

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TURKISH FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY TÜRK MODA FOTOĞRAFÇILIĞININ TARİHSEL GELİŞİMİ

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Abstract

Fashion photography is one of the most important areas that can be associated with fashion. The share of fashion photography is quite large in the promotion of every product that can be called fashion. Fashion photography is the photographing of a fashion item or a garment using different techniques, emphasizing the characteristics. Being especially multicolored is the most characteristic feature of fashion photography which distinguishes itself from other photographing areas.

Western clothing culture developed simultaneously with Tanzimat period, unlike the world, has found its place in Turkey in 80's. Despite the close pursuit of the West, there are different reasons behind the absence of the fashion photography field. Considering the history of fashion photography in Turkey, it is observed that studio photography pioneered the fashion photography.

The emergence of Turkey as a profession in fashion photography has gained importance in recent years is quite new. One of the biggest factors in this situation is that ever-changing fashion is now becoming a consumption object. The constant change in fashion makes fashion indispensable. One of the most important tools in this market will be fashion photography. The development of fashion and fashion photography has now become an integral unity. To reveal the status of fashion photography in Turkey in this regard is extremely important. With this study, it was concluded that fashion photographs were initially perceived as portrait and studio photography, and in further periods, they were shaped with technique, art and creativity. In this context, this study revealed the historical development, past and present of fashion photography, and some recommendations were brought up.

Keywords

Historical Development, Fashion Photography, Clothing Culture

Öz

Moda fotoğrafçılığı moda ile ilişkilendirilebilen en önemli alanlardan biridir. Moda olarak adlandırılacak her ürünün tanıtımında moda fotoğrafına düşen pay oldukça büyüktür. Moda fotoğrafçılığı bir moda ögesinin ya da bir giysinin özelliklerini vurgulayarak, değişik teknikler kullanılarak fotoğraflanmasıdır. Özellikle çok renkli olması diğer fotoğraf alanlarından ayrılan en karakteristik özelliğidir.

Tanzimatla birlikte batıya koşut olarak gelişen giyim kültürü dünyadaki gelişimin aksine Türkiye'de ancak 80'lerle birlikte vücut bulmuştur. Batının yakından takip edilmesine rağmen moda fotoğrafı alanının oluşmamasının ardında farklı nedenler yatmaktadır. Türkiye'deki moda

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fotoğrafının tarihi incelendiğinde, stüdyo fotoğrafçılığının moda fotoğrafına öncülük ettiği görülmektedir.

Son yıllarda önem kazanan moda fotoğrafçılığının Türkiye’de bir meslek dalı olarak ortaya çıkışı oldukça yenidir. Bu durumun en büyük etkenlerinden biri, sürekli değişen modanın artık bir tüketim nesnesi haline dönüşmesidir. Modanın sürekli değişim içerisinde olması, modayı vazgeçilmez kılmaktadır. Bu pazardaki en önemli araçlardan biri ise moda fotoğrafı olacaktır. Moda ve moda fotoğrafının gelişimi günümüzde artık ayrılmaz bir birlikteliğe dönüşmüştür. Bu bakımdan moda fotoğrafçılığının Türkiye’deki durumunun ortaya konulması son derece önemlidir. Bu çalışma ile moda fotoğraflarının ilk zamanlarda portre ve stüdyo fotoğrafçılığı gibi nitelendirildiği ilerleyen zaman içerisinde teknik, sanat ve yaratıcılık ile şekillendiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu kapsamda bu çalışma ile moda fotoğrafçılığının tarihsel süreç içerisinde gelişimi, dünü ve bugünü ortaya konulmuş ve bazı öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

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Tarihsel Gelişim, Moda Fotoğrafçılığı, Giyim Kültürü



INTRODUCTION

Fashion has been studied and analyzed by numerous theorists as one of the important research subjects of sociology. Veblen, who defines the upper class in the capitalist system depending on social class distinction as *leisure class*, discusses fashion as a phenomenon based on the excessive consumption and conspicuous extravagance on the part of the aforementioned class. According to Veblen (2005), changes in fashion are functionally useless and doomed to be outdated as per its inner structure. Benjamin (1993) explains fashion as *the main element of the upper social structure* by using the concept of *dialectical image*, while Barthes (2008) shapes the phenomenon of fashion by referring to linguistic concepts and trying to form a new meaning system. According to Baudrillard (2008), fashion is *that which is paradoxically outdated*.

Fashion lays the groundwork for social identities to be redefined by constantly attributing new meanings to the artificialities embodied by it. The seduction of fashion lies on the effort to reify new styles embodying values which develop and change in societies and sometimes oppose each other (Berber 2010).

