Autumn's best dressed books

A look at the latest fashion page turners

Dovima (left) and Audrey Hepburn in 'Funny Face' (1957)

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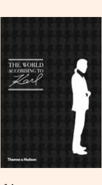
Claire Holland and David Hayes AUGUST 30 2013

From witty one-liners and pages filled with charming fashion illustrations to, well, "Pretty Much Everything"; the new season's crop of fashion books are here. It is just what your coffee table has been waiting for.

The World According to Karl, Thames & Hudson, £18.95 (published September 16)



Karl Lagerfeld is no stranger to controversy; he likes to create as much of a statement with his provocative comments as he does with his designs. *The World According to Karl* is a collection of quotations – his "Karlisms" – that include his pronouncements on fashion, love, politics and art. Often controversial: "Frustration is the mother of crime. I'm afraid there would be much more crime if it weren't for prostitutes and porno films", occasionally profound: "Art is something you feel. You don't need to own it"; but always outspoken – thankfully Lagerfeld doesn't believe in self-editing.

Special features: witty illustrations by Charles Ameline that play on Lagerfeld's signature look.

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Adam & Yves by Gladys Perint Palmer, Firefall Editions, $39.95 (out now)

Journalist and fashion illustrator Gladys Perint Palmer describes her second book as "a handwritten, tongue-in-cheek history of fashion." Opening with Adam and Eve and going on to Yves Saint Laurent and beyond, she neatly juxtaposes epoch-defining moments in history with her irreverent drawings. While the history runs chronologically, the illustrations – many from her archive of catwalk drawings – relate to the text but do not precisely illustrate it. Perint Palmer treats her lucky subjects like exotic species with her sweeping ink strokes subtly extending necks, or exaggerating a posture, to create an air of (flattering) otherworldliness.

Special features: play spot the fashion folk: is that really Suzy Menkes as Madame de Pompadour? Oh yes it is.

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Illustration Now! Fashion edited by Julius Wiedemann, Taschen, £34.99 (published mid-September)

Featuring more than 350 works by 90 artists, this book presents a comprehensive overview of the most up-to-date styles and trends in fashion illustration. Collage is widely used, a reflection of the art world's ongoing fascination with the "found" object and photographs. And artists such as Maren Esdar, Lina Bodén and Ëlodie go beyond simply copying a catwalk look to create fantasy worlds around the clothes that are full of the eerie distortions of surrealism and fairy tales. But it is the old tradition of ink and paint on paper that stands out, particularly in the work of minimalists such as Aurore de La Morinerie and Cecilia Carlstedt.

Special features: the prints of sketches are reproduced complete with charming smudges of paint, spots of ink and wrinkles of unstretched watercolour paper.

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The Fashion Book, Phaidon, £39.95 (published October 7)

This is a veritable "who's who" of the fashion world. Updated from the 2001 original, this weighty tome now features a further 65 new entries, including well-established designers such as Hussein Chalayan, Roland Mouret and Lanvin's creative director, Alber Elbaz. Both Victoria and David Beckham make their debut too, under the title of designer and icon respectively, along with zeitgeist-defining entries such as blogger Scott Schuman (aka The Sartorialist) and Net-a-Porter founder Natalie Massenet, as well as designers of the moment Alexander Wang and Mary Katrantzou.

Special features: the subjects are arranged alphabetically rather than thematically – so Missoni's iconic zigzag stripes are happily matched by the trademark pleats of Issey Miyake.

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Pretty Much Everything by Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, Taschen, £44.99 (published October)

This compilation of the work of Dutch photographers Lamsweerde and Matadin is a slimmed-down version of a limited-edition book that was priced at a hefty £450. Tracing their career from the late 1980s, the book highlights the diversity of the pair's work, which straddles art and fashion. The plates are a mix of fashion editorial, advertising, art works and celebrity portraiture, including shots of Lady Gaga, Clint Eastwood, Gisele Bündchen, Rachel Weiss and Kate Moss.

