

WHAT U WEAR

by Jerome Ryckborst

Fashion is tragic. It's sad and disgusting. This disturbs me since it is an exciting business, and the business I want to be in. I suppose fashion is a sport — yes! it is a sport. It is this social game we play with our bodies and our minds.

Today we find ourselves preoccupied with our bodies. Gotta make it look bigger, smaller, colored, pale, straight, curly, strong and healthy. We poke holes in it, pluck it, paint it, starve it, and we take it all oh-so-seriously.

That's the disgusting part. We've missed the point. True fashion is self-indulgent and fun, whereas appearance is serious and boring. Fashion takes appearance and plays with it. It *should* be fun.

Yet for most, fashion is torture. Some people feel like they can never, ever, get there. They're not happy with the way they look and before you know it their self-esteem is down the tubes. You've heard it: I'm fat, I look gross, I'm boring, I want to die.

WHERE do these ideas originate? Well . . . you must understand that fashion is two things. It is art and it is business.

There are designers who are in it for art's sake. Here's what some of the big names say:

Thierry MUGLER: "I like strong women. Strength is a very important feeling for me, but I suppose my inspiration comes from the woman in the theatre or from travelling. All of that is very stimulating . . . it must always be a story, like a film."

Christian DIOR: "Fashion comes from a dream and the dream is an escape from reality."

Karl LAGERFELD: "To me, a woman is a fascinating and potentially beautiful creature."

Claude MONTANA: "I'm crazy for perfection. I have this fear that I'll . . . have to accept some detail that's not absolutely perfect."

CHLOE: "Chloe is a state of mind."

These people, these artists, are perfectionists who live in a dream-world where they can define their own perfection.

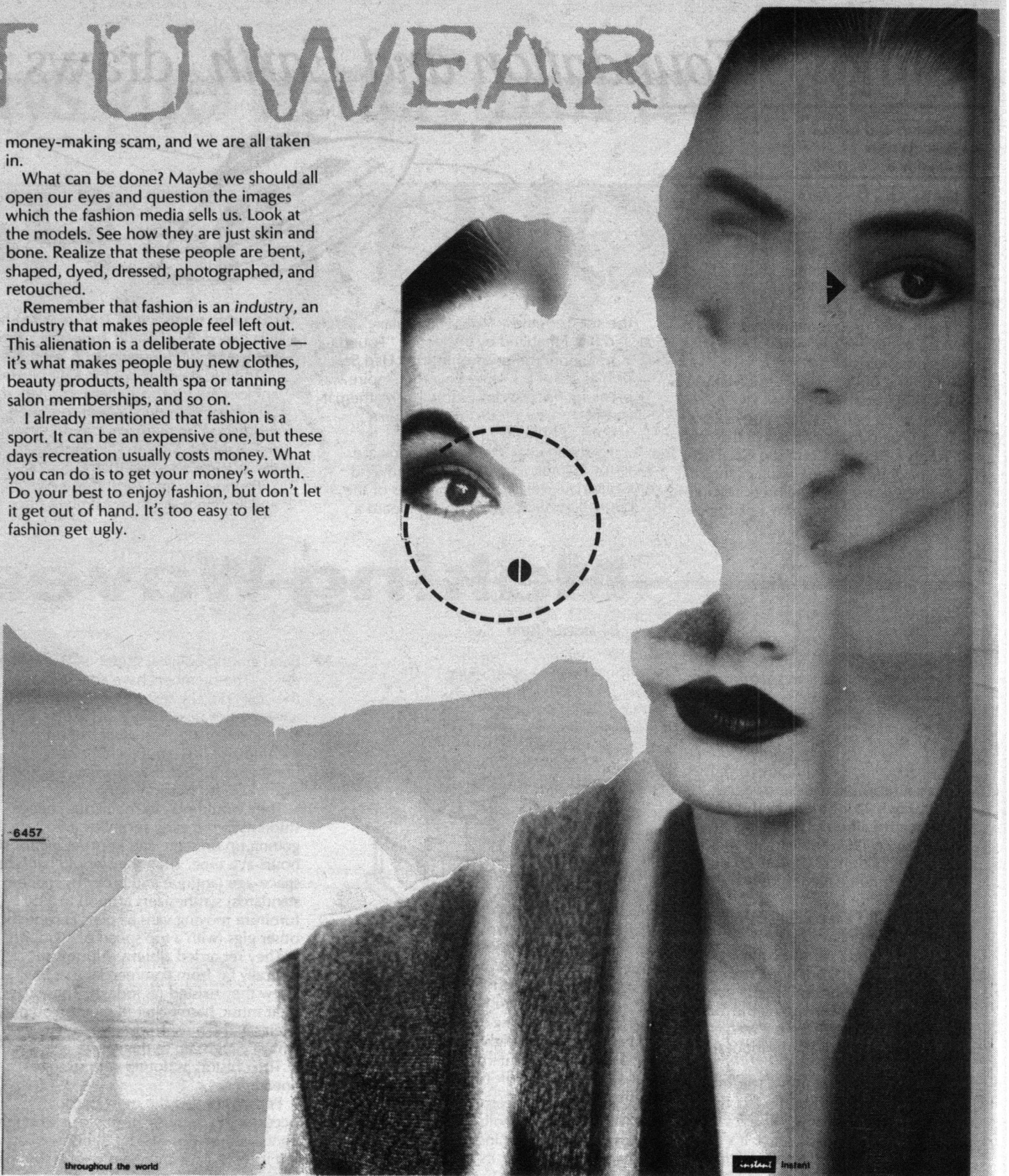
Now, along comes the business end of fashion. These artistic views of perfection are mass produced and marketed down our throats. The fashion *business* is a big

money-making scam, and we are all taken in.

What can be done? Maybe we should all open our eyes and question the images which the fashion media sells us. Look at the models. See how they are just skin and bone. Realize that these people are bent, shaped, dyed, dressed, photographed, and retouched.

Remember that fashion is an *industry*, an industry that makes people feel left out. This alienation is a deliberate objective — it's what makes people buy new clothes, beauty products, health spa or tanning salon memberships, and so on.

I already mentioned that fashion is a sport. It can be an expensive one, but these days recreation usually costs money. What you can do is to get your money's worth. Do your best to enjoy fashion, but don't let it get out of hand. It's too easy to let fashion get ugly.



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