In today's consumer society, the fashion industry has turned the female body in particular into a social project that it shapes time and again within the scope of statements concerned with beauty and icon creation, sinking itself into the effort of delivering the desired visual quality. Perceived as intertwined concepts in regard to the platforms discussing them within the historical process, fashion and body have become visible through clothing (Himam Er 2009).

Photography, which tries to create a language unique to it, meets fashion in this process. While on one hand, it makes progress on the way to be an art form, on the other hand, it becomes a communication language enabling fashion industry to reach masses.

Changing economic conditions in post-1980 Turkey enabled textile, fashion and advertising sectors to develop, and became effective in the branching of fashion photography in Turkey. In the 1990s, fashion photography started to dominate the fashion industry with the development of desktop publishing and photography techniques. Branching throughout the world in the early 1900s, fashion photography could only make its breakthrough in Turkey after nearly a century.

Fashion Photography

In the 1850s, fashion photography was utilized to inform people about fashion. The London Stereoscopic Company produced stereoscopic images comprised of three side-to-side photographs on a single card, which created a three-dimensional impression when looked from a stereoscope (De Wit 1998: 4).

The first use of photography in fashion imagery is the album of Countess de Castiglione created with 288 photographs depicting her in her own clothes in 1856. The Metropolitan Museum of Art argues that the countess is among the first women to have been seduced by a camera.

The majority of fashion photographs between 1850 and 1880 were composed of social portraits, rather than commercial reproductions. Black-and-white photos were mostly colored manually afterward. Photograph reproductions were created on published pages with the advent of the halftone technique (Dayı 2006).

Before the 1880s, *carte de visite* was used to document fashion from a standard-sized photograph used as a portrait. The advantage of such photographs was their capability to be

mass-produced. They were designed to be distributed to potential customers or in shops. However, the scope of their utilization was limited. The photographs labeled “Document Photographique” were revealed to be the oldest photographs, and they were created for French pattern books between 1881 and 1882.

The oldest commercial fashion photograph was taken in 1891. A few of the first attempts made an effort to try something more than a depiction of the clothing displayed on a mannequin-like figure. Fashion photographs were almost always taken for published magazines. In 1901, the French magazine *Les Modes* started to publish photographic drawings.

Adolf de Meyer is considered to be the pioneer of fashion photography, a photographer of extravagant elegance and intelligence. Working in this field in the early 1900s changed the general view as to what made a fashion photographer. De Meyer is the first person to elaborate on what the word *fashion* meant (De Wit 1998: 4-6).

De Meyer wanted to perceive people as fashion, made them glamorous and tried to vitalize a specific kind of style in them, using soft focus technique and ignoring the clothing details. De Meyer’s style of exposing his models, his way of using accessories, his use of backlight, and the effect he created by covering the lens with a silk gauze brought an ethereal quality to his photographs (De Wit 1998: 6; Kruger 2001; Lehnert, 2002).

Fashion photography was both shaped and limited by the fashion industry. Photographers challenged the conditions of the period by seeking extraordinary angle and shooting features that could render a specific photograph unique. However, they were limited by fashion editors that they worked for. Even though the editors raised an elite class of photographers, they assumed a meticulous and at times merciless attitude when picking photography images. Then came the 1930s, an important period of change. Even though the color production was still a complex, expensive and prestigious process, it bettered the possibilities for fashion photography to be popular. Due to its connection with modernity, color photography became the mutual language of fashion photography. The first color photograph was printed on *Vogue* magazine in 1932, and the recovery of black-and-white photography was out of the question until the 1950s (Steele 1997; Elliot 2000).

It is a known fact that fashion illustrations and photographs concentrated on women between 1900 and 1920. In photography, focusing attention on esthetics competes with the pressures of representing fashion. Fashion photographs are extremely distinct and striking visuals that lure and seduce their audience and depict a delusive and magnificent world.

In the 1930s, faces were perfect as a doll, bodies were angular and geometric, and models were completely young. Naturally, the use of cosmetic products closely affected fashion photography.

The Second World War was a transitional period for fashion photography, which started to reflect the ideas and characteristics of the war period by assuming an increasingly more political and criticizing style. It maintained its development seeking new things, besides engaging in trial and error methods through which it discussed the effects of war on the lives of ordinary men and women.

In the 1950s, while fashion photography technically combined documentary techniques with a sense of social comment, it also started to contain the elements of deliberate momentary movement and ambition found in photojournalism.

Towards the 1960s, dissatisfaction and displeasure turned into an explicit revolution, and fashion became the symbol of turbulent and exciting anger and rebellion of the 60s generation. Fashion photographers were ironically capitalized while concentrating on the spirit of the 1960s. This period explicitly created the sexual content of the relationship between the

photographer and the model, thus becoming a basic characteristic of 1960s photography (Ducros 1998).