Special features: the book comes with a cool sheet of stickers so you can personalise the cover.

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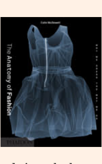
The Anatomy of Fashion: Why We Dress the Way We Do by Colin McDowell, Phaidon, £59.95 (published October 2)



The human body is at the heart of McDowell's ambitious 358-page thesis on fashion, covering the development of dress over the past 40,000 years. Yes, prehistoric to the present day. Packed with fascinating pub-quiz facts – ancient Greek women were the first to wear bras, white is the colour of mourning in India and shoes didn't have different shapes for left and right feet until the 1860s – and more than 450 colour images of everything from henna tattoos and skin piercing to designs by Yves Saint Laurent and Alexander McQueen to paintings by Jan van Eyck and Michelangelo. Aimed at fashion students and students of fashion alike.

Special features: weighty enough to double up as a handy doorstop.

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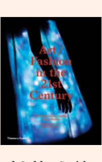
Art/Fashion in the 21st Century by Mitchell Oakley Smith and Alison Kubler, Thames & Hudson, £32 (published November 11)



Australia-based Oakley Smith and Kubler chart the rise of the rapidly growing interplay between fashion and art over the past decade with 250 colour photographs of cool collaborations. Does fashion want to be taken seriously? Does art want an invite to all the best parties? Who knows. In the fashion corner we have the likes of Marc Jacobs, Miuccia Prada, Hussein Chalayan and Viktor & Rolf – and for art's sake, names such as Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Jeff Koons, Tracey Emin and Zaha Hadid.

Special features: living, breathing art/fashion collaboration Daphne Guinness has written the foreword.

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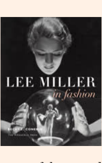
Lee Miller in Fashion by Becky E Conekin, Thames & Hudson, £19.95 (September 2)/The Monacelli Press, $45 (published October 8)



Recognised as one of the most distinguished photographers of the 20th century, Lee Miller was a busy woman. In her mid-twenties she made the unprecedented leap from Jazz-Age fashion model to fashion photographer, later became a celebrated Surrealist under the guidance of lover Man Ray, then joined the war effort during the second world war, documenting everything from the liberation of concentration camps to the abandoned apartment of Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress, for the pages of Vogue. Here Conekin focuses on the fashion, in Miller's modelling work, photographs and illustrations.

Special features: the devil is in the detail – many unseen archive photographs, contact sheets and memos bring Miller's wit and daring into vivid focus.

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A Queer History of Fashion: From Closet to Catwalk, edited by Valerie Steele, Yale University Press, £30 (published September 26)

Steele, who is director of the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, edits wordy contributions from acclaimed scholars such as Jonathan D Katz and Elizabeth Wilson looking at fashion through the prism of sexuality – from 18th-century dandies to the influence of camp icons such as Marlene Dietrich and Leigh Bowery, via Oscar Wilde. But it's not all serious political discourse and polemic; fashion gets a look in too, from Yves Saint Laurent's Le Smoking to the "double bride" finale on the spring/summer 2013 Chanel catwalk.

Special features: no clothes at all on the cover, just a naked shot of model Jenny Shimizu wielding – what else? – a giant lipstick.

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Jean Patou: A Fashionable Life by Emmanuelle Polle, Flammarion, £65 (published September 24)

Coco Chanel's haute couture rival in the 1920s and 1930s finally gets the full archival treatment. And about time too. There is so much more to Jean Patou than perfume – though his scent Joy is still a bestseller to this day – as it was he who pioneered jersey sportswear, daytime pyjamas, knit swimwear and suntan oil. Author Emmanuelle Polle draws from previously unseen family archives of photographs, diaries, client lists and sketches to create a portrait of a man "of his own time" – and though it was short-lived (he died at the age of 49) what a devilishly glamorous time it was.

Special features: the garments pulled from the archive have been lovingly photographed especially for this book.

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