Giorgio de Chirico and Pierre Roy were both commissioned to illustrate for *Vogue*. Huene’s involvement with a publication associated with important figures helps give credibility to his work as an artist.

Surrealism in advertising, whether noticed or not, was a popular aesthetic during the interwar period and one that Huene understood and employed. Sara Schneider suggests that surrealism may have been an easy and ideal style for advertising because it utilized the combination of the real with fantasy and dream, a natural facet of advertising, which displays images of objects or concepts that are not currently a part of the viewer’s reality. Phil Braham, in discussing the perception of reality with regards to the female body, which is often an object of desire in advertising, states that people have a certain expectation when they hear the word “nude,” which is to automatically think of women of a particular age, shape and attractiveness. Braham says that most of us are not even aware of this reflexive thinking, and that it happens below the radar screen of consciousness. This suggests viewers approach photographs of women with an expectation of what they will see – an expectation of beauty and femininity. However, what happens when they are confronted with an image that conflicts with their expectation? What happens when one turns the pages of a magazine filled with photographs of well-known models and actresses and suddenly see the detached head of a mannequin like Huene’s *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson* (Fig. 4)?

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26 Pass, 244.
27 Ibid, 294.
28 Schneider, 12.
This life-mask is of the proper age, she is beautiful, she has a stylish hair-do, thin eyebrows and a shapely mouth; however, she is a severed head. At first glance, it seems as if she is resting her head in her hand, but the hand is not a mannequin’s, it is flesh and bone and holding up a disembodied, plastic head, thus conjuring up ideas of masks and jarring violence, a juxtaposition that fits well with the surrealists’ notions of the uncanny. Mark Sandberg makes a noteworthy point when he says that mannequins generally take on bodies of integrity, meaning that when they are on display they are fully dressed, posed, and composed and are thus often mistaken for real people. This customary practice adds to the unexpected, uncanny threat when one is met with the trunkless head of a mannequin. Huene successfully adopted the mannequin in fashion photography by creating a surreal experience that appealed to popular tastes.

Importantly, the cover of *La Révolution Surréaliste* from July 15, 1925, featured a mannequin in fashionable dress with her back turned to the camera as she feigns life (Fig. 5). As the premier publishing venue for the surrealist movement, the publication set the standards of artistic taste. The mannequin on this cover places a hand on the railing and is paralyzed before the stairs she would ascend (a Freudian dream symbol of the male genitals). I assert that the great link between surrealist photography and fashion photography is the object of desire; the mannequin embodies this desire. As a simulacrum of life and flesh, she is a symbol of absence, a further connection with fashion photography, for when a viewer looks at an advertisement they realize what is absent in their own life.

As a tool in both advertisement and artistic expression, the mannequin provides an object that reflects the distress and hollowness of the interwar period. André Breton, leader of the original surrealist movement in Paris, first met Louis Aragon, another surrealist figurehead, in

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1917 while working with disturbed soldiers in the psychiatric ward of a military hospital.\footnote{Mary Ann Caws, \textit{Surrealism} (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004), 21.} There was a great trauma and horror that endured after World War I that, as art historian Mary Ann Caws says, is evident in the deformations, displacements and deprivations rampant in the surrealists’ artwork, where the figures are unsexed, undefined, and lifeless.\footnote{Ibid, 27.} The mannequin embodies this trauma. The mannequin is undefined, it is sexed and unsexed, lifelike and lifeless, present and absent. The uncanny, the mask and mannequin in the case of Huene, was meant to alienate the viewer from the work and even from her/his self.\footnote{Ibid, 28.} This is why the mannequin was the ideal uncanny object. The viewer can identify with it so readily, and yet there is a barrier, a lack, a hollow simulacrum of life and cold reflection of humanity that fit into both surrealist imagery and fashion photography of the time.

Julia Kristeva gives another theory that illuminates why the mannequin is considered uncanny, and thus an important facet of the surrealist aesthetic. According to Kristeva, the corpse seen without God and outside of science is the utmost of abjection. Mannequins are the most uncanny of objects as they imitate life – but are dead. Huene’s mannequin heads are even closer to the corpse because they are beheaded, lacking any semblance of a complete being, and are, in some cases, death masks. Kristeva says the corpse is an object that is death-infecting life, uncanniness, and real threat. It disturbs identity and order, and does not respect borders, positions, or rules. It is an in-between, ambiguous and composite.\footnote{Julia Kristeva, “Approaching Abjection,” in \textit{The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader}, ed. Amelia Jones (New York: Routledge, 2003), 391.} Does Kristeva not describe the mannequin precisely in her discussion of abjection and the corpse? The mannequin is lifeless while resembling life, it is ambiguous and composite, and thus it disturbs identity and order, all
of which concerned surrealisits of the time and made the use of the mannequin appropriate for their artistic expression.

Mark Sandberg’s writings about French wax museums and mannequins easily connect with Kristeva’s theory of the corpse and its abjection and further our understanding of their uncanny appeal in 1930s fashion photography. He indicates that the wax sculptures have a particularly fleshy simulation, but are constantly reminding the viewer of their materiality with their staring eyes, immobility of the pose, and waxy sheen. He describes how the display of mannequins for public consumption was nothing new to the twentieth century. Before the French Revolution, Madame Tussaud’s mentor, Philippe Curtius, founded two wax museums in Paris. Here one would see slashed-throat corpses, decaying-bodied mannequins, and severed heads in a guillotine basket. The French Revolution was a war of spectacle that included horrific public decapitations and violence. These wax museums were a result of the violence of the Revolution. Sandberg also reveals that journal accounts reporting on wax museums discussed their backrooms full of haphazard body parts, bodiless heads, and strewn limbs.

Tussaud’s description of the wax mannequin corpses manifests the violence of the French Revolution and shows that violence provided the main attraction of the display. The French king’s physical beheading represented the symbolic rupture between the past and the future that left France a place where individuals would have “real and present power.” This relates to Huene’s photographs of chopped heads and provides the context for the acceptance of violence in France – it represented their freedom. Additionally, the guillotine was used for execution in

35 Sandberg, 18.
France even into the late twentieth century. Huene’s images, the wax museum, and Paris’s public spectacles of violence were acceptable because they were set apart from the viewer – on the pages of Vogue, or in a Salon de Cire tableau – the violence does not threaten the viewer because it is contained and occurs on the mannequins. A print from 1787 by P.D. Viviez called Change-moi cette tête, while satirical, illustrates how seeing mannequin heads, headless bodies, and body fragments laying on the ground was commonplace in France (Fig. 6).

Tussaud’s public displays are not the only examples of France’s fascination with macabre bodies. The Paris Morgue was another popular venue for the display and spectacle of actual dead bodies – specifically, anonymous corpses. Le XIXe Siècle estimated in 1895 that in a four-day period, ten thousand people had visited the morgue to view the corpses of two baby girls.39 The Paris Morgue “represented the quintessentially urban experience of anonymity with its potential for both increased freedom and alienation.”40 The morgue was open to the public all day every day with the deceased displayed behind a large piece of glass like a shop window with their clothes and effects strewn behind them, and at which passersby could stop and gawk (Fig. 7).41 The viewing of dead and decaying bodies was an inextricable part of Paris culture; therefore Huene’s photographs of masks and beheaded mannequins were not unfamiliar sights, nor unpopular imagery. Mannequins and masks, like the dead in the Paris Morgue, are anonymous and represent the alienation of the modern city and exhibit Parisians’ fascination with the display of morbid bodies.

40 Ibid, 46.
41 The public, spectacular nature of the Paris Morgue was due to its function as a depository for anonymous dead persons. The public was intended to identify the deposited deceased.
At the end of the nineteenth century, to prolong public display, the morgue workers began photographing the bodies and posting them in the entranceway.\textsuperscript{42} Photographing anonymous dead bodies, now too, was a part of Paris culture, and the viewing of these bodies, in windows or photographs, was a public form of entertainment on par with the theater, novels, and museums. It was only natural, then, that artistic images of the dead mannequins would be acceptable and popular in Parisian culture.

In the twentieth century, technological advancements changed the face of warfare and made World War I one the most lethal in history. After the trauma and brutality of both of these wars, the French saw similar violence and beheading done to mannequins in their surrounding visual culture. It was a “display of personal political trauma.”\textsuperscript{43} Here, again, dismembered, mutilated, abased mannequin bodies were shown in public view, as well as printed in magazines. Steven Heller and Louise Fili assert that dismembered mannequin pieces have a mysterious appeal – heads, a foot, a hand, etc.\textsuperscript{44} They arouse our interest and create a strong desire to consume. The presence of violated and abused mannequins in Paris may shed some light on the popularity of the surrealist aesthetic and the use of the mannequin by Huene.

Disturbing images can often be attractive when viewed from a distance, such as viewing an automobile accident or criminal activity on the evening news. Wax figures had for centuries been a medium associated with death, such as their use in Egypt and other ancient cultures, in which wax was made into effigies, and up to the eighteenth century, when wax body parts were used for anatomical modeling.\textsuperscript{45} Huene’s female masks and heads, while strange and disturbing,

\textsuperscript{42} The bodies of the unidentified dead were only in the window three days – due to their stink and decay they necessitated burial. Schwartz, 58.
\textsuperscript{43} Sandberg, 22.
\textsuperscript{45} Graybill.
successfully functioned in *Vogue*. Their success may be justified by Edmund Burke’s words on the sublime when he says, “When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful as we every day experience.”\(^{46}\) This exemplifies the idea of a controlled distance between the spectator and the violated, dead mannequin and how it is able to function as pleasurable.

