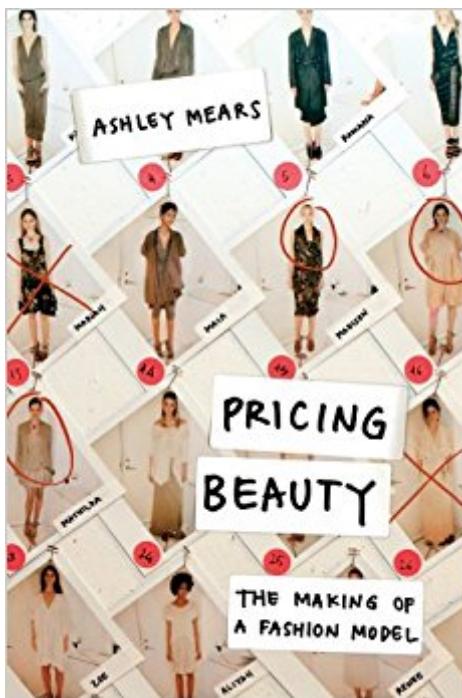


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Pricing Beauty: The Making Of A Fashion Model



Synopsis

Sociologist Ashley Mears takes us behind the brightly lit runways and glossy advertisements of the fashion industry in this insider's study of the world of modeling. Mears, who worked as a model in New York and London, draws on observations as well as extensive interviews with male and female models, agents, clients, photographers, stylists, and others, to explore the economics and politics and the arbitrariness behind the business of glamour. Exploring a largely hidden arena of cultural production, she shows how the right look is discovered, developed, and packaged to become a prized commodity. She examines how models sell themselves, how agents promote them, and how clients decide to hire them. An original contribution to the sociology of work in the new cultural economy, *Pricing Beauty* offers rich, accessible analysis of the invisible ways in which gender, race, and class shape worth in the marketplace.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Mears gives voice to a group of women who are paid to be seen and not heard." (Slate 2011-09-07) "Mears has produced a fascinating study." (Boston Globe/The Find 2011-09-11) "Mears acknowledges that walking the runway can be a thrill unlike any other [but also] notes some of the industry's exploitative aspects." (Stylelist 2011-09-22) "A nuanced, and deliciously complicated depiction of an industry." (Tottenville Review 2012-01-19) "This book is sociology at its finest. Mears's rarified status as a model-researcher provides rich insight into the specific nuances of

fashion. (American Journal Of Sociology/AJS 2012-07-20) Mears's book represents an original, highly readable contribution to the field. (Choice 2012-02-01)

"Ashley Mears is a talented ethnographer, a first-rate sociological thinker and an artful writer. Pricing Beauty offers a dazzling, engaging, utterly original contribution to public and scholarly understanding of embodiment, gender, race, culture, and markets. A riveting work of priceless beauty!" (Judith Stacey, author *Unhitched: Love, Marriage and Family Values from West Hollywood to Western China*) Mears's winning formula: combine deep inside knowledge of the fashion business, based on intensive observation, with useful sociological ideas, and present the result in readable, witty and incisive prose. I learned a lot and you will too. (Howard S. Becker, author of *Art Worlds*) Ashley Mears shows us beauty is not in the eyes of the beholder but in the complex ensemble of organizational imperatives, social networking, and critical timing. She reverses stereotypes of gender pay, sexuality, and the making of markets. It is a first-hand analysis that does not let up in its page-turning intelligence and unremitting clarity. (Harvey Molotch, Professor of Metropolitan Studies, New York University)

"Pricing Beauty is a courageous and provocative book. Mears takes us behind the curtain of high-stakes fashion. Drawing on her own experiences as a model, Mears uncovers the far less glamorous side of the industry, one that few of us will ever see. This is sociology at its finest: thoughtful analysis, great storytelling and an empathetic perspective on the lives of so many who pursue their dreams, only to find a few nightmares along the way. A must read for anyone interested in understanding how celebrity is made." (Sudhir Venkatesh, author of *Gang Leader for a Day*)

"This book is a pleasure to read; an entertaining, well-written and sophisticated analysis. I strongly recommend it to anyone interested in the intersection of aesthetics, gender, and labor." (Debra Gimlin, author of *Body Work*)

Fascinating book about the behind-the-scenes workings of the modeling industry. In college, I briefly dabbled in modeling, though more of the 'commercial' and 'promo' type than the high fashion that Mears' work sought to investigate. I found her very candid accounts and quotes from insiders to be unfiltered and honest, though confirming my own observations that as a model, one is really commoditized and reduced to her (or his) parts. In terms of the distinction between 'editorial' and 'commercial' models, I think her explanation and comparisons of the dichotomy between the two worlds was very thorough...the trade-off between prestige and financial security is a common theme, not only in the modeling world, but throughout many other industries as well. When asking

various people in the fashion industry about the lack of diversity (both in terms of racial and size), Mears received a myriad of comments echoing that the lack of diversity was caused by inadequate supply of models (per designers and photographers), inadequate demand for certain types of models (from bookers). It is no wonder that diversity is still difficult to come by when viewing images in Vogue, or catwalk stills on a website. However, I do think the situation is changing; Mears' book came just a few years too early to catch the social-media wave which propelled more diverse models such as Ashley Graham and Barbie Ferreira to fame. There is still a long way to go, and Mears' book confronts an uncomfortable topic head-on.

A well-thought out and very interesting analysis of the Modeling industry, with applications to Entertainment in general. Provides some glimpses into "behind the scene" but the approach is that of a dissertation. I feel those looking for an intellectual look at how beauty is monetized will be pleased. Those looking for a light "day in life of fashion model" will be disappointed.

Ashley Mears has researched the complex fashion world from the perspective of an insider, the results are brilliant and revealing. Equality is a universal concern, but research has mostly focused on the dispossessed and marginal groups, now we have access to the top of the pyramid in a lucid academically sound analysis. Commodified women, the luxury fashion industry and its complex ecology. Highly recommended.

This book gives you a behind the scenes look at the modeling industry. Thought it's certainly not the first book written on the subject, where it differs from the others is that it takes a more scientific approach to the subject delving into the sociological, economic and psychological aspects of the industry. If you're in the industry, or are very interested in it, this book is a must read.

The book examined all angles and brilliantly articulated what most in the fashion industry know but cannot communicate. Anyone outside of fashion can enjoy and benefit from this read, Ashley applies the narrow topic to a much broader scope/context.

A good read, but for those interested in this industry only. I would not recommend it to someone who isn't.

Ashley Mears does an outstanding job of detailing the hidden realities of modeling within the fashion

industry. For someone as young as her, her debut is impressive in its research and scholarship. She makes the case persuasively and successfully of how beauty is packaged and commodified in the "cultural economy of today". Her contribution is monumental in giving a serious study of a field dismissed by the larger society as frivolous and light. To the contrary, there is a great deal of ingenuity, creativity, and business within contemporary fashion.

This was one of the most inspiring and truth-striking books I have ever read. It instilled in me a sense of the "sociological understanding and perspective" constantly themed throughout, identifying aspects unbeknown to me and the average person. Through investigation one can discover all sorts of things that society has instilled in the everyday and commonplace, even discrimination in forms of gender and race, economic hierarchy, and even more. So many aspects of the overall market and life in general were provided in new illuminating ways throughout this sociological compilation. Ashley Mears is a wonderful author, sociologist, and overall curious perspective individual. 5 Stars!

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