

A STUDY OF VISUAL NARRATIVE IN FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY PRODUCTION AND STYLING

KHALED, A. M. S. M.^{1*} – SHARIF, N. M.²

¹ *Faculty of Communication, Visual Art and Computing, Universiti Selangor, Selangor, Malaysia.*

² *College of Creative Art, University Teknologi MARA Cawangan Melaka Kampus Bandaraya Melaka, Melaka, Malaysia.*

**Corresponding author
e-mail: fendishas[at]unisel.edu.my*

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Abstract. Fashion photography entails the adept organisation of visual elements to effectively communicate a cohesive narrative. An adept artist has the ability to enhance the storyline and unveil the fundamental nature of fashion, establishing a seamless synergy between models, garments, and the surroundings. The proposed study strategy employs a hybrid technique that integrates optimistic and interpretive viewpoints, as well as pragmatism, to effectively tackle these difficulties. The utilisation of fashion additives is essential in producing visually compelling photos. Fashion photographers strive to curate and attach garments, accessories, and objects in order to establish an ambiance, convey a narrative, or convey a message through photographic imagery. They employ action, instruments, accessories, and bodily gestures to capture the subject matter. Fashion photography is a form of visual communication that captures the fundamental aspects of style and beauty. Fashion photographers purposefully employ deliberate signalling gestures and stances to produce photographs that possess a powerful emotional resonance and effectively convey messages. The objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process involved in constructing visual narratives in fashion photography. This will be achieved by studying the crucial elements that contribute to the effective transmission of signals. The outcomes may influence the course of outstanding style and fashion photography and assist photographic practitioners in improving their skills and productivity.

Keywords: *styling, fashion photography, visual narrative, gesture movement integration*

Introduction

The fashion manufacturing business has seen substantial expansion and attracted much attention lately (Pöllänen et al., 2019). Fashion additives significantly influence fashion photography by enhancing the visual attractiveness of images. The primary aim of a fashion photographer is to meticulously choose and position garments, accessories, and props to create a distinct ambiance and communicate a certain message via photographic imagery. This method has several roles that enhance the aesthetic appeal and economic advantages of fashion photography. Their duty involves choosing suitable attire that enhances the model's attributes and corresponds with the overarching subject of each photographic session. Moreover, it is essential for fashion artists to possess a thorough comprehension of current fashion trends and the capacity to anticipate future trends to maintain the continual relevance and allure of their creations within the dynamic fashion market. The decisions in fashion photography show the potency of visual narrative. By meticulously selecting and strategically arranging diverse components such as apparel, accessories, and props, fashion photographers may produce photographs that transcend conventional fashion representation. This visual

depiction functions as a medium to express cultural, social, and personal narratives, contesting established conventions and advocating for inclusiveness. Fashion photography may educate viewers on the significance of representation and diversity via visual expression. The essence of fashion photography transcends mere dress and accessory choices; it encompasses the art of articulating a story with significant depth. The amalgamation of apparel, accessories, and general aesthetic functions as a medium through which artists articulate the essence of a topic or brand. Each meticulously selected detail enriches the narrative, elicits emotions, and accurately communicates the message desired by the artistic team. Fashion photography serves as a potent tool for constructing visual tales that explore the intricacies of culture, identity, and communal dialogue. Diverse functions, processes, and practices in this domain exhibit variety regarding fundamental ideas, viewpoints, the role of facilitators, and their constraints. Nevertheless, it has been noted that these factors engage with each other. The notion of commercial growth pertains to many essential roles, each including those parts. It has been noted that the manufacturing function employs distinct methods and approaches used just in commercial communication with all relevant parties (Pöllänen et al., 2019).

The significance of movement in fashion photography is in its capacity to enhance picture depth and communicate profound meanings. By deliberately integrating movement into their photos, fashion photographers may express emotions, attitudes, and ideas that transcend the sheer display of apparel or accessories. These moves include complex hand gestures and emotive body language, establishing a link among the model, the attire, and the viewer. An examination of movement in fashion photography reveals how deliberate motion enriches the story and communicates themes within fashion imagery. Flusser contends that the mobility of signals in fashion photography transcends simple decoration or secondary significance, serving instead as a medium of communication and deliberate self-expression. Through intentional signal manipulation, photographers may shape viewers' perceptions and interpretations of pictures, ultimately affecting society values and cultural narratives. As a fashion photographer, it is essential to comprehend the importance of storytelling via visual tales, with the use of gestures including body language, emotional expressions, and the technical elements of photography. The formation of a visual narrative inside a single picture is a cooperative endeavour between a proficient photographer and a sculptor. The integration of imaginative vision with stylistic proficiency facilitates the production of pictures that not only exhibit fashion but also incite contemplation and encourage change, contingent upon the target audience. Fashion photography beyond the basic documentation of contemporary trends; it represents a visual dialogue that transcends temporal and geographical limitations. Each picture signifies a distinct chapter in the narrative of fashion, a collective, and an ever-evolving manifestation of personality. Mastering fashion photography involves not just technical expertise but also a creative odyssey that integrates artistic vision, technical competency, and the capacity to inspire and encourage contemplation via painstakingly composed photographs. By judiciously selecting relief components, photographers may produce photos that emphasise the inherent attributes of garments or accessories while simultaneously communicating messages and eliciting emotions. Visual representation has the capacity to enlighten the audience on contemporary fashion trends, cultural influences, and social values. It is essential for fashion photographers to acknowledge the significance and influence of photography in defining notions of beauty, diversity, and inclusion within the fashion business (Frosh, 2020). Khaled et al. (2023) assert that displaying many styles, body

types, and cultural representations in art may question society conventions and promote a more inclusive and open sector. By presenting models from many ethnic origins and numerous body types, we may contest traditional beauty standards and foster a reassessment of prevailing notions of style and allure (Skjulstad, 2017). Ultimately, fashion photography transcends mere visual appeal; it functions as a conduit for awareness, empowerment, and social revolution.

Literature review

In portrait and fashion photography, the creator's participation is essential for generating visually and artistically compelling photos. The contributions of artists, choreographers, and art direction in portrait and fashion photography are essential. Individuals collaborating with photographers and creative teams guarantee that each component inside the frame amplifies the intended visual story. Polowy (1989) assert that stylists are crucial in augmenting the physical aesthetics of models and assuring their conformity to the intended image or persona. Pöllänen et al. (2019) assert that fashion stylists are tasked with meticulously picking and arranging clothes, accessories, and props to accentuate the model's attributes and elevate their aesthetic appeal. The harmonious integration of all elements in a picture is accomplished by the teamwork of the photographer, model, hair stylist, and fashion designer, thus realising the visual story and intended goals. Moreover, it is essential for designers to be abreast of current fashion trends and proactively foresee emerging trends to provide visually attractive and pertinent insights (Kaya, 2019). Fashion designers significantly contribute to the visual presentation by meticulously selecting accessories, identifying appropriate backdrops or atmospheres, and executing essential adjustments to attain a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing outcome. It is essential for children to comprehend the interplay between different materials and colours, as well as how it elicits emotions or communicates a visual story. Hall-Duncan (2010) emphasises the need of meticulous attention to detail and a profound comprehension of how elements like lighting and backdrop manifest on camera.

A designer must possess a thorough understanding of the brand, the target demographic, and the visual message the picture intends to communicate. Successful cooperation and communication with photographers and other creative professionals is crucial for attaining cohesive and significant outcomes. This entails the sharing of ideas, receptiveness to criticism, and its incorporation into the overarching objectives (Pöllänen et al., 2019). The design and direction of art in fashion photography include the production of compelling creative representations that accurately communicate the distinctive attributes of fashion items. The use of design and orientation in fashion photography is crucial for constructing a visual story that captivates both the audience and buyers. This approach entails meticulous evaluation of several components like attire, props, backdrop, illumination, postures, and forms to construct a unified and compelling visual story. Artists and art directors cooperate to actualise the brand's vision and message via meticulous selection and arrangement of these elements. Designers are crucial in the selection and arrangement of clothes and accessories to achieve an aesthetically pleasing result. The art director manages the creative vision of the portrayal, collaborating closely with the photographer to create a unified visual story that integrates costumes, props, locations, and lighting, all working in concert to provide visually impactful photos (*Figure 1*).



Figure 1. Poses and styling done by art director.

A proficient fashion photographer exhibits a range of talents and attributes that enhance their success in the profession. They possess an extensive comprehension of the organisation and its personnel, together with a thorough awareness of the ethical standards of fashion houses in business activities. Fashion magazine photographers possess a profound comprehension of the trends and traditions inherent to the field. A crucial element for fashion photographers to adeptly capture the spirit of the contemporary cultural milieu is their awareness of the newest trends in the fashion sector. A proficient photographer have the capability to produce enduring photographs that consistently attract attention throughout time. A research by Tamsin Blanchard in 2021 shown that Avedon significantly influenced the creative aims and potential of the genre. The person previously said that when emotions or facts are graphically depicted, they undergo a metamorphosis, developing from objective reality to expressions of subjective judgement. The issue on the role of errors in photography remains contentious. Each picture has an exceptional degree of precision. Nevertheless, none of the aforementioned claims can be regarded as an accurate representation of reality. Richard Avedon's photographic oeuvre is recognised for its provocative and contemplative qualities, subverting the norms of photography prevalent during his era. Avedon's influence is pivotal in the transformation of photography from a traditional medium to an instrument for artistic expression. The artist's most renowned piece is entitled "Dovima with Elephants." The material was first released as a 14-page piece focused on Paris fashion in the September 1955 edition of Harper's Bazaar. The artwork features a woman clad in an exquisite Dior gown, elegantly situated between two elephants in a circus environment. The artist's portrait is renowned for its unique black and white aesthetic and its capacity to express authentic and personal feelings inside a structured format (*Figure 2*).



Figure 2. *'Dovima with Elephants' is the quintessential fashion photograph by Richard Avedon. Evening gown by Dior, Cirque d'Hiver, Paris, August 1955.*

Fashion photography choreography is the meticulous orchestration and direction of creative components to construct a unified and captivating visual narrative that engrosses the viewer in the realm of fashion and encourages engagement with the brand. This book examines the significance of self-reflection and creative concentration in fashion photography, which is essential for crafting visually captivating narratives that connect both the audience and customers efficiently. This research's findings may impact high-quality fashion photography and improve the efficacy and efficiency of professional photographic approaches. Fashion photography requires meticulous attention to several elements, such as attire, props, backdrops, illumination, postures, and motion, to construct a unified and compelling visual story. Fashion photography choreography is a collaborative endeavour involving several professions, including photographers, magazine editors, fashion editors, stylists, and art directors. The integration of investigation and creative direction is crucial in fashion photography to construct a story that successfully communicates the brand's message and engages the audience. This approach includes a thorough analysis of components like costumes, props, scene design, lighting, postures, and motions to construct a unified and impactful visual story that engages the audience while communicating the creative message and brand.

Materials and Methods

The creation of narratives in fashion photography necessitates a proficient capability to produce visually compelling images that may impact the viewer. Developing skill and establishing a successful career in fashion photography is a protracted path for photographers, which entails achieving rapid recognition. Photographers meet many

problems that need a command of rigorous scientific knowledge, acquired via either formal or informal education. The distinct narrative of a photographer is influenced by their diverse experiences, paralleling the progression of photographic technology from analogue to digital, enabled by specific software. This study will include observations and interviews with photographers and collaborators, including art directors and stylists, engaged in each fashion photography session to evaluate the process that results in alterations to aspects of fashion photography. This will be accomplished by examining the dynamics and stylistic identity in the creation of fashion photography, alongside the competencies in art and fashion photography, and the collaborative connections important to linking aesthetic ideals within the workflow of fashion photography production.

Results and Discussion

Interviews were held with photographers, art directors, and stylists throughout the project. Unstructured interviews were conducted to investigate the collaborative dynamics of aesthetic ideals in fashion photography creation. Each session involves direct observation at the filming site and an analysis of the applied procedure. Preliminary observations indicated that each fashion photography session is executed in groups of many personnel who assume responsibilities and do activities as dictated by the editor or creative director to effectively realise the project in accordance with the predetermined plan. The collaboration of each participant entails fulfilling their designated roles by implementing the art director's plan and adhering to the photographer's guidance in technical photography aspects, including camera equipment, lighting techniques, and enhancing specific angles through the synchronised actions of the photographer, art director, stylist, and model, who embody every movement and attire.

Art direction and style are essential in fashion photography, establishing a visual story that reflects the brand's identity and message. The stylist organises garments, accessories, and embellishments to express a particular mood or narrative, while the art director collaborates closely with the photographer to establish the overarching creative idea. The role of editing in fashion photography has evolved to mirror shifting trends and viewer inclinations. Contemporary fashion has adopted a narrative-driven methodology, using garments, accessories, and contextual components to construct visually compelling tales that captivate the audience. Historically, the focus was exclusively on the display of current trends; however, modern fashion styles have embraced a narrative-driven approach, utilising the interplay between garments, accessories, and contextual elements to craft visually compelling stories that captivate the audience (Ha et al., 2017).