The 1970s witnessed different experiences and hyper-contradictions in fashion photography. The key element in the fashion photographs of this period was the obsessive emphasis on sexual motifs (Kismaric-Respini 2004).

The 1980s in fashion photography can be defined as a period in which glamorous presentations were created. With the advent of the ability to transfer optic images produced in photography to the digital media, a controversy over *image production* started in photography, just like in other art forms.

In the 1990s, fashion photography entered into a new period contradicting the sexual obsessions of the 1990s, which manifested as post-feminism, new male image, and ambivalence towards homosexuality. In this period, fashion photography bypassed itself. Another important aspect of the 1990s is the fact that fashion photography got affected by cinema.

Historical and current events have inevitably had a great impact on fashion photography and societies, which has actually caused a downward spiral. Simultaneously, our moral values have undergone a change; what is acceptable now was out of the question 30 years ago. At this juncture, fashion photography tells people about styles, what they should wear, and how it will look on them. From Paris to Milano and New York, where clothes are presented through pictures and sold in shops, fashion and photography go hand in hand, both of them becoming an expression of artists creating them. In this regard, the role of a fashion photographer is to encourage the change in seasons and styles (Garcia 2004).

In this context, fashion photography has turned into a colossal business continuing to influence the world, starting as illustrations depicting the latest fashion from couture houses in France especially in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Historical Development of Fashion Photography in Turkey

After the invention of daguerreotype and its public introduction, the invention of photography was announced with a story on a newspaper called *Takvim-i Vekayi* (the Calendar of Facts) in Istanbul in 1839. Sultans' tradition of having their portraits made, starting with Selim III in the 1800s, turned into engraving reproduction in following years, and sultans' albums started to be created after the reign of Mahmud II. In the following years, photography technique was seen to be used in the published albums (Atasoy 1986), which depicted the portraits of sultans (such as Sultan Abdülaziz and Sultan Abdul Hamid II).

Orientalism gained a very popular status especially in literature and art throughout Europe in the nineteenth century. Western artists presented the mystery of the orient in the reality provided by photography with traces of orientalism. Photographs depicting painters and photographers coming from the west and their relatives in Turkish clothing are good examples of this. In the same period, the Abdullah Frères were seen to photograph women and male models with women's costumes adorned with orientalist clothing (Özendes 1992-1998). Even if they were not perceived as a line of business in the western sense, these photographs can be said to have been similar to haute couture style and be the first fashion photographs in simplest terms.

It is known that there were numerous other photographers in Istanbul besides the Abdullah Frères, one of whom was Pascal Sébah. He also produced orientalist photographs containing female figures, used all the elements of orientalism in his studio. He took the photographs of the album *Local Clothing in Turkey*, also known as *The Clothing of Ottomans*, in 1873, which is a highly significant work in Turkish clothing history. Nevertheless, it would be

quite difficult to talk about the existence of corporate fashion photography in the western sense in Turkey until the Republican Period.



Photograph 1: *İnci* Magazine 1919 (a-Burqa models, 1, 1 February, the last page, b- winter coats, 11, 1: 19)



Photograph 2: *Yeni İnci* Magazine (The first issue, Number: 1 June 1338/1922; *Hayat* Magazine 1958, Issue, 90-96 (on the right))

If we examine Photographs 1 and 2, we can see that the photographs taken for *İnci* magazine give general information about the clothes of the period. It can especially be said that the detailed photographs of burqas and coats were included in the magazine and that in a way they supported the publicity of the clothes specific to the period.

When fashion photographs are analyzed according to their periods, results that can be determinant for Turkish fashion photography are revealed. If we take a look at issues of *Hayat* magazine from different years, we can see the distinct change in fashion photography. While

the advertisement photographs in the early issues of the magazine were mainly composed of drawings or illustrations, photographs became dominant in the following issues. One of the most important names from *Hayat* magazine is Suavi Sonar, writing and photographing in the fashion sector. Sonar was a photographer, painter and women's tailor. The news and stories he reported abroad about fashion in the places he lived, especially in Rome and Paris, were initially published on *Yarım Ay* and *Yelpaze* magazines, and later on *Hayat* and *Ses* magazines. Throughout the pages he sent from Europe, one could find photographs of popular models of the period and dress advertisements.

In this period, Suavi Sonar sent some of the fashion photographs he took to *Hayat* magazine. These photographs are seen to bear some resemblances to the western fashion photographs. Sonar's fashion photographs are crucial in that they were the first examples (Ak 2001).



Photograph 3: *Hayat* Magazine 1957 February-March (Spring Creation and Olgunlaşma* Institute Student) *A type of high school for girls, teaching the arts of handcraft and clothing

As Berber puts it, while on one hand fashion photography puts up a struggle to be known as a general photography form based on its own esthetical traditions, on the other hand, it has followed a line on which femininity images embodying passion and provocation are created and displayed.