Another undeniable facet of the surrealist photographic aesthetic, which was adopted by fashion photography, is the fetishizing of women. The fetish was a prevalent focus of surrealism and was popular imagery during the 1930s, thus it was inevitably in commercial advertising and fashion. Freud describes the fetish:

“...it is as though the last impression before the uncanny and traumatic one is retained as a fetish. Thus the foot or shoe owes its preference as a fetish...to the circumstances that the inquisitive boy peered at the woman's genitals from below, from her legs up; fur and velvet . . . are a fixation of the sight of pubic hair, which should have been followed by the longed for sight of the female member; pieces of underclothing, which are so often chosen as fetish, crystallize the moment of undressing, the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic.”\(^{47}\)

The fetish is the fixation on a piece or fragment of a whole, in most instances dealing with and concealing the fear of castration of the male by the threatening female. It is a way of controlling the fear, which the surrealists exemplify in their work by fixating on and controlling the female body.

\(^{46}\) Quoted in Graybill.
\(^{47}\) Wood, 32.
The fetish is a powerful signifier of desire and this desire, as Ghislaine states, is fulfilled through consumption.48 Fetishes are typically fragmented pieces of a larger whole. Fetish is the focusing on one part to channel all of the fear of castration into a controlled fragment – skin color, mouth, eyes, hands, feet, legs, or the head, as in the case of Huene’s three photographs of mannequins for Vogue. Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans, 1934 reveals a peculiar head of a mannequin placed with a gingham taffeta scarf and matching gloves (Fig. 8). It does not appear that the mannequin is wearing either item, but rather the head seemingly floats behind and above the scrunched up scarf, while the gloved-hand creeps into the frame from the left. The head, while disembodied and fetishized (and perhaps more strange), threatens less and is circumscribable. The occupant of the glove disconcerts the viewer as she realizes that the position of the hand seems too lifelike to be the mannequin’s, and if it were, it is at too strange an angle and therefore must be detached – a composite of figures filling the frame. Huene’s use of the fetish perhaps relates to the surrealist goals of controlling the threatening modern woman who now educates herself and enjoys a career and social freedom (a phenomenon to be addressed later in this thesis). This may be a male photographer’s fear of social castration and therefore attempts to arrest this female development in his images.

The fetishized female body is common in the photographs of surrealists like Claude Cahun, Roger Parry, André Kertész, Jacques-André Boiffard, and Raoul Ubac, and is similarly found in Huene’s mannequin and mask photographs. In Huene’s photograph Mauboussin Diamond-and-Topaz Corsage Clip, Mannequin by Pierre Imans, (1934) the mannequin head looms large in the closely framed shot (Fig. 9). The thick, false eyelashes create great spider-like shadows on the mannequin’s cheek and recall the fetishized eyes of Man Ray’s Tears (Larmes), 1930 (Fig. 10). The mannequin’s tightly framed shot cuts right above her eyelids, exposing the

48 Ibid, 36.
lower part of the face and a slender, long neck. The head serves as fetish because it is recognizable and retains its beauty, yet it is still containable and controllable. Huene likewise adopted the popular aesthetic of the fetish to both legitimize his works (by associating them with the high art of the surrealist movement) and to appeal to a popular readership.

All of Hoyningen-Huene’s images that I have chosen to analyze have as their subject the lone, fetishized mannequin head and mask. Popular in both surrealist and fashion photography, fetishization describes a great deal of the artistic aesthetic of both styles. François Baudot adds to the idea of woman as central to and fetishized by surrealism when he said, “although surrealism was essentially a male-dominated movement, straight away the group placed woman at the heart of its creative process.” He further states that it was an easy step to take from this type of adoration of woman to fetishizing her body, her accessories, and her dress.49 Laura Mulvey, famous for her feminist theory of film spectatorship, describes two modes of the male gaze: voyeuristic and fetishistic. The fetishization of the female figure in film, like photography, conceals the male viewer’s castration fear.50 Beheading, according to Freud, is a symbol of castration in dreams.51 Hoyningen-Huene’s mannequin head and mask images show his shared affinity with the high artists of surrealism as they fetishize in an attempt to conceal anxiety and detain female social development by forcing her into small, controlled spaces and pieces.

Pass argues that “fashion is the perfect vessel for fetishism” and quotes Walter Benjamin saying, “In fetishism, sex does away with the boundaries separating the organic world from the inorganic. Clothing and jewelry are its allies.”52 The mannequin, therefore, becomes just another inorganic object utilized to sell commodities. Surrealism conflates similar boundaries and creates

49 Baudot, 6.
52 Pass, 256.
strange juxtapositions dealing with the female body, the organic and the inorganic, life and death, just as fashion does. These similarities make it more clear how surrealist aesthetics initially became popular in fashion photography of the 1930s.

In fashion clothing is a sign for woman. Clothing “makes” the man or the woman, and is often conflated with woman and her identity. In André Breton’s text, *Nadja*, gloves become a very charged simulacrum for women. Gloves make the hands resemble paws, like those of an animal. In early twentieth-century popular surrealist and Freudian thought, woman was thought of as closer to nature, animalistic and primitive. Those surrealist views of woman conflate her identity with object just as fashion does. In both of Huene’s 1934 fashion photographs, woman becomes synonymous with object. In *Mauboussin Diamond-and-Topaz Corsage Clip, Mannequin by Pierre Imans* (1934), the corsage, the jeweled clip, and the mannequin are, indeed, objects and the female mannequin that resembles a live model has physically and metaphorically replaced woman. The live woman has been frozen in plaster, her face and expression sealed and painted with makeup, and she has had her hair and eyelashes glued permanently to her visage. In *Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans* (1934) the composition seems a pile of objects including an eerie, gloved hand, a rumpled scarf, and a disembodied mannequin head. In commenting both on artistic style and the identity of woman, Huene inserts himself effectively into the artistic conversation of the 1930s.

Many French artists, including nineteenth-century authors and painters, participated in the description of the artist as creator, otherwise known as the Pygmalion myth of creation. Ovid’s poem, *Metamorphoses*, describes a male artist, Pygmalion, who fell in love with his own

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53 Ibid, 274.
creation making an art-object synonymous with a love-object.\textsuperscript{54} In the nineteenth century, artists and writers took up this ancient myth as subject matter. Girodet painted \textit{Pygmalion et Galatée} in 1819, for example, and many others like Edward Burne-Jones, Jean-Léon Gérôme, Émile Zola, and Honoré de Balzac had their renditions of the Pygmalion myth, thereby establishing themselves as artistic creators who create products of male fantasy. These artists used Pygmalion to describe their dominating role and relationship with their own art, but its use also exhibits the response and anxiety to the visible presence and participation of women in the public sphere, especially women’s new roles as producers and consumers of art.\textsuperscript{55} The interwar period, in which Huene works, parallels this time of change and unease dealing with new female roles in society. Furthermore, Huene’s \textit{Antoine with One of His Creations}, 1933, links itself to a long accepted, previously established artistic subject matter, legitimizing his work further (Fig. 11). Nineteenth-century practices and artwork provide the background and discourse of the employment of the Pygmalion myth that confuses live woman with artistic creation.

In Freud’s essay \textit{Delusion and Dream in Jensen’s Gradiva} (1907), he is dealing with the Pygmalion myth and interested in psychoanalyzing Jensen’s character Norbert Hanold. Hanold is a young male archaeologist who falls in love with a classical Greek cast relief of a woman. Hanold names her Gradiva and dreams that he witnesses her death at Pompeii. The archeologist accepts the dream as fact and goes to Pompeii where he believes she has come to life as modern woman. This modern woman is actually a physician who cures him of his delusions and who was a childhood playmate and has loved him since youth.\textsuperscript{56}


Likewise, the avant-garde film, *Rien que les heures* by Alberto Cavalcanti, released in 1926, included similar Pygmalion-like appeal and interesting interactions with the mannequin. We see a woman’s thin legs at first, squarely framed on the thighs while a set of arms fixes the thigh-high stockings by pulling them up the thigh from the knee. The shot cuts to a man’s bearded face as he dreamily and longingly looks at the face of the figure on which he works. He then arranges her garter decorated in flowers and pulls her skirt to cover her legs. As he neatly arranges the clothes and the figure the frame moves so that the viewer is able to see that the delicate woman is really a mannequin, although extremely lifelike. The frame extends to reveal that the man is in a shop window and begins dusting her. She is hollow seeming, empty and frozen, but smiles kindly. The man smiles up at the woman, his face the only object in the frame, while his hands move to handle her body where the viewer cannot see. His face betrays that he likes this work and receives pleasure from touching her. While the frame remains on her thighs and hips, his arms reach up out of the frame to adjust her blouse around her breasts.

In Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Pygmalion’s hands reach to touch his sculpture and are called *temptantes*, which in poetic contexts connotes rape. Many surrealist photographs of the female body do not try to conceal their allusions to rape. The man inspects his work, looks satisfied and places the duster in the crook of his mannequin’s arm. The shot fades from the mannequins in the window and focuses on a sign with an image of a female figure and the words, “Maison d’Accouchement,” or “House of Childbirth.” It is not only the live man who looks longingly at the feminine mannequin that reminds the viewer of the Pygmalion myth – he who cares for her, dresses and undresses her, arranges her and makes her beautiful, creates her – but also the sign reinforces the idea that she has been born of the male worker, or of mankind.

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57 Sharrock, 41.
The idea of Gradiva as a sculpture that Hanold thinks has come to life, or the commonly painted Pygmalion myth where the sculptor falls in love with his female statue and she comes to life, is also found in Huene’s photograph of *Antoine with One of His Creations* from *Vogue* (1933). In *Antoine with One of His Creations*, as in other Pygmalion depictions established in the previous century, the male genius is creator and the female object is his creation. All mannequins are objects and must have, therefore, been created by someone. In the case of the paintings, the males stare at their creation longingly, and in the case of *Antoine*, lovingly, as a simulacrum of life. Antoine holds a mannequin bust with very small and disproportionate shoulders, a long, thin neck, exaggerated eyes, and a very stylish hairdo. She is beautiful and representative of her maker (her eyebrows echo his), but she is still and silent – her mouth too small and too tight to speak, just the way her creator intended. The article next to the image that was seen in *Vogue* read, “At the left is the creator-extraordinary of hair-styles – Antoine, no less, admiring his own handiwork in his own studio. His latest “coup” is the “brushed-up” movement in coiffures, temptingly pictured . . . ”58 The all-powerful, genius, male creator stares at the creation as if he has barely completed the work in his studio. In surrealist photographs of fragmented female mannequins and busts, there is strong feeling of erotic encounter between the human male maker and the female creation.59 Antoine, like Pygmalion, is the creator, spectator, and lover of his object. This represents another facet of surrealism that Huene embraces in order to include himself in the surrealist conversation and substantiate his work.

While most artists who incorporate the Pygmalion myth do so in a classical way, portraying the male creator’s relationship with his object as admiration and infatuation, some surrealist artists were known for their violent manipulation of female mannequins. Hans Bellmer,
for example, ripped plastic female bodies apart, dismembered them, violated them, distorted them, pieced them back together and then photographed them (Fig. 12). His eerie images exemplify the surrealist focus on the violent and criminal of the unconscious, as well as the Pygmalion myth of creation. Breton himself wrote in *L’amour Fou* (1937) that the distortion and fragmentation of the female body is read as beautiful.\(^{60}\) Similarly, Hannah Hoch, a member of the dada movement, which spread to several cities including Paris and was a precursor to surrealism, created photomontages of the 1930s are filled with bits and pieces of mannequin-like bodies with some that are sexualized, androgynous, and even a clear composite of genders.

Huene’s masks and mannequin heads are disjointed, separated from the body, fetishized, and while they are not violent and violated, they still draw on and associate with the high art of the surrealist movement, thus legitimizing his work in fashion photography as art.

These specific aspects of the surrealist aesthetic—objects of desire, the uncanny, the mannequin and mask, the fetish, the female body, the Pygmalion myth of creation, and ambiguity in general—help to describe a connection that Huene sought to create between his work and the high art of surrealism. By employing these aesthetic qualities, he establishes his work in fashion photography among contemporary art of his day and incorporates himself into the artistic conversation of the period. His work is a reflection and product of the interwar years.

The early twentieth century was a time when many artists like Brancusi, Picasso, Klee, Giacometti, Ernst, Franz Marc, and others, were incorporating “primitive” art, objects, and models in their artistic style as well as subject matter. André Breton compared ruins and mannequins with the thought that both are fragmentary allusions to a more whole and complete existence in the past.\(^{61}\) Paris in the interwar era was full of artistic movements looking to the past

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\(^{60}\) Caws, *Surrealism*, 30.

\(^{61}\) Hoving, 128.
and “primitive” cultures attempting to find truth and understanding in a world of chaos. Boundaries break down between real female bodies and man-made constructions of these bodies. Books like Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, published in 1899, and Maugham’s *The Moon and Sixpence*, from 1919, dealt respectively with the “primitive” peoples in the African Congo and the natives of Tahiti – both colonized by European countries. Artists’ studios and museums in Paris, like the Musée d’Ethnographie du Trocadéro, founded in 1878, were open venues where people could see “primitive” objects such as masks. Significantly, Man Ray photographed African masks and fashionable accessories from the Congo that were published in fashion magazines (Fig. 13). surrealists, along with many other artists and artistic movements of the time, contemplated and incorporated primitive styles and subject matter.

It is no coincidence that a fashion photographer of the early twentieth century would be interested in primitivist ideas and subject matter, especially one who created such surrealist works. Interest in primitive ideas was encouraged by the colonization of Africa and other countries. Huene liked Tunisia, a French colony with many French inhabitants, and built a house there around 1931, revealing his own tie with the exotic and primitive.62 Surrealist artists were also traveling to Africa, as other artists had before them.63 Huene’s photographs of mannequin heads from this time, while drawing from primitivism and the surrealist usage of primitive objects, are, in fact masks – representatives of the early twentieth-century’s response to major societal changes in France, such as the development of the new interwar modern woman and the cultural and national disillusionment resulting from the First World War.

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63 The Mission Dakar-Djibouti was a French ethnographic expedition that traversed central Africa west to east from 1931 to 1933. The mission was mainly scientific, however, it collected 200 sound recordings and 3,500 objects for the Musée de l’ethnographie in Paris. Photographs by French surrealist writer and ethnographer, Julien Michel Leiris, and others were made known in surrealist artistic circles and the findings of the Dakar-Djibouti expedition were published in 1933 in a special issue of *Minotaure*. Ian Walker, “L’Afrique fantôme: La photographie entre surréalisme et ethnographie,” *Cahiers d’Études Africaines*, 37 cahier 147 (1997): 636, 639.
A mask is an object that is designed to be placed over and conceal either the face, or the entire head. The mask swallows up the face or the head so that the mask is visible to the viewer rather than the face or head underneath.\(^{64}\) Masks are an ancient form of changing and shifting identity, making them an interesting tool for the artistic world of the twentieth century, not only because they were used anciently as well as in contemporary “primitive” cultures, but also because they transform identity, a major issue of the interwar period, especially the identity of woman. Origins of the term *mask* are unclear, but it seems likely that it comes from the Arabic term *maskhara*, which means “‘to falsify’ or ‘transform’ into animal, monster or freak.” In Middle Kingdom Egypt, the word *msk* meant leather, or a “second skin.”\(^{65}\) Masks are a part of primitive cultures, and were popular in terms of artistic aesthetic, but they were also useful in describing issues of the 1920s and 30s and the identity of the new interwar modern woman.

In early religious traditions, priests, shamans, and other religious figures would don masks in the belief that they could help them make contact with their gods while protecting them from the powerful forces invoked during sacred rituals. In ancient Greek dramas, masks were used to portray certain characters, specifically protagonists, to make their identity more universally appealing and recognizable. The most significant aspect of the mask, apart from hiding the wearer’s identity, is the ability to alter the perception of reality.\(^{66}\) The definition of reality and its subjective nature inspired many artistic movements of the twentieth century that will be relevant in this discussion of primitivism and its incorporation in surrealist photography.

John Nunley and Cara McCarty state that masks have been created out of necessity; in order for societies to survive and thrive they must respond with masks to satisfy desires as well

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as confront challenges that they face. Masks represent the ability to change and reinvent one’s identity, to appease spirits, to transform and to visit other worlds.\textsuperscript{67} The fundamental purposes of mask-use relate well to the turmoil of the interwar period in France as artistic movements looked to other, more “primitive” worlds in order to meet the challenges presented during historically turbulent times. Thus, masks are a form of protection worn when dealing with adversaries in physical and spiritual realms. This is exemplified by warriors, shamans, athletes, and so on. They protect themselves with a “powerful and forbidding appearance.”\textsuperscript{68} As such, masks are a human’s physical survival method to compete and exist in the world against threats.

With the end of World War I and the looming onset of World War II, France was a country fraught with chaos, trauma, and technological change. During this time, protective masks (like those used in modern warfare) were designed to include definite facial characteristics (Fig. 14). In fact, WWI excitement of the machine age had strongly influenced mask design, resulting in a sleek, streamlined, robotic aesthetic that made the wearer like a machine, efficient and strong (Fig. 15). Nunley and McCarty assert that changes in combat and technology made gas masks the face of war during this time.\textsuperscript{69} The 1920s also marked an increase in mass production through manufacturing, which was fundamental in providing the protective masks to all of the armed forces.\textsuperscript{70} The protective masks of the interwar modern woman (mannequins, fashion images, advertisements, and makeup) were likewise mass-produced and perpetuated through the fashion industry. Mannequins in the fashion world were an integral, mechanized, and man-made part of mass production and manufacturing, and served as industrialized masks of the interwar modern woman, a compelling object for surrealist artists as well.

\textsuperscript{67} Nunley and McCarty, 15.  
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, 276.  
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, 287.  
\textsuperscript{70} Liz Conor, \textit{The Spectacular Modern Woman: Feminine Visibility in the 1920s} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 111.
In the 1920s, a new ritual was introduced to society – that of applying the mask of makeup to create a new surface on the face of woman. Makeup provides the wearer with choices of what to reveal and what to conceal, and there is power in this decision. Makeup can be used as a mask and as a disguise; it can make one obscure and anonymous.71 As discussed earlier, the interwar modern woman of the 1920s and 1930s was changing her identity, becoming conflated with mannequin and new uniform standards of beauty, and she was now masking herself with makeup, a powerful symbol that is reflected in the mannequin photographs by Huene.

Primitive objects and racial interests, including masks, played an integral part of visual culture during the early twentieth century. A painting that illustrates this point is by the French fauvist, Matisse, in his Portrait of André Derain, from 1905 (Fig. 16). Here, Derain’s jaw and neck are a ghastly green, while the rest of his face resembles a wooden mask as the brown paint geometrically outlines the front of his face, exclusively. Cubist Pablo Picasso painted female figures in his infamous Les Demoiselles d’Avignon from 1907 who have faces imitating Iberian and African masks. Symbolists from around the same time, like the Belgian James Ensor, painted faces that morph into masks and skulls creating a sense of an ominous, masked and menacing humanity. Furthermore, German expressionists frequently depicted foreboding masks, as in Emil Nolde’s work Masks Still Life III, in 1911 (Fig. 17). Nolde’s masks are varied in color, size, and orientation, however each is menacing with bared teeth and large holes for eyes. In French, the term still life is nature mort, instilling thoughts of something arrested and dead.

Death masks and life masks, alike, have a strange, still, deathly quality about them that is captured by Nolde in his nature mort with objects that, themselves, describe the “dead nature.” Huene’s photographs continue in this artistic tradition of still life with arranged objects of arrested masks and heads, frozen, and deathly objects, just as Louis Daguerre’s nineteenth-

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century photographic work and Walker Evans or Charles Sheeler’s contemporary still-life photographs, were used to establish photography as art. Important artistic movements were interested in the primitive and created the context from which Huene would draw upon for legitimacy.

Not only was depicting the mask in art popular during the twentieth century, but creating exotic and primitive spectacles had been popular in the nineteenth century and continued into the 1930s. Dressing up in exotic costumes and masks was in vogue in the interwar period. Parties and masquerade balls were thrown and stand as a testimony to both the influence of popular primitivism on fashion and social life, and the contemporary concern with the surface of things. Elsa Schiaparelli, a surrealist fashion designer with whom Huene worked, attended Daisy Fellowes’s Oriental Ball in 1935 with clear interest in the exotic “other,” where she dressed as a black, Venetian page. The very same year, one of Schiaparelli’s clients threw a circus-themed party, and later Schiaparelli brought her daughter to a different party dressed as the Ambassador of Siam. Brassai, a surrealist photographer, noted that Paris was “attracted…by the strangeness of primitive customs, we know more about the habits of the pygmy or African bushman than we do about a Parisian from the rue des Solitaires.” Surrealists and the culture in Paris in the 1930s in general, were interested in the primitive other, be it circus performers, the Orient, Africa, or black skin. Huene’s photographs become more culturally significant when viewed in the historical context of the mask culture.

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72 Shattuck gives an example of primitive spectacle in Paris in the International Exposition of 1889: “A Cairo street scene was constructed with authentic imported Egyptians to live in it and perform the danse du ventre. The Javanese dancers became the rage of Paris, influenced music-hall routines for twenty years, and confirmed Debussy and his tendency toward Oriental harmonies.” Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France 1885 to World War I (Great Britain: Fletcher & Son Ltd, 1969), 16-17.

73 Evans, 26.

74 Ibid, 25.

Fashion is a masquerade and a performance. To fashion one’s self is a “coherent performance” in the construction of one’s identity. Lacan shows that a relationship exists between masquerade and melancholy, which is described by a “lack.” Lacan uses masks when discussing the impossibility of the satisfaction of desire. Evans’s reading of David Bate’s surrealist studies reveals that surrealist photographs and fashion show “the cultural coding of the body rather than the body itself; costumes, masks, theatrical make-up and facial expression take precedence when compared with those other surrealists’ emphasis on the female body as torso.” Images of mannequins and masks divide the sense of self and reflect Lacan’s alienated and fractured self where the body is other.

_Vogue_ and many of its artists, designers, and illustrators draw from popular art aesthetics and contemporary influences to help situate and legitimize themselves as viable and respectable art forms. Eduardo Benito made many illustrations for _Vogue_ in the 1920s and ‘30s and his most popular and successful illustration covers were disembodied heads that reflected the style and influence of Brancusi’s sculptures. In 1926 Benito began his series of Brancusi-like heads, which no one else in fashion was doing at the time (Fig. 18). Benito repeated these disembodied head illustrations for _Vogue_ in the 1930s. A caption in _The Art of Vogue Covers_ reads, “Two memorable heads mark the turn of the decade, Lepape’s raising the mask of past fashion to reveal the new face of the thirties, Benito’s making quite sure that both mask and hat are still firmly in place. The new face appears much more natural, for, as the body’s shape is emphasized by softer clothes, makeup now emphasizes the face’s intrinsic merits (Fig. 19 and Fig. 20).”

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77 Ibid, 15.
78 American _Vogue_ began in 1901, British _Vogue_ in 1916, and French _Vogue_ in 1922. Most of the cover illustrations were used in all three magazines, although, perhaps at different times. Packer, 5, 24.
79 Ibid, 230.
is significant that this caption refers to one of Benito’s 1931 *Vogue* cover heads and describes it as wearing a mask. Furthermore, Benito’s illustrations of sculptural heads and masks are portrayed in various artistic modes, for example, Benito’s October 1926 cover reads more cubist with its rigid rays and geometric shapes, while his March 1931 cover reads like expressionist renderings of ethnographic masks, and Lepape’s 1931 illustration has a much more natural, Rousseauian quality. These various modernist styles used in *Vogue* speak to the different levels of the its broad and varied readership.80 *Vogue*, as an arbiter of style, also included aesthetics of various high art movements to legitimize itself as an authoritative voice of taste, as did its photographer, Huene.

The *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson* reveals a beautiful female face, framed with small curls of hair, fashionable in that period of time. Her eyes are closed and her lips look supple. She is a fashionable woman of the 1930s, resting her head on her hand. Upon closer inspection, the viewer realizes that the face does not belong to an animate woman. She is a mannequin – a hard, cold, plaster simulacrum of not even an entire woman, but only a disembodied head held up by the hand of a woman, or perhaps a disembodied mannequin arm. She is reduced to mask visually, but also by the photograph’s title. Life masks were made by casting a mask of a living actor’s face, and thereafter actors, other than the original one, would wear the mask.81 Thus, the *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson* is not Ms. Wilkinson and is not meant to be Ms. Wilkinson, but rather is meant to be taken and worn by many other actors, perhaps the female viewers of this 1933 *Vogue* issue. Likewise, Huene’s mannequin head in *Mauboussin Diamond-and-Topaz Corsage Clip, Mannequin by Pierre Imans*, portrays the mask of the interwar modern woman. The mannequin’s face has been built up with heavy makeup creating a mask of high artifice. In

80 Stein, 157.  
81 Nunley and McCarty, 246.
addition, there is a distinct line, which runs from the side of the face near the hairline, down the jaw line and around the chin outlining the mask that has been pressed into the slim neck of the figure.

The mask, in European tradition, suggests a topsy-turvy world of contradiction where the natural order is upset and ideas of monstrousness, transgression, deception, and association with underhanded behavior prevail. Huene photographs several mannequin heads in 1933 and 1934, some of which were designed by the mannequin manufacturer Pierre Imans, like in his *Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans*. An image of Imans’s wax figures, from 1930 is peculiar with its fourteen male heads of various styles and expressions standing on the tops of rods (Fig. 21). This photograph conjures up images of Kurtz’s fence in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) – a dealing with primitive ideas and themes. When Marlow, the narrator, realizes that the ornamental knobs on the fence were, in fact, decapitated heads on stakes surrounding Kurtz’s house, he was surprised, but states that they seemed to be in eternal slumber. So too, are Imans’s wax heads in a seeming state of restfulness; most look calm and some asleep – or in that “eternal slumber.” These heads are stuck into stakes, creating a sense of violence and discomfort; however, there is no pain or anguish in their expressions. This uncanny mood is heightened by the heads that stare directly at the viewer. Huene’s *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson* is similarly a solitary head on a stake. Again, the head is in eternal slumber. Perhaps not intending to conjure up a violent image like that of Kurtz’s fence, Huene nonetheless portrays a solitary head, which, taken in cultural context, reflects the culture obsessed with primitivism and masks. His work plays a part in and comments on this culture, giving it meaning and permanence.

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82 Hettie, 46.
Huene’s photograph of *Antoine with One of His Creations* (1933) resembles another female mannequin head on a stake. This “creation” of Antoine’s has a beautifully artificial face, a long, slender neck, and one very narrow shoulder. Her other shoulder seems to have been chopped off, narrowly missing her head. Below her is a long, stake-like pedestal that enters the frame at an angle and into which her mannequin head is stuck. This pattern of decapitation was evident in other works of the surrealist movement, showing a fascination with fetishization (as discussed earlier) and primitivism (as in Conrad’s novel). This inclusion of popular iconography and cultural symbolism aided Huene in legitimizing his work in the fashion industry by aligning it with the work of the surrealists in the context of the interwar period.

In a culture dominated by visual media, in which objects or concepts of desire are and were defined by what is advertised as beautiful and attractive, the interwar modern woman was likewise defined in part by her appearance and portrayal in popular visual publications, such as fashion magazines. Huene, as a member of the fashion world, one of the creators of this new woman’s visual identity, contributed to the continual conversation of the interwar modern woman and her development in a consumer society.

The modern woman of the twenties and thirties was emerging and the lives of women were changing with their mobilization into the workforce during the war. Fashion magazines indicate that there was a cultural shift with the new preference for slender, youthful, and active female bodies.84 Coco Chanel and Jean Patou promoted the look *garçonne* – the revolutionary androgynous style for females, with short hair and low, cloche hats, and streamlined, straight looks cut for a boyish figure.85 This became a source of concern for many. Some critics stated that the look of the *garçonne* implied that the modern woman was concerned neither with

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85 Pass, 39.
motherhood nor with taking on traditional gender and societal roles in the interwar and post war period. It was thought that because women were dressing like men, smoking like men, and working like men that they were acting like men, being mistaken for them, or becoming lesbians. Citizens pro-garçonne created, instead, a vision of a mobile woman who was athletic and independent.86

The “emancipated” modern woman of the interwar period was the result of social, political, intellectual, and technological changes that shaped everyday life of Western urban centers. This modern woman was influenced and constructed by emerging industries like the illustrated press, advertising, and cinema. As Chadwick and Latimer put it, she was “going places” in Parisian depictions. The modern woman of the 1920s and 30s in Paris was shown at the wheel of an automobile, at the helm of speedboat, in the cockpit of an airplane, in control, self-assured, capable, aggressive, adventurous, and independent as she traveled unescorted and entered new spaces that had previously been privileged as male. In France in 1924, a new decree made the baccalaureate the same in boys and girls schools, which facilitated women’s access to university.87 The identity of the interwar modern woman was changing in drastic ways, which would have a sweeping effect on popular culture. The modern woman in the 1920s was depicted as urban, single and young. She was, according to the media, out of the home spending her time enjoying a career, dancing, smoking, going to cafés and attending movies. Her body was the “primary site for displaying her modernity” with short hemlines and bobbed hair.88

Mary Lynn Stewart argues, however, that although fashion magazines were focused on female modernity, this was limited to their appearance and not their activity, specifically noting

86 Ibid, 43.
87 Stewart, 202.
88 Ibid, 200.
the inclusion of automobiles and the lack of female drivers.89 Huene photographed Colette Salomon as “the modern woman” for *Vogue* in 1927, appropriately dressed for driving and in the driver’s seat of an automobile, which seemingly contradicts Stewart’s statement about a lack of female drivers (Fig. 22). While Salomon sits holding the steering wheel in a car all on her own, it seems to be about her appearance. Her clothes and position indicate that she is a ready and capable driver, however, the frame truncates most of the car and its wheel. She is not depicted driving down the road with the wind blowing on her face, but rather, she is controlled, once again. She is pushed into a flattened and stage-like space recalling flat modernist qualities like form, line, shape, rather than a realistic, three-dimensional image. The photograph is reduced to image and form, as is the woman within the photograph. The caption indicates that this is a modern woman, and indeed she is, the interwar modern woman who, in these specific Huene photographs, was reduced to her appearance rather than her activity in an anxious attempt to halt the newly developed freedoms of women during this time.

Along with the more obvious style changes, the interwar modern woman “appropriated attributes of spectatorial mastery like the camera and the monocle.”90 Women in the twentieth century were seeing and being seen differently. After World War I ended, a new period of complexity arose – a transition into a peacetime economy in the women who had gained rights and jobs during the war were forced out of their jobs by over six million discharged, French soldiers.91 The Civil Code of the 1930s in France had not yet elevated women to an equal standing with men and sometimes the press appealed for the nineteenth-century laws prohibiting

89 Ibid, 201.
91 Ibid, 4.
females in masculine attire. Although many women were able to successfully navigate their way through this society, it was a time of confusion with rights for females being given and taken away. These changes were altering the face of woman and the female role in society. She was in the work place and out of it, she was dressed like a man and like a woman, perhaps she was becoming threatening, foreign and alien, thus emphasizing her otherness.

Hannah Höch’s sexualized and androgynous photomontages reflect ambiguity dealing with the interwar modern woman and incorporate the mannequin. Maud Lavin finds that these gender-ambiguous images could suggest the realization of “shifting and antihierarchical gender identities.” The shifting of women outside of the home and into academia, the workplace, and other spheres, gives deeper meaning and understanding to these masculinized female images. In Höch’s work, *Dompteuse* from 1930, a white mannequin head, with modern eyes and a very mask-like appearance, rests atop an androgynous torso wearing a brocaded tank top with a matching, fitted skirt (Fig. 23). This slender figure is female, except for the very masculine biceps, broad shoulders, hairy arms, and masculine hands. The female dress and mannequin head show this woman as fashionable and able to navigate the world of female beauty for her day. At the same time, her manly arms give this figure the ability to physically work like a man and the appearance of strength. While her mannequin face and eyes look down solemnly, her arms and torso are positioned in a way that confronts the viewer directly and with potency. This ambiguity and uncertain identity can be seen in the styles of both high art, like dada and surrealism, and fashion photography of the time.

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92 Ibid, 5.7.
Some aspects of photographic theory will prove useful in describing the commodification of the female body in both fashion and surrealist photography, and will help to show Huene’s discussion of the female identity, one of the aspects of his work that have ensured his fame and artistic success. There is a distance between the self and the viewing of self as other, which Barthes identifies as a “cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity.”\(^{94}\) Photography transforms the self-subject into other-object in part because the photographer forces the sitter to contort in various positions. This contorting of the body and othering of self is extremely common in fashion photography as well as surrealist photography. As the sitter contorts she feels herself become an object, a version of death, according to Barthes. In every photograph there is a return of the dead, because the sitters realize that they have become, or have been reduced to, total image.\(^{95}\) Huene’s photographs speak to this realization of self as other and death because the viewer anticipates seeing a live model occupying a scene into which the female spectator can insert herself. However, these disembodied mannequin heads create a disconnect and do not allow for such an insertion of self. Furthermore, the mannequin is initially reduced to image upon creation because its function is for spectacle and display, so the effect is doubled when she is photographed.

The nature of the photographic medium commodifies the subject-sitter by transforming them into a product to be consumed. Fashion itself is built upon the selling of commodities and the selling of the female form as commodity, therefore fashion photography and advertising is a layered machine of commodification. Surrealist photography likewise used the female body as its major object in commodification and consumption.\(^{96}\) Commercial photographs and images

\(^{94}\) Barthes, Camera Lucida, 12.
\(^{95}\) Ibid, 14.
\(^{96}\) Ibid, 6.
link a product to a person selling them both.\textsuperscript{97} In the case of photography, the interwar modern woman was sold as an object by artists and fashion magazines. According to Walter Benjamin, photographs, because they are reproducible, take on a mass existence, therefore they lack unique reality, authenticity, and the here and now of an original.\textsuperscript{98} Huene’s photographs were reproduced and mass-produced on the pages of \textit{Vogue}. The mannequins by Pierre Imans in Huene’s photographs were mass-produced as well. These mannequin heads and masks took on a mass existence, because they were reproducible objects, reproduced in photographs, and then mass produced in \textit{Vogue} publications. In a culture dominated by consumerism, there is an “urge to get hold of an object at close range” even if the consumer must settle on an image of that object.\textsuperscript{99} John Berger and Walter Benjamin have similar ideas about the viewer’s ability to possess the object in the image, or photograph. They argue that the beholder has power over the object, which could mean a woman, and the viewer is able to control and own the figure.

Consumer society is built upon object ownership, and a desire is created in twentieth-century print magazines from which such ownership can be obtained. To simply own a \textit{Vogue} magazine was to own some portion of chic and the potential to be beautiful through the help of the images within. In both surrealist and fashion photography, there is a sense of ownership over the object, a control and manipulation of the female body.

Female mannequins represent death, dismemberment, and fetishization, which fits all too well with surrealist goals. However, the original purpose and function of the mannequin was always for fashion in a consumer society.\textsuperscript{100} Surrealist photographs in the interwar period focus on the mannequin, such as Eugène Atget’s photographs of highly made-up mannequins and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{99} Ibid, 16.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Wood, 17.
\end{itemize}
mannequin heads in seemingly neglected shop windows around Paris (Fig. 24). Significantly, in 1938 André Breton and his group participated in the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*. In this exhibition, there was a constructed urban street filled with seventeen mannequins dressed and designed by individual artists, and each under their own fictitious street sign. Man Ray describes the violent treatment of the female mannequin in this display as callous rape, calling the mannequins victims who necessitate abuse by the artists as well as the visitors of the exhibition who become these females’ solicitors:

“In 1937 nineteen nude young women were kidnapped from the windows of the large stores and subjected to the frenzy of the surrealists who immediately deemed it their duty to violate them, each in his own original and inimitable manner but without any consideration whatsoever for the feelings of the victims who nevertheless submitted with charming goodwill to the homage and outrage that were inflicted on them, with the result that they aroused the excitement of a certain Man Ray who undid and took out his equipment and recorded the orgy.”

The entrance to this exhibition was dark and necessitated patrons renting flashlights in order to navigate the space and see the mannequins. This act transformed the viewers into the nighttime solicitors of a red light district, lurking in the streets and gawking at the streetwalking mannequins. In surrealist hands, mannequins became sexually available figures. Duchamp’s street sign was the Rue aux Lèvres, a pun on rouge à lèvres, indicating makeup and the masking and artifice of the interwar modern woman, but perhaps also a surrealist fetish of the mouth (Fig. 25). Cosmetics were extolled in the nineteenth century by Baudelaire when he states women are

101 Quoted in Pass, 301.
102 Evans, 24.
103 Pass, 301.
fulfilling a duty by presenting themselves as ideal. “She is obliged to adorn herself in order to be adored” by “lifting herself above Nature,” and with powder she becomes better than a human, creating a mask for her face and body like an idealized female sculpture, or more appropriately, a mannequin. Thus the mannequin had effectively replaced woman in fashion as well as in sexual consumption.

Duchamp’s mannequin reflected the interwar modern woman and the cross-dressing boundaries for which he was so well known, as his playful alter-ego, Rrose Selavy, indicates. He transformed the young female-type, yet sexless, mannequin into a risqué garçonne making her male and female, and as Pass indicates, not in a way that reconciles the two genders, but rather brings contradiction. André Masson’s mannequin, which stood next to Duchamp’s and was photographed by Raoul Ubac, was much more characteristic of the male surrealist treatment of these female bodies (Fig. 26). Masson put his mannequin’s head in a birdcage and gagged her with velvet and replaced her mouth with a pansy. The birds from the birdcage are not inside, but rest in the armpits of the mannequin and “the only ‘clothing’ she wears is a mirror surrounded by tiger eyes…[that] returns the gaze of the viewer catching them in their scopophilic gaze. The tiny door of the cage was left open allowing the viewers to gaze upon the clear view of her face.”

She stares directly at the viewer with only part of her face framed, just the shape and size of a mask. Krauss relates this mannequin image to surrealist associations of the praying mantis as the female who devours her mate after coitus. Ubac’s photograph shows the phallic female with the prey still in her mouth as she castrates the male. However, while she is dangerous, she is contained, controlled and possessed by the cage around her head and the tight, claustrophobic

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105 Pass, 305.
106 Krauss and Livingston, 74.
spacing of the frame. Huene’s photographs maintain this dangerous apprehension of the female that is likewise contained and possessed through cropping and close, tight framing. Though Huene did not portray his mannequin masks in such violent and abusive ways, as a part of the fashion world, he was intrinsically a part of the commodification of woman and the powerful symbol of the mannequin as a replacement in the consumption of the female body.

The main driving force in the commodification and consumption of surrealism and fashion is the female body.  

107 The female body was fundamental to surrealism, its displays, exhibitions, and commercial activities. The mannequins that replaced female bodies were fragmented, abused, broken, and eroticized in the great psychological cause of the artistic movement. The mannequin body and the mask are confused between human and machine, male and female, animate and inanimate. It is commodity and erotic object.  

108 Mannequins, in surrealism as well as fashion, are submissive objects that are assembled piece-by-piece, posed, dressed, undressed, shot in photographs and framed in shop windows with the soul purpose of always being gazed upon by passing voyeurs. French Vogue printed an article about the exposition’s display designer saying, “Siegel has created a new form in the Art of the mannequin,” suggesting that modern art is seen along with modern fashion and style, and that the woman is the most useful to fashion when an object – flexible, docile and workable. Women’s roles were growing and changing during the interwar period, and this fragmenting, disempowering violence and control over the female figure of the mannequin exhibits the male anxiety of the period and attempts to arrest this new power and change. The ambiguity and

107 Wood, 6.
108 Ibid, 10.
fluidity of the mannequin between artifice and reality worked well for the aims of surrealism as well as fashion.\textsuperscript{109}

A photograph by Man Ray, \textit{Noire et Blanche}, was published in French \textit{Vogue} in 1926 (Fig. 27).\textsuperscript{110} Here a pearily white female model, Man Ray’s lover Kiki de Montparnasse, lays her head on a flat surface in such a way that enhances the feeling of it being disembodied. Her face and head resemble the black African mask, which she props up with her hand. They have the same thinly carved eyebrows, beautifully closed eyes, slicked back hair, and a long and slender face with a narrow chin. While Kiki embodies the height of fashionable style in the 1920s; the African mask embodies the vogue for all things African, or primitive. This photograph appears alone on the pages of \textit{Vogue} with the title, “Visage de nacre et masque de ébène,” or “mother of pearl face and ebony mask.”\textsuperscript{111} Describing the female’s face as mother of pearl presents it as a construction of surface, just like the mask next to it. The two female heads in this photograph are conflated with one another by their formal and physical appearance, as well as by the title, which exhibits both as artificial construction and mask.

Huene’s images like \textit{Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson}, \textit{Antoine with One of His Creations}, and \textit{Scarf and Gloves by Chanel}, \textit{Mannequin by Pierre Imans}, all play with the mannequin and ideas of real, beautiful, lifelike woman juxtaposed with the reality of the cold, plaster, mechanically produced object. \textit{Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson} has realistic, feminine facial features. This female mask is beautiful, and rational, until the viewer recognizes the supporting hand that holds the head, revealing it as an object. The woman in \textit{Scarf and Gloves by Chanel} seems to be a photograph of a fashionable woman of the period, but it takes a moment to realize,\textsuperscript{109} \textsuperscript{110} \textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{109} Willis Hartshorn and Merry Foresta, \textit{Man Ray in Fashion} (New York: International Center of Photography, 1990), 17.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid, 62.
like most mannequins, that she is made of wax, placed along with other objects for sale. The consumer society and the commodification of the female body were useful to fashion photographers and surrealist photographers alike, and Huene used these popular notions and aesthetics to include himself among the high artists of the time.

The mannequin as a simulacrum of the female body is an indispensable object for fashion, serving many purposes – from its roles in the initial designs of clothes, to actual production and fittings, then to store windows, displays, and advertising. Liz Conor gives insight into the meaning of the mannequin in her book *The Spectacular Modern Woman: Feminine Visibility in the 1920s*. She describes the mannequin as a “sort of dream woman,” which relates to the goal of women in fulfilling their own fantasies through fashionable consumerism, as well as the surrealist focus on dreams and their dream women.112 The mannequin has a paradoxical status that “was realized through the cultural interplay between constructions of the Modern Woman and the status of the women-object in modern commodity displays.”113 The mannequin simply confirmed the idea of woman as object in mimicking and masquerading as woman. Theories on female spectatorship will be examined later on, but it is important to the place of fashion photography and Huene’s work to note that the mannequin also invited woman to occupy its space and to replace it with their own image, confusing woman with object and reinforcing that connection.

Originally, the mannequin was made of wax, which would sometimes melt in the heat of the shop window, and did not include a head or limbs. It was not until the second decade of the twentieth century that attempts were made to render a more accurate likeness with larger

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112 Conor, 105.
113 Ibid, 105-106.
dimensions and realistic bodies. Mannequins were not real women, but simply imagined bodies constructed by retailers and designers. New window displays and modern styles banished the old-fashioned mannequins and postures, substituting the wax dummies with highly styled faces set into avant-garde environments. These life-like dolls were and are mass-produced objects and reproductions of idealized feminine beauty. The mannequin imitating woman was strange, realistic and novel during the interwar period. It is no wonder that surrealist photographers, Huene included, took this strange new simulacra, that was reproduced all over the visible world of fashion, and reproduced it in their own photography.

Between the 1920s and 1940s, the term “mannequin” could refer not only to the dummies on display but also referred to live models, further confusing the female identity with a fake mannequin on exhibit for consumer pleasure. In fact, live models were not as welcome as mannequins because they were not able to fit into the circumscribed ideals of beauty that man-made, mass-produced dummies could. In other words, in the context of photography (both surrealist and fashion) the mannequin was a better, more useful version of the female form than actual living women. Its placement in society as a symbol of commodity knits it even closer to the identity of woman. Live models and mannequins both exemplify “the feminization of commodity aesthetics as a condition of the spectacularization of the Modern Woman.” The mannequin had finally replaced the image of woman in a consumer society that rejected her as not good enough. The spectacular modern woman became a spectacle and was conflated with and replaced by a literal object. Huene’s Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson merges the real woman

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114 Ibid, 106.
115 Ibid.
117 Conor, 109.
119 Milbank, 109.
with the artificial. The stoic, painted mask of the mannequin is supported, not by her neck, but by a living woman’s arm. The hands of the living woman animate the object-woman.

Dr. Liz Conor indicates that the “paradoxical status of the Mannequin was realized through the cultural interplay between constructions of the Modern Woman and the status of the woman-object in modern commodity displays.” 120 Mannequins furthered and confirmed the status of woman as object, commodity, and spectacle. Female bodies are associated with commodity exchange as well as the object of the gaze in modern society, and the mannequin is the fantasy object of perfected womanhood. While the image of Huene’s photograph of Antoine with One of His Creations suggests the idea of the female figure as object, the title immediately solidifies it. The female face is also the object of the penetrating male gaze of Antoine. With false lashes, a flawless face, and perfectly articulated lips, the photograph of the Mauboussin corsage clip displays a great degree of artificiality and commodity value. Nearly every aspect of the photograph can be purchased in modern society and can physically make up the woman.

The mannequin is the interwar modern woman. With her mask she can transform into anything and be anyone and do anything. She is the fantasy object that has replaced woman and she is gazed upon throughout urban streets standing in the place of the prostitute – the savage in the midst of modern civilization and an object of public pleasure, who navigates the margins of society becoming anything she wishes; “slender…cyclopean; now tiny and sparkling, now heavy and monumental.” 121 Huene sought to legitimize his work by participating in the contemporary dialogue on the female form and identity in the context of consumerism and commodification. His work with masks for Vogue consistently show the popular themes of fragmentation and

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120 Conor, 105-106.
121 Baudelaire, 36.
conflation of the female form with the mannequin and comment on the consumer product that the female body had become.

Importantly, Huene’s viewership, the readers of *Vogue* magazine, fundamentally differs from the audience of the surrealist group. It was necessary, therefore, to treat the female form in a different way than the other male artists did. In photographing the typically sexualized figure of the female mannequin in a non-sexualized way, more as a mask than a representation of the sexual, female body, Huene creates images that reject the male gaze. By appealing to a predominately female audience with his non-violent treatment of the female form, Huene’s surrealist endeavors are successful as fashion photographs and as artistic works.

The spectatorship and target audience of the fashion publication, *Vogue*, was (and is) generally female, which is quite different from the elitist and artistic group of surrealists, which was predominantly male. The goal of surrealist art and literature also differed from *Vogue* photographs and articles in its tendency “to arouse in the viewer a corresponding feeling of isolation.”122 The surrealist publication, *La Révolution surréaliste*, took on a scientific mode in order to legitimize itself. It resembled contemporary scientific periodicals such as *La Nature*. Various surrealist artists, like André Breton, de Chirico and Gauthier would report on dreams, which were followed by the automatic writings of Robert Desnos, Eluard, and Aragon.123 The goal of these publications and experiments was to set free the unconscious.124 The audience for so much Freudian thought and conversation was obviously meant to be male.

The presumed audience for consumerist literature, however, is female. As Andrews and Talbot mention, “women’s relationship with consumption is unavoidable and part of women’s

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122 Caws, 17.
123 Ibid, 19.
everyday life.” Conor goes as far as to say that retail and commerce are, in fact, “constituted by sex and sexual difference.” This gender distinction was exploited through display in marketing, advertising, magazines, and shop displays and windows, all based on seducing the female via sexed and sexualized displays, exhibitionism and commodities. Although the idea is contestable, the fact that it is sustained is important to an examination of female spectatorship of fashion magazines. Andrews and Talbot also state that in western capitalist societies consumerism is simply an integral part of being female, and that it is the public sphere where femininity is performed. The twentieth century saw the development of this new public space for women that provided a new independence and unprecedented movement. Along with these developments, fashion magazines targeting women and fostering their new role in consumerism became more popular, among which *Vogue* rose to a high reputation.

The consumer, as a viewer, is meant to be fascinated by the spectacle of images that he or she sees. Marxist critic Wolfgang Haug states that a consumer’s fascination is fostered by an economic system that places value on commodities’ appearances, rather than their use value. Objects that “fascinate,” or more accurately, the image of objects that “fascinate,” play to the consumer’s sexuality. Mulvey claims that fascination in film is something reinforced by already existing notions of fascination at work in a social structure. Fascination, according to Mulvey, is when the spectator simultaneously experiences affinity and repulsion. This is what occurs with the mannequin: viewers and spectators identify with the female shape, the fleshy skin color, the

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125 Conor, 113
126 Ibid, 113.
128 Ibid, 3.
129 Schneider, 51.
basic parts of the human form, and at the same time experience rejection and disidentification with the man-made, lifeless waxwork.