The art director, while crafting visual narratives for each theme, delineates the significance of the model's movements, facial expressions, body language, and environmental factors, employing photographic techniques to generate a series of storytelling visuals underpinned by formalistic elements pertaining to each role. The phenomena of signal movement involves not only the actual relocation of models or objects but also the intentional choices made by the photographer about composition, lighting, and ambiance. Flusser (2011) *Theory of Photography* posits that signal transmission in fashion photography transcends mere visual allure; it is an intentional act that imparts meaning and sends messages on style, identity, and social values. This

transmission of signals enables photographers to express their creative vision and engage with the audience. They construct visual tales that transcend superficiality, prompting viewers to scrutinise and interact with the visuals more profoundly. Flusser's thesis underscores the deliberate transmission of signals, advocating for a critical examination of the ideologies and narratives produced via fashion photography. The harmonious integration of all elements in a picture is accomplished by the cooperation of the photographer, model, hair stylist, and fashion designer, therefore realising the visual story and intended goals. Moreover, it is essential for designers to be abreast of current fashion trends and to proactively forecast emerging trends to provide visually attractive and pertinent insights (Kaya, 2019). Fashion designers are essential in improving visual presentation by meticulously choosing accessories, identifying appropriate backdrops or settings, and making required adjustments to get a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing outcome. It is essential for them to comprehend the interplay between diverse materials and colours, as well as how it elicits emotions or communicates a visual story. To elicit emotions that reflect the visual story of each successful fashion photography session, the selection of characters embodying these emotions must integrate the sentiments of the location, gestures, and aesthetic methods in fashion photography. As the creative director and local stylist, each idea for every fashion photography session must include cultural characteristics that are comprehensible and appreciable by all viewers. Being understood refers to conformity with society standards, while being respected pertains to the capacity to evoke the audience's emotions. The culture of each civilisation is distinct, incorporating the beliefs, socio-economic situations, and prevailing politics of each group. Gestures in fashion photography embody the synthesis of the aspirations and convictions of both the photographer and the model throughout each session, encapsulating the essence of each product's personality. Each move performed signifies the identity of the fashion product shown by the model, including emotions and cultural aspects.

Conclusion

The significance of movement signals in fashion photography is in its capacity to enhance depth and communicate profound meanings. Fashion photographers use intentional gestures, including hand signals and body language, to express emotions, attitudes, and messages that transcend the visual display of garments or accessories. Utilising Flusser (2013) theory to analyse signal movement in fashion photography provides a profound comprehension of how these deliberate motions augment the overarching narrative and message transmission. Flusser (2013) contends that the mobility of signals in fashion photography transcends simple decoration or coincidence; it is a mode of communication and intentional self-expression. Photographers may intentionally manipulate signals to affect viewers' perceptions and interpretations of photographs, so affecting societal values and cultural narratives. Moreover, Flusser (2013) theory leads us to reflect on the importance of deliberate signalling behaviour in contesting and redefining society norms and criteria of beauty. A proficient fashion photographer must have both technical expertise and a profound comprehension of human emotions, enabling them to convey and capture these sentiments via their creative endeavours. The visual presentation of humans or models before to and during cosmetic application significantly influences the selection of suitable lighting settings. The process of generating dynamic poses in studio fashion photography entails

instructing the model to experiment with diverse motions and postures that augment the vibrancy and visual allure of the composition. The formation of successful connections and communication with the subject is a crucial aspect in eliciting the model's emotions. This research elucidates the characteristics of several elements within the fashion photography process, highlighting the significant role of fashion stylists and the narrative inherent in fashion photography. Nonetheless, other pathways for more investigation exist. Empirical investigations analysing the collaborative interactions of designers, stylists, and photographers, along with the influence of these connections on creative results. In-depth exploration of this topic may provide significant insights that improve our comprehension of the fashion photography process and the vital contributions of fashion designers.

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Conflict of interest

The author is a researcher and freelance fashion photographer who collaborated with several personalities referenced in this study. Through interviews and observations, the study findings facilitate the collaboration between photographers and collaborators who effectively conduct each fashion photography session, as well as the documentation and development of techniques in the production process, thereby ensuring an efficient and organised process.

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