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About the Modern Girl, Again: Spectacle, Politics, Subjectivity



About the Modern Girl

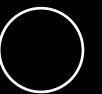
...highly commodified cultural construct crafter by male journalists.'

'a phantom projected onto the social landscape by male critics anxious about socio-cultural change.' (Miriam Silverberg)



'mainly media sensation and partially lived reality.' (Dina Lowy)

'a screen on to which all sorts of fantasies and ideas about sexuality could be projected.' (Wada Hirofumi)





Japan's first mannequin girl: Hanako at the national exhibition of industry commemorating the enthronement of the Showa emperor in 1928.

(from Kon Wajirō, *A New Guide to Greater Tokyo* (Shinpan dai Tokyo annai, 1929))

How to Become a Mannequin



How to become a mannequin is a question that many young women are asking. The answer is not simple, but it is not impossible either. It requires a certain amount of talent and hard work.

First, you must have a good physique. You should be tall and slender, with a graceful posture. You should also have a pleasant expression and a good voice.

Second, you must have a good education. You should know something about fashion and be able to talk to customers.

Third, you must have a good temperament. You should be patient and able to work long hours.

Fourth, you must have a good sense of business. You should know how to sell your goods and how to manage your money.

Finally, you must have a good luck. It is not always easy to find a good employer, but if you have all the other qualities, you will eventually find one.







'How to Become a Mannequin, Asahi Graph 4 March 1931

Mannequins










Mannequins are women who work in department stores and fashion shops. They are responsible for displaying the latest fashions to customers. They must have a good physique and a pleasant expression. They must also have a good education and a good temperament. They must be able to work long hours and have a good sense of business.

'Mannequins', Asahi Graph, 25 Sep 1929



新しいマネキン

百貨店が百貨店と、その反対として劇的に様式化した
もの象徴的なものと現はれることはあらゆる条件に見られる
ガールの出現は百貨店の頂点を飾るものといへるでせう。此の寫眞は明らかにその反対を語るもので
最近ニューヨークに現れたのです。子供は服を着た丈夫の模範的な木切で出来た人形を愛玩下さ
い。その姿のデパートですぐ模倣しようとするね。

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'The New Mannequins', Yomiuri 6 July 1929

人形 マネキン
ここに活路を求めよう
領域を荒された
人形 マネキン
だんく、商業的に変わってゆく

食事もマネキン
熱い風呂で
お風呂

'The Mannequins, Their Domain Devastated by the Human Models, Become Gradually More Abstract', Yomiuri 27 March 1932

腹中から戀文
マネキン人形病院
オメガ
聯合物産西東

'A Love Letter in the Belly', Asahi 23 Jan 1936



The fears and perceptual anxieties emanating from ever more powerful machines are recast and reconstructed in terms of the male fear of female sexuality reflecting, in the Freudian account, the male's castration anxiety...Woman, nature, machine had become a mesh of significations which all had one thing in common: otherness; by their very existence they raised fears and threatened male authority and control.

Andreas Huyssen, 'The Vamp and the Machine: Technology and Sexuality in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*', *New German Critique* 24/25 (1981), 226.







Komai Reiko (real name Asanuma Kiyoko)

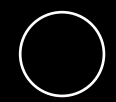




Maruyama Miyoko in her modelling days



Maruyama Miyoko, *Mannequin Girl: The History of Showa as Told by a Poet's Wife* (Tokyo: Jijitsūshinsha, 1984)





Hara Sen (1905–1989): actress, married to Communist poet Nakano Shigeharu (1930–1979)

