Both ethics and aesthetics imply the notion of value – ethics is about our actions being good or bad, aesthetics is about artistic or sensory qualities. Aesthetic values and demands can lead to ethical or unethical decisions and ethical values and demands can affect aesthetic choices and developments. The philosophical dwellings on the relationship between ethics and aesthetics have a long history, from Aristoteles and Plato, via Baruch Spinoza, Immanuel Kant, Walter Benjamin and Ludwig Wittgenstein, to Michel Foucault and Christine Battersby. Aesthetic and ethical questions interact in profound ways not least when it comes to the phenomenon of fashion in its both symbolical, social, cultural, and economical meanings, functions and consequences. While the intimately connected aesthetic and ethical conditions of fashion have been discussed since its inception, and recurrently reflected by early fashion thinkers such as Thomas Carlyle, Charles Baudelaire, and Benjamin, they are today more urgent than ever. The exploitative and severely unethical aspects of fashion production, representation, and consumption keep being most vividly fleshed out through investigatory journalism and documentary films, but academic engagement with and consideration of the current unsustainable situation is still rather scarce. This collection of thirteen essays has as its overarching aim to incite a wider and more engaged study of the status quo as well as historical cases of fashion production, representation, and consumption through connecting and aligning it to longstanding questions and matters of ethics and aesthetics.

Aesthetics has implicitly played an important role in the academic field constituted by fashion studies, but it has most often been somewhat loosely related to rather abstract phenomena like modernity and capitalism, or to identity aspects such as sexuality, class and gender, as in Vicki Karaminas and Adam Geczy’s *Fashion’s Double* and *Critical Fashion Practice*, or as in our own previous collection *Fashion and Modernism*.1 The field has also seen a growth in publications that deal with ethics in relation to consumption and/or production, not least considering the past years strong focus on sustainability in both research and the industry, such as for example fashion scholar Sue Thomas’s *Fashion Ethics* from 2017 in which she analyses the lifecycle and the supply chain, or cultural theorist Efrat Tseëlon’s anthology *Fashion and Ethics* from 2014.2 There are also many publications situated outside of the academia, which rely on the writings of fashion practitioners, such as *Slow Fashion: Aesthetics meets Ethics* by Safia Minney, founder of People Tree, from 2016.3 Further, studies of fashion have for long been keen on investigating the relation between fashion and morality, and a prime example here would be Aileen Ribeiro’s *Dress and Morality*, first published in 2003. Yet, no publication has taken such a wide and historically dispersed grip on fashion, aesthetics and ethics in
the manner that this volume does. Bringing together original work by a both disciplinary and
globally heterogeneous group of scholars, including a fashion designer, Fashion Aesthetics and
Ethics strives to show how the global fashion industry, an industry involving many various production
and consumption practices and structures, markets, positions, and marketing media, has important and
pertinent aesthetic and ethical consequences. This is an industry characterized by an increasingly fast
spinning production and a relentless exploitation of environment and of labour force, including
underpaid textile workers, retailers working under brutal competition from the mass-merchandise
discounters, young designers / seamstresses / curators often working for free, and a vast body of
aspiring models. Furthermore, visual fashion representations and fashion-related aesthetic ideals are
becoming more influential than ever in directing consumers in their social and personal identification
processes and bodily practices with sometimes fatal consequences. On the other hand, fashion
consumers’ awareness of ethical problems, resistance and activism against unhealthy body ideals,
claims for ethnic diversity and body positivism are constantly increasing. Addressing these and related
issues, this collection pinpoints how the powerful aesthetic presence of fashion deserves and needs to
be discussed in relation to its ethical premises and highly problematic outcomes. It thus sets out to
engage and appeal to a vast audience of both scholars and practitioners interested in the values
inherent in fashion production, representation and consumption, the interactions between aesthetic and
ethical mechanisms driving phenomena and realities in the fashion system and in theoretical
reflections on how to affect real change. Fashion Aesthetics and Ethics: Past and Present is published
by Bloomsbury Academic and will be coming out in 2022.

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