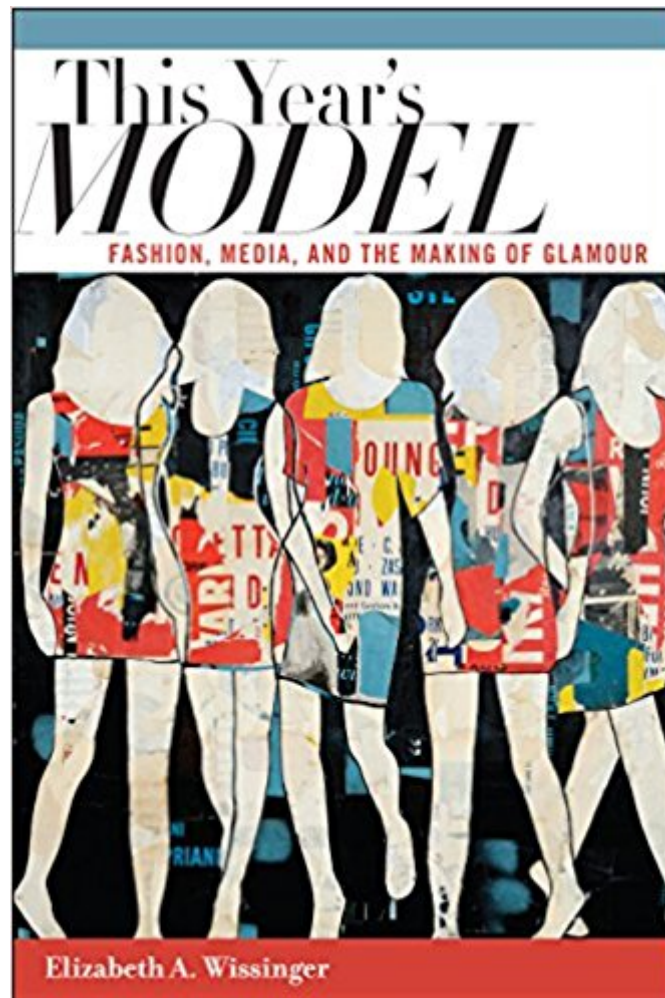




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This Year's Model: Fashion, Media, And The Making Of Glamour



Synopsis

Over the last four decades, the fashion modeling industry has become a lightning rod for debates about Western beauty ideals, the sexual objectification of women, and consumer desire. Yet, fashion models still captivate, embodying all that is cool, glam, hip, and desirable. They are a fixture in tabloids, magazines, fashion blogs, and television. Why exactly are models so appealing? And how do these women succeed in so soundly holding our attention? *This Year's Model*, Elizabeth Wissinger weaves together in-depth interviews and research at model castings, photo shoots, and runway shows to offer a glimpse into the life of the model throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Once an ad hoc occupation, the "model life" now involves a great deal of physical and virtual management of the body, or what Wissinger terms "glamour labor." Wissinger argues that glamour labor—the specialized modeling work of self-styling, crafting a "look," and building an image—has been amplified by the rise of digital media, as new technologies make tinkering with the body's form and image easy. Models can now present self-fashioning, self-surveillance, and self-branding as essential behaviors for anyone who is truly in the know and in fashion. Countless regular people make it their mission to achieve this ideal, not realizing that technology is key to creating the unattainable standard of beauty the model upholds—and as Wissinger argues, this has been the case for decades, before Photoshop even existed. Both a vividly illustrated historical survey and an incisive critique of fashion media, *This Year's Model* demonstrates the lasting cultural influence of this unique form of embodied labor.

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Customer Reviews

“In a sympathetic yet critical view of the labor of glamour, Wissinger presents rich ethnographic work augmented with interviews and the close integration of media and press materials on the historical trajectory of the modeling and fashion industry from the mid-1980s through the present.”—Choice

“Elizabeth Wissinger has produced a really interesting and very timely book on fashion modeling that clearly and insightfully dissects the industry practices since its early developments in the twentieth century to the present day. This is very valuable book; a pleasure to read.”—Joanne Entwistle, author of *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress, and Modern Social Theory*

In a thoroughly fresh analysis, Wissinger uses the fashion model as a lens to theorize changing intersections of technology and the body. With an eye for rich ethnographic detail, she takes us inside the world of modeling and skillfully back out again into the macro historical changes in embodiment and technology that modeling exemplifies. *This Year's Model* delivers a rich and troubling history of how we have all come to manage ourselves as brands. It's the kind of book that will change how you think about your own body's place in our high-tech world.”—Ashley Mears, author of *Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model*

Elizabeth Wissinger is an Associate Professor of Sociology at BMCC/City University of New York and Associate Professor of Fashion Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center.

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