



Press Release

## Leeds Arts University's research fellow celebrates book launch

**Consuming the Body: Capitalism, Social Media, and Commodification** by Dr. Dawn Woolley  
Launch event: Friday 21 October, 5:30 - 7pm

Leeds Arts University are delighted to announce the book launch event for 'Consuming the Body: Capitalism, Social Media, and Commodification' by Research Fellow, Dr. Dawn Woolley. Dr. Dawn Woolley will be in conversation with Dr. Jacki Willson (Associate Professor in Performance and Gender in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries at the University of Leeds) to discuss some of the themes and ideas in the book.

'Consuming the Body: Capitalism, Social Media and Commodification' examines contemporary consumerism and the commodified construction of ideal gendered bodies, paying particular attention to the new forms of interaction produced by social networking sites. The book describes the behaviours of an ideal neoliberal subject: