



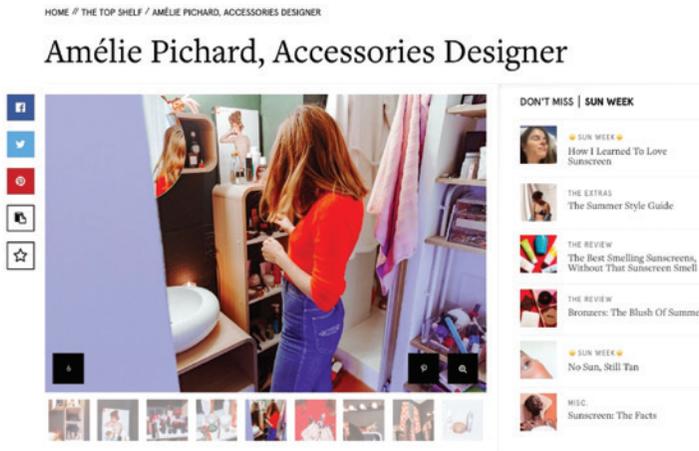
‘Into The Gloss’

Felice McDowell

Central Saint Martins and the London College of Fashion,
University of the Arts

‘The Top Shelf’ and ‘#ITGTOPSHELFIE’ are both webpages of the beauty/fashion blog ‘Into The Gloss’ (ITG), founded by Emily Weiss in 2010. I have chosen to consider two pages from the same site as the ways in which they are similar and different present another instance of how digital fashion media participates in the fashioning of life. Although men have appeared on both pages, I have focused upon the blogs’ female participants.

<https://intothegloss.com/categories/the-top-shelf/>



'The Top Shelf'

This page typically comprises an interview with a fashionable female figure, in which aspects of her personal background and professional credentials are briefly detailed as a foreground to a lengthier synopsis of various beauty products that she uses on a daily basis. Written as a first person narrative, this text is accompanied by a series of photo-images often taken of the interviewee at her home; these images largely follow a similar format of portrait shots of the interviewee, close-up shots of beauty products on shelves, and then wider interior space shots. Although a disclaimer states that what is published is as 'told to ITG', this auto/biographical text fashions the listing of beauty practices and products and creates a sense of intimacy and connection with successful, stylish and attractive women—actresses, musicians, writers, publishers, contemporary artists, designers, fashion editors, bloggers, creative directors, stylists, photographers, models, make-up artists, entrepreneurs, CEOs—who are featured in 'The Top Shelf' posts.

<https://intothegloss.com/categories/itgtopshelfie-2/>



#ITGTOPSHELFIE



The ITG Commenter With The Ultimate Dewy Skin Routine

"I've really fallen in love with shiny skin—the kind of dew that shows up uninvited when the sun messes with your makeup." [READ MORE >](#)

#ITGTOPSHELFIE'

The '#ITGTOPSHELFIE' page also takes the format of an interview series but offers the readers, or 'community' of ITG followers, a chance to submit their own take on a 'Top Shelf' interview via an Instagram submission. Arguably this can be seen as a form of imitation, as ITG followers seemingly enact personas and auto/biographical narratives represented in 'The Top Shelf' posts. Yet this example of digital fashion media can also be understood as an instance in which young women take some control of their own image through forms of the selfie and the shelfie. Moreover, the followers featured on '#ITGTOPSHELFIE' are themselves often workers within various sectors of the fashion and creative industries and, therefore, also engaging in a process whereby they become subject to imitation and potential innovation in the ways in which they incorporate and enact fashion and beauty narratives on and offline. Nonetheless, for women living, working and studying within neoliberal capitalist society the fashioning of one's life on and offline remains ambiguous. Digital fashion and beauty media provide various forms of space for this fashioning of self, with significance for digital life writing and its scholarship present and future.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Felice McDowell is an Associate Lecturer in Fashion History and Theory at Central Saint Martins and in Cultural and Historical Studies at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London. Her current research interests are in methodologies of fashion history, archival research, critical theory, life writing, and the visual and textual representation of fashion "work". She has been published in the journals *Fashion Theory*, *Photography & Culture*, *Clothing Cultures*, *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* and *About Performance*. She is co-editor of *Fashioning Professionals: Identity and Representation at Work in the Creative Industries* (Bloomsbury, 2018). Email: f.mcdowell@fashion.arts.ac.uk.