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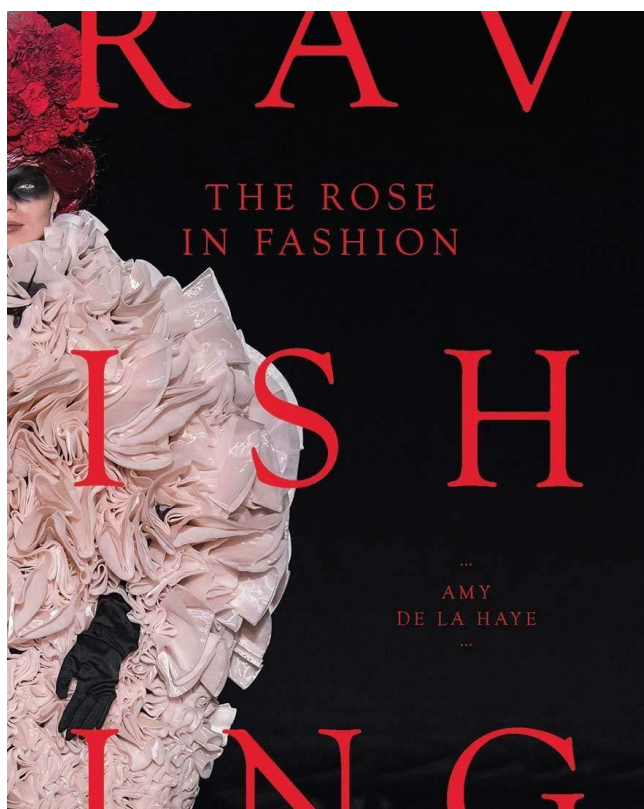
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Ravishing: The Rose in Fashion, Amy de la Haye, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, United States, 2020, Published in Association with The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, Notes, Bibliography, Credits, Index, 38 Black-and-White Illustrations, 228 Colour Illustrations, 240 pages, Hardback, £30.00.

Of all flowers, the rose is perhaps the most overdetermined, capable of signifying a multitude of meanings, from romantic love, innocence, and beauty, to sexuality, desire, danger, and death. Amy de la Haye's book

Ravishing: The Rose in Fashion is the first scholarly overview of the use of the rose in fashion, encompassing the flowers' symbolism, representation, and material uses. The book accompanies an exhibition of the same name, scheduled to open in 2021, at the Museum of The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), State University of New York. The book takes an in-depth look at the long history of the rose as fashion's favourite flower: from the use of real roses in classical costume, though eighteenth century silks and nineteenth century muslins, to its role as a source of inspiration for contemporary fashion practitioners such as photographer Nick Knight and designer Alexander McQueen. Although certain aspects of this history have been explored in other publications (Seaton, 1995; McNeil, 2010), *Ravishing: The Rose in Fashion* is the first compressive overview, bringing together a diverse range of fashion thinkers to explore fashion's ongoing fascination with the rose.

Rather than take a strictly chronological approach to the topic, the book is organised as a series of thematic chapters, each of which unpacks a particular facet of the flower's potency. Starting with a brief forward by Museum at FIT director, Valerie Steele, and an introduction, titled, "Roses: Flowers that Are Looked At" by de la Haye, the book interweaves a systematic overview of four centuries of floral fashion with chapters exploring the use of the rose in jewellery, perfume, and photography. As a whole, the book is richly illustrated with images from the upcoming FIT exhibition, fashion photography, fashion plates, and botanical prints.

The four chronological chapters unpack the changing meanings, uses, and representations of the rose over four centuries. A chapter by curator, Colleen Hill, examines the botanically inspired silks of the eighteenth century, a period of intensive horticultural inquiry. Chapters by de la Haye delve into the language of flowers and rose symbolism in the nineteenth century; the use of roses by twentieth century designers including Poiret, Charles James, and Dior; and finally, the paradoxes and provocations of the rose in twenty-first century fashion. Of the thematic chapters, “The Rose in Context” by Jonathan Faiers explores our broader cultural preoccupation with the rose and its multiple meanings, thinking about the ways the rose has been used to represent sexuality, desire, power, and transformation.

De la Haye’s chapter, “Permanent Botanicals,” explores the practice of making artificial roses—objects which overcame the flower’s inherent impermanence and made their delicate beauty accessible to all. The chapter, “Scent,” by Mairi Mackenzie traces the history of rose perfumes and the complex interplay of gendering those scents. Jewellery collector and historian Geoffrey Munn presents a history of rose inspired jewellery—from ancient Greek goldwork to contemporary jeweller JAR. Finally, an interview “A Conversation on Roses” with photographer Nick Knight, for whom the rose remains a continued source of inspiration, is illustrated by his extraordinary photographs of roses from his garden. Interspersed between these chapters are short case studies on particular objects and uses of the rose in fashion, including silk painting, Charles James’ iconic rose laden Corsette dress, the making of artificial roses, and Frederic Malle perfume “Une Rose.”

This book is astonishing in its breadth, presenting both a valuable reference point for anyone interested in the enduring appeal and power of the rose, and an excellent resource for students and designers alike. Perhaps, what is most interesting about this book is how de la Haye and her co-authors skilfully explore the dualities that the rose embodies. Both its fragile and transient scented beauty but also the danger of its prickling thorns: a quality much drawn upon by Alexander McQueen and, more recently, designers such as Noir Kei Ninomiya and Rei Kawakubo. Beyond its ravishing beauty—and this book is truly beautiful—it is this, the punctum of roses and their piercing details, which the book explores so well. Despite their evident beauty, roses are rarely truly benign. Overall, this is a stunning book that goes a long way in unpacking the complex, and at times contradictory meanings of the rose in fashion.

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Email: ellen.sampson@northumbria.ac.uk

Dr. Ellen Sampson is an artist and material culture researcher who uses film, photography, and writing, to explore the relationships between clothing and bodies, in museums, archives, and in everyday life. Sampson is Vice Chancellor's Senior Fellow in Design at Northumbria University, England, and was a 2018-2019 Polaire Weissman fellow based at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in New York. During 2019-2020, she was a Professorial Fellow in Fashion at University for the Creative Arts, London. She has a PhD from The Royal College of Art, London. Her monograph, *Worn Footwear, Attachment and the Affects of Wear*, was published by Bloomsbury in 2020.