One example of this fascination with the spectacle of the mannequin in French literature before this period is Émile Zola’s novel, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883). In the narrative, Denise’s younger brother, Pépé’s response to the mannequins of the shop reflects the uncanniness of the figures and the “fascination” that Schneider and Mulvey discuss. Pépé was “overwhelmed by an anxious need to be hugged, at once enchanted and disturbed by the lovely ladies in the window.”

Mannequins are mechanical, almost automatons; they resemble humans, but their existence is deceptive. Huene’s *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson* initially confuses the viewer, not sure if the female figure is human or man-made. As Schneider argues, “a particularly favorable condition for awakening uncanny feelings is created when there is intellectual uncertainty whether an object is alive or not, and when an inanimate object becomes too much like an animate one.”

During a time of change and disillusion, the mannequin, like the automaton, reflected the soullessness of the interwar period in its uncanniness and fascination, which aided in its predominance in the arenas of art and fashion.

Naturalistic novels like *Au Bonheur des Dames* include discussions of the changing fashion world and its impact on society. Zola incorporates the mannequin as part of this discourse several times throughout the novel. Denise—the young, female protagonist—comes across a department store that completely occupies her thoughts and attention.

“…This building that seemed so enormous to her, brought a lump to her throat and left her standing, shaken, engrossed, forgetting everything else. The high door on the angle overlooking the Place Gaillon, entirely made of glass, rose as far as

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131 Schneider, 53.
the mezzanine, surrounded by a mass of heavily gilded ornamental mouldings.

Two allegorical figures, a pair of laughing women, leaning backwards with naked breasts, held between them the sign: *Au Bonheur des Dames.* 132

Young, female consumers are the intended audience for the fashion spectacle and Denise represents typical female spectators who gawk at windows and who are enchanted and overwhelmed by the paradise that included mannequins in poses of enjoyment. Shop windows themselves were a public spectacle, not only because they were looked at in the open streets, but also because their viewers became a spectacle. Department stores were ritualistic chapels “dedicated to the worship of womanly charms,” and even with the advent of fashion magazines, they have kept that high position. 133 The spectators of department stores would become the fascinated consumers of fashion magazines and of Huene’s photography.

Among the parallels between fashion and surrealist photography that I have discussed, the original context of both fashion and surrealist photographs serves as a connection between the two, along with their consumption in modern society. Many surrealist photographs were published in surrealist books, like André Breton’s *L’Amour fou*, as well as surrealist periodicals, like *Minotaure*, an example of the avant-garde magazines that were gaining importance in artistic movements during the early twentieth century, attest to the increased significance of printed media. 134 In these publications, surrealist photography served to intervene, strangely juxtapose, and confuse in its central position aside the text. The relationship of image with text in surrealist publications is similar to that of image and text in fashion magazines: the text is meant to enhance the intended experience for the spectator. The aesthetic created by this juxtaposition is

132 Ibid, 4.
133 Zola, 6.
134 Pass, 24.
different between the two styles, but both use it successfully to achieve their goals with regards to their potential viewers.

Barthes tells us that the fashion text has an authoritative voice and serves a didactic role and function. Artistic movements can be compared, in this instance, to the fashion industry and their manifestos to fashion publications. The *Surrealist Manifesto* likewise serves a didactic function by describing the purpose and intention of surrealism, as well as giving prophesies of mankind reaching truth and beauty through surrealism. Fashion magazines prophesy of coming changes in trends and declare what is beautiful. However, the text in fashion magazines functions in a completely different way than in surrealist publications. In a fashion magazine, the text next to a photograph repeats elements of the garment that are already visible in the image. The garment and the woman wearing it are consumed as a whole in the photograph, while the text stresses certain aspects and complements the image. This is dissimilar when contrasted with the surrealist magazine and its function of photograph and text. Surrealist publications like *Minotaure* and *La Révolution Surréaliste* included photographs accompanied by text that was not meant to illuminate, or compliment, but was rather oddly juxtaposed to contradict, to seem arbitrary, mindless, and bizarre. In *Vogue*, however, the text found next to "Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans" reads, “At the right you see one of the smartest of Chanel’s ideas for spring – gloves and scarf of taffeta printed in tidy little gingham checks. The ends of the scarf, with their bows, join together to make a crisp chou under your chin. The Aris gloves cross their palms with leather; from Best. The mannequin with the luscious lashes is by Pierre Imans.” In fashion, the text reinforces the message of the photograph, what the objects are and

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136 Ibid, 14.
that they are for sale, rather than contradicting the image as in surrealist publications. Therefore, the context of Huene’s work rejected a part of surrealism in order to address the intended female viewer.

Especially between the world wars, the producers and consumers of fashion were predominately women. Pass acknowledges that surrealism infiltrated daily life in the thirties, which was influenced by many more artists than simply by André Breton and his small circle. Although mass culture had been devalued because it was understood as feminine and entailed passive consumption rather than active production and was described as “seductive, illusory, shallow and passive,” women were playing a more active role during the interwar period. Pass quotes Andreas Huyssen when he says, “certain forms of mass culture, with their obsession with gendered violence are more of a threat to women than to men. After all, it has always been men rather than women who have had real control over the productions of mass culture.” However, between the two world wars, this tradition was broken and women were actively creating, contributing to, and controlling the fashion industry.

The audience and spectators of Vogue were, by majority, female; they were actively consuming fashion, even simply by looking at the pages of Vogue. It is easy to assume that male designers, photographers, and editors dominate the fashion world, however, in the early twentieth century this was simply not the case. The editor in chief of Vogue from 1914 to 1952 was Edna Woolman Chase and most of the editors and writers for Harper’s Bazaar were women. Images of women in fashion publications are commonplace, but it is not my purpose to examine why this is the case. Rather, I want to address the fact that the intended audience for fashion

138 Pass, 18.
139 Ibid, 19.
140 Ibid, 35.
141 Ibid, 35-37.
publications is typically female, meaning that fashion images of women are created and intended for consumption by other women, which further indicates a different gaze at play than the male one – what Pass calls a homosocial gaze.\textsuperscript{142} Huene was a participant in the creation of the new gaze, even as a man taking the photos. His works were intended for a female audience that was not meant to see them through the male gaze.

Mulvey’s contribution to the discourse of the gaze contradicts the previous argument, stating that a female spectator assumes the gaze of the male with a controlling and voyeuristic gaze, or it may be a narcissistic gaze where she identifies with the female image through likeness and recognition. Pass, however, makes the case for a completely different, performative gaze where the female spectator looks at the clothes, the jewelry, the object being advertised, and rather than assuming a male or narcissistic gaze, she places herself in the place of the photographed image. She imagines herself in the clothes and where she will wear them. Identification is what fashion magazines hope for because they ultimately want to sell the advertised product, therefore Pass’s performative gaze gains integrity. Huene’s \textit{Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson} does not conform to traditional, sexualized images of women in advertisements. This photograph exemplifies an instance where the male gaze is rejected as the mannequin mask has an uninviting, rigid face that confronts the viewer directly. The eyes are closed, further rejecting the gaze. She has no body at which to stare or control and she is an object, not a woman in the flesh.

The female gaze in surrealist novels is processed through a “screen of male desire.”\textsuperscript{143} In 1928 André Breton published his novel, \textit{Nadja}. Surrealist scholar, Ian Walker, notes that Nadja’s

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid, 16-17.
presence in the book is actually absence.\textsuperscript{144} The source of the gaze is the woman who is the object of the male author’s desire.\textsuperscript{145} The images of Nadja in the book conceal more than they uncover, in the usual surrealist way (Fig. 28). They create a constant interaction of presence and absence, revealing and contradicting, fact and fiction.\textsuperscript{146} As an inaccessible, elitist style, this interplay between the feminine and masculine gaze could not have become popular for a fashion publication like \textit{Vogue}. Rather, Huene conformed some surrealist aesthetics to a more female-dominated spectatorship.

An extreme example of the male dominance in surrealism, Hans Bellmer’s photographs of his \textit{Poupées} give disgusting, distorted and sadistic images of violated dolls. Freud taught that woman was a constant threat due to her penis envy, which would cause her to steal man’s power by castration. The female dummies Bellmer photographs are scorned, bound, mutilated, punished, raped, and beaten by his hands for his pleasure and so that he has complete control over the threatening female body.\textsuperscript{147} Cher Krause Knight aptly describes surrealism as “…‘a men’s club’ reinforcing and perpetuating long-standing power relationships in which men reigned supreme, producing artworks for a definitively male audience.”\textsuperscript{148} Huene’s employment of surrealist aesthetics is, however, successful, even though his audience is predominately female, because he avoids the violence and abuse common to the artwork of many surrealist personalities.

The popularity and acceptance of the mannequin in fashion photography, and thus in Huene’s work, can be analyzed through the examination of the modern shop window display, a

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid, 109.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, 113.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, 227.
sign of modernity in urban centers like Paris. Their function, though introduced earlier, is similar to fashion publications – they sell by tantalizing the imagination. The glass window, like the page of the magazine, separates the female consumer from the objects of her desire and confers a sense of mystery and longing. Schneider states, “It may be the glamour of stillness that attracts viewers to the windows – even to the point of participation.”¹⁴⁹ This provides more evidence for Pass’s idea of a performative role for the viewer, a participation role. The nineteenth century saw the beginning of department stores and a new form of display that included new forms of sensations. Shoppers were not used to seeing goods from the streets, and magazines like Vogue were not created until the beginning of the twentieth century, so this kind of exposure to commodities changed the relationship between consumer and commodity as well as the way in which consumers experienced fashion forever.

During the world wars, shopping displays, especially in Paris, were determined to dispel the depression of war and became beacons of liveliness, cheer, and “normaley” with their bright lights and attractive colors. Electric light was still novel and presented a completely new feel to dark streets when placed in shop windows.¹⁵⁰ Businesses were producing extremely lifelike mannequins while mechanical and special effects were utilized in fashion display.¹⁵¹ The twentieth century also began to see the art of window dressing.¹⁵² This can be seen in Cavalcanti’s 1926 film Rien que les hueres, where the public is able to see a male employee undress and dress the frozen female figure of the mannequin. Female consumers were buying an image of the mannequin, whether seen in a shop window, or on the pages of Vogue. These new cultural facets forced the general public to learn new and proper behaviors when looking into a

¹⁴⁹ Schneider, 2.
¹⁵¹ Ibid, 184.
¹⁵² Ibid, 181.
window (thought to be a vulgar activity for country bumpkins) and looking through a magazine – both of which included mannequins. These stoic female bodies created public discomfort and some window displays were required to be covered when the mannequins were naked, or being dressed.

The aims of visual merchandising are to initially attract the attention of the viewer, arouse their interest, and create desire that will lead to a decision to buy.153 *Applied Visual Merchandising* by Mills, Moorman and Paul, focus their discussion on shop window displays; however, I believe these ideas are easily applicable to fashion print advertising. Displays, whether window or print, insinuate the merchandise shown will give pleasure, comfort and improved appearance.154 Surrealist goals, on the other hand, were to create strange juxtapositions and associations, to jar the viewer. Images of mannequins are uncanny and unnatural and, therefore, easily fulfill the goals for surrealist photographers. Why, then, are strange depictions of mannequins in fashion photography successful if their purpose is to show that the product will give pleasure, comfort, and improved appearance? The answer lies in the new female spectator rather than the male dominated one of surrealism.

Obviously, the readership for *Vogue* was a decidedly female audience, so why did these disembodied heads work in a popular fashion editorial? Huene’s images, although they adopt many aspects of the surrealist aesthetic, such as the uncanny and haunting effect, are not as overtly violent when compared with Bellmer’s *Poupée* photographs. Huene’s mannequins, while not chopped up into pieces and put back together like some strange monster of Frankenstein, have still encountered some brutality. The steely cool face of the *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson* conjures ideas of beheading as a solitary arm raises the beautifully silent, mask-like head. The

154 Ibid, 6.
title of life mask conjures the idea of it being a death mask, and as such the viewer imagines the
title of life mask conjures the idea of it being a death mask, and as such the viewer imagines the
face of a dead Dolores Wilkinson while Huene photographs her “life-mask.” Huene’s 1934
image *Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans*, includes another beautiful
mannequin head with long eyelashes, some wavy hair, and rouged lips. The Chanel scarf and
glove become the menacing factors in this photograph as the scarf wraps around the neck of the
bodiless mannequin head, threatening to strangle, while the glove looks like it is filled out, as if it
someone was wearing it, yet there is no wrist or arm or body, only a dismembered hand and
head. The ominous scarf and gloves stimulate ideas of sadism and masochism, exemplified by
Jacques-André Boiffard’s surrealist photographs of women wearing leather masks that cover the
entire head. These images are violent and the masks that seem to smother the women, with only
small slits for the mouth and nose, are obviously sadistic. One photograph depicts a woman
handcuffed with her arms chained to the ceiling above her head, while another has a scarf of
chains that strangle her throat (Fig. 29, Fig. 30, and Fig. 31). Huene’s images, while
implementing surreal aesthetics, are more successful at attracting female spectators because they
maintain a popular aesthetic and reference to high art, but do not treat the female body perverse
violence or derision.

Violent treatment of the female body through the simulacrum of the mannequin can be
exemplified not only by Hans Bellmer, but also by Man Ray’s use of female busts and
mannequins. While many of Huene’s images include classical sculptures, busts and torsos, his
portrayal is one of elegance, grace, and undisputed beauty, which is absolutely not the case for
surrealist photographers, like Man Ray. In his *Venus Restaurée* (Venus Restored, 1936) he
photographs a white, classical torso without arms and head. This female bust conjures up ideas
of sadomasochism and bondage because she has been tied up and bound with a rope (Fig. 32). Bellmer and Man Ray’s photographs both include the violently sexualized female torso – vulnerable, misshapen, abused and fragmented. Kristen Hoving explains that it is “easy to see the misogynist intentions of surrealism at work” in these beheaded and disarmed bodies, but that the torso is more complex due to the long history and discourse of the classical, idealized female body. In this case, however, the torso has had conceptual and sexual violence enacted upon it.

Surrealist photographers like Man Ray, Kertesz and others used photographic strategies that “defamiliarized” the human (especially female) body. Huene’s use of surrealism in his fashion photographs appeal to the popular aesthetic of the time, but widens the availability of the images by avoiding the violence and abuse evident in other artists’ work. This aesthetic makes his work valuable to the fashion industry, while his association with the surrealist movement gives it more legitimacy.

Amidst the turbulent changes of the interwar period, surrealist photographers employed their medium to create visual representations of the philosophy to which they subscribed. Portrayals of the unconscious, the uncanny, fetishes, and fantasies played a major role in visual culture, their photos contributing to the high art of the time. Huene’s mannequin images for Vogue during the 1930s draw from this artistic style in many ways in order to solidify and give credibility to his work as fine art. He employs the same medium and incorporates surrealist aesthetic and motifs, such as the uncanny, the fetish, the mannequin, and the Pygmalion myth of creation. Huene’s images of masks and mannequins are complex as they draw from modernism and surrealism. They contribute to the commodification of the female body and reassert her objectification as they are fragmented, cropped, fetishized, and some closely framed to an

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155 Hoving, 132.
156 Ibid, 133.
157 Krauss and Livingston, 60.
uncomfortable degree. He is the male artist who dominates and controls these scenes with the angles, cropping, setting, lighting, framing, and subject matter. However, Huene’s images do not aggressively and violently objectify the female body to the extent of surrealist photographs. Moreover, these photographs of women are not truly women at all, but plastic mannequin masks and heads, deepening this complexity in which he plays. With his images of the mannequin and masks, he involves himself in larger dialogues, such as the identity of the interwar modern woman and a response during a time of male anxiety, the commodification of the female figure, the changing female gaze, and the popular theme of the primitive, thus asserting himself as an artist and solidifying his position among significant surrealists.

George Hoyningen-Huene’s surrealist images have been largely overlooked in academic study of the surrealist movement, along with other fashion photographers of the time. Many other artists of renown, likewise fashion photographers, such as Cecil Beaton, Martin Munkácsi, Erwin Blumenfeld, and Horst P. Horst, join Huene in his work that, although for commercial purposes, inherently demands more attention as a part of the greater artistic conversation of the period, proving to serve a higher function in art history than previously believed.
Fig. 1. Giorgio de Chirico, The Duet, 1917.
Fig. 2. Carlo Carrà, *Il Gentilono Briaco (The Drunken Gentleman)*, 1916.
Fig. 3. Constantin Brancusi, *Mademoiselle Pogany*, 1913.
Fig. 4. George Hoyningen-Huene, *Life-mask of Dolores Wilkinson*, *Vogue*, Paris, 1933.
Fig. 5. Man Ray, cover of *La Révolution surréaliste*, 15 July, 1925.
Fig. 6. P.D. Viviez, *Change-moi cette tête*, 1787.
Fig. 7. Morgue Interior, from Jean-Henri Marlet, *Le nouveau tableau de Paris*, 1821-24.
Fig. 8. George Hoyningen-Huene, *Scarf and Gloves by Chanel, Mannequin by Pierre Imans, Vogue*, Paris 1934.
Fig. 10. Man Ray, *Tears (Larmes)*, c. 1930.
Fig. 11. George Hoyningen-Huene, *Antoine with One of His Creations*, *Vogue*, Paris, 1933.
Fig. 12. Hans Bellmer, *Doll (La Poupée)*, 1936.
Fig. 13. Man Ray, *La Mode au Congo*, *Bazaar*, September, 1937.
Fig. 15. Protective facemasks, illustrated in “Aboutissements de la mécanique,” Variétés, 2/9 January 15, 1930.
Fig. 16. Henri Matisse, *Portrait of André Derain*, 1905.
Fig. 17. Emil Nolde, *Mask Still Life III*, 1911.
Fig. 18. Eduardo Benito, cover October 1, *French Vogue*, 1926.
Fig. 19. Eduardo Benito, cover March 1, *Vogue*, 1931.
Fig. 20. Georges Lepape, cover August 30, *Vogue*, 1931.
Fig. 21. Advertisement for Pierre Imans, *Figures de Cire*, 1930.
Fig. 22. George Hoyningen-Huene, *Colette Salomon*, *Vogue*, Paris, 1927.
Fig. 23. Hannah Höch, *Dompteuse (Tamer)*, ca. 1930.
Fig. 24. Eugène Atget, Paris, 1925.
Fig. 25. Mannequin by Marcel Duchamp at the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*, Paris, 1938.
Fig. 26. Photograph by Raoul Ubac, Mannequin by André Masson at the Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme, Paris, 1938.
Fig. 27. Man Ray, *Noire et Blanche*, French *Vogue*, May, 1926.
Fig. 28. Photomontage of Nadja’s eyes, *Nadja*, 1964 by André Breton.
Fig. 29. Jacques-André Boiffard, *Untitled*, 1930.
Fig. 30. Jacques-André Boiffard, *Untitled*, ca. 1930.
Fig. 31. Jacques André Boiffard, *Untitled*, ca. 1930.
Fig. 32. Man Ray, *Venus Restaurée, Moule en Platre et Corde*, 1936.


“Vogue’s Eye View of the Mode.” *Vogue* (November 15, 1933): 35.


