



The Role of Paparazzi's and Celebrity — HAUTE

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Like many fashion-oriented individuals, I'm drawn to the glossy pages of fashion magazines, instructing me each month on which trends are popular and which have been dropped from this season's docket. Although curated and informative, how much power do these former echelons of fashion actually hold? Popular trends in fashion and make-up are increasingly being decided by celebrities and the paparazzis who snap their photos. Celebrity is becoming so important in gaining popularity for pieces that fashion houses compete to get the biggest names to wear their clothes exclusively, runway models now need a famous parent to even be considered, and designers are using the pap shots as a jumping point for their spring campaigns.

The Kate Middleton Effect was first discovered when the iconic blue wrap dress she wore for her engagement announcement flew off the shelves (metaphorically of course, it was only sold online). Now the very act of being photographed in an outfit causes an international clamour for the item. Although, unintended, one of the Duchess' main roles is as a walking advertisement for British designers. While Kate Middleton didn't seek out this job, designers took note of the importance of a celebrity endorsement and turned it into a successful business platform. Dior looked to the rising star power of Jennifer Lawrence, who not only models for their campaigns but also exclusively wears Dior on the red carpet. In the past, runway models were seen as hangers, an instrument, a blank canvas to highlight the design. Now, fashion weeks, are dominated by a few, already famous models. Brands are increasingly looking to the already famous to raise their prominence and following among a younger audience.

Design houses are increasingly looking to the paparazzi photo aesthetic in advertising their collections. Both Yeezy and Balenciaga's Spring 2018 campaigns created fake paparazzi photos with their designs and models; Balenciaga even featured a fake body guard, protecting a model being 'hounded' by the paparazzi. These new campaigns glorify the model, not the clothes, begging the question does contemporary fashion have anything to do with the designs, or just the person who will wear them? The increased importance of celebrity is ultimately a reflection of our own society. Our obsession with what celebrities are doing at any moment of the day has led to the increase in paparazzis and the photos they produce. Our own focus on the person has overshadowed the clothes that they are supposed to be endorsing. Because fashion is often a reflection of the culture it is made in, like the extravagance of designs and abundance of silk used by Dior following the end of World War II and the fashion ration, it is worth asking the question: has our current cultural fascination with celebrity altered this relationship?