

Ten Years of Fashion, Style & Popular Culture



By Joseph H. Hancock II, author and editor

Being a journal editor is probably the least sexy thing you can do in academia. If anyone thinks this role makes you a scholarly fashion diva, they are nuts. It is a pure labour of love. Sure, there are a few commissions here and there, but never more than a few thousand dollars a year. The immense joy of doing this job is getting e-mails from people telling me how publishing their articles has made a difference in their careers or that they enjoyed working with me as much as I did them. You see, being an academic can be lonely, especially in a practice-based art college surrounded by people who believe creating spaces and making things is more important. Over the last twenty years at Drexel University, it has become my job to educate my colleagues, some of whom still call *Fashion, Style & Popular Culture (FSPC)* a magazine, that it is a scholarly journal and how it works. Quite frankly, it is exhausting. But today, I will let you in on a secret. The reason I became an editor was loneliness. I had few friends and colleagues with whom I could share ideas, and I thought this would be my way of changing it. Over the last decade, we have built a new family and group of colleagues across the globe – those who once felt alone, just like me.

For years, I attended the Popular/American Culture Association conferences and chaired their fashion area for over a decade. I recognized a need for people working in these areas to have a



place to publish their papers. At this conference I met the owner of Intellect Books, Masoud Yazdani, but when I proposed the *FSPC* journal I was told it might be too narrow a market. I was not giving up! I enlisted the help of anthropologist and scholar Ted Polhemus. He told me the word 'style' in the journal's title would allow it to explode – and he was right. Because of our cultural context, the word 'fashion' has become sexier in the eyes of the world, but people generally celebrate 'style' instead because who can keep up with fashion in our consumer-based society?

Intellect financially invested in *FSPC*, making it one of their leading journals after landmark publications like *Film, Fashion & Consumption*, which is still edited by a goddess of the fashion discipline, Pamela Church-Gibson. I was thrilled that Intellect's James Campbell (Head of Marketing & Sales) and Bethan Ball (Senior Production Editor) were there to help organise and wrangle associate editors, advisory boards and editorial boards. Today, the journal is represented across the globe, with members reflecting the diversity of this publication that readers have come to love.

We are both theory and practice-based and encourage either approach in our publications. In that regard, we are somewhat punk and genuinely equitable and inclusive. And that is why I get ►

'We have had guest editors representing the LGBTQIA+ communities, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Black Lives Matter and the Latin Communities. We believe that all voices need to be heard and embrace all perspectives, from the scholarly fringes to the popular in fashion'

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approached by so many people who genuinely want to work with me and the team.

I encourage scholars to go out and discover fun fashion and style events. My husband and I enjoy attending concerts like Madonna's Celebration Tour and seeing fun celebrities like Bob – The Drag Queen. Most recently, we saw the 1980s legends Taylor Dayne and Tiffany, who were simply fantastic! Taking these events and incorporating them into scholarly articles is what makes this discipline so crucial to understanding our very existence. As material culturalists and style enthusiasts, we must embrace these events as part of our zeitgeist.

My last words are these: *Stay true to yourself*. These words come from the guy who did cargo pants as a doctor of philosophy, and most people laughed. But ten years later I was part of a political debate between cisgender men and women on whether cargo pants should be worn, with my face splattered all over significant networks and the *Wall Street Journal*. So, who's laughing now? Do what you want, but credit those who have come before, both in word and in image. Remember, most ideas have been thought, but relatively few are put in words and published. Happy 40th birthday Intellect! •