The relationship between the consecutive techniques of fashion photography developing and changing and the techniques of femininity has constituted a whole with the 20th-century efforts of fashion phenomenon to be shaped, and has become inseparable.

Besides seizing the moments of fashion, fashion photography also serves as a resource of basic information on types of clothing and human bodies they adorn in terms of its practical and historical development process. Photography has created a revolution in the fashion industry in terms of introducing clothing realistically, and studying the relationships between clothes, those who wear them, and their contents and displaying these things by finding various ways to present them.

In the early twentieth century, clothing advertisement was increasingly accelerated with the publications of fashion photographs, and fashion photography started to be utilized in that

direction. Introducing and selling a product is naturally dependent on that product's visibility. In this period, magazines and newspapers on which such fashion photographs could be seen were published, based on the reality that women would eventually start to follow them. In today's world, fashion photography still serves this purpose, while also trying to ensure an ineradicable place for itself.

In the 2000s, fashion photography started to be considered as a separate branch, and in parallel to this situation, the number of fashion photographers increased fast. With the developments in technology, richness of color, technique and space became prominent in these fashion photographs. Aesthetical concerns were now more important. Considering that today's technology is advancing fast, a good photographer needs to keep up with this fast development. Turkish fashion photographers tried to keep up with these developments and started to develop a style unique to themselves. In this context, fashion photography in Turkey sailed towards new searches.



Photograph 4: Current Fashion Photos (Yaşar Saraçoğlu, 2019)

Conclusion

Fashion is a sociological concept which numerous contemporary philosophers argue over and which has not lost its actuality, bearing periodical characteristics based on changes in the social structure determined by the relationship between production and consumption.

Having turned into a gigantic village thanks to globalism, the world has started to speak one universal language, which is fashion. With the development of communication tools, advertisements have not only pierced into our lives but also become a lifestyle; and in this new lifestyle, the most crucial tool to create demand in the market will be fashion. This simultaneous history of fashion and photography has turned an inseparable marriage in our day.

Fashion photography has recently gained importance in Turkey, just as it has throughout the world. One of the greatest factors in this is that fashion, perceived on the same level as change, has turned into a consumption object.

Pictographic and narrative elements of various art forms possessing the powerful narrative language of the 21st century and visual elements of fashion photography which have

intertwined with one another have inevitably fitted into each other.

Besides its task of recording fashion images, fashion photography has also the feature of being a resource of basic information on clothes, accessories, and motives they adorn. From its early days when it was known as a form of portrait photography to our day, the development of fashion photography has been maintained by its changes, technical and esthetical approaches it has affected and in return has been affected by, and its relationship with artistic movements.

Considering the history of fashion photography in Turkey, it is seen that studio photography preceded it. In the first periods of photography, it is seen that non-Muslim minorities took part in photography in the Ottoman Empire. The examples that may be considered the first fashion photographs in today's Turkey belonged to Ottoman palace photographers.

With the transition to consumption societies, changes in the narration and presentation styles of fashion photography have been witnessed in parallel with the changes in the sense of fashion. As mentioned above, obtaining or creating images has acquired a new dimension thanks to the utilization of computer technology in this field.

Naturally, it is not possible to elaborate on photographers who constitute the history of fashion photography in our day and their works one by one. The fact that each of them has used a narrative style unique to themselves turns each of them into a distinct study subject. At this point, it is extremely difficult to foresee how fashion photography in our day will be shaped in the future. But what will determine this will be fashion's look on the female body.

SUMMARY

Fashion photography is the photographing of a fashion item or a garment using different techniques, emphasizing the characteristics. Being especially multicolored is the most characteristic feature of fashion photography which distinguishes itself from other photographing areas.

Western clothing culture developed simultaneously with Tanzimat period, unlike the world, has found its place in Turkey in 80's. Despite the close pursuit of the West, there are different reasons behind the absence of the fashion photography field. Considering the history of fashion photography in Turkey, it is observed that studio photography pioneered the fashion photography.

The emergence of Turkey as a profession in fashion photography has gained importance in recent years is quite new. One of the biggest factors in this situation is that ever-changing fashion is now becoming a consumption object. The constant change in fashion makes fashion indispensable. One of the most important tools in this market will be fashion photography. The development of fashion and fashion photography has now become an integral unity. To reveal the status of fashion photography in Turkey in this regard is extremely important. In this study, the past and present of fashion photography have been disclosed and some suggestions have been developed.

Naturally, it is not possible to elaborate on photographers who constitute the history of fashion photography in our day and their works one by one. The fact that each of them has used a narrative style unique to themselves turns each of them into a distinct study subject. At this point, it is extremely difficult to foresee how fashion photography in our day will be shaped in the future. But what will determine this will be fashion's look on the female body.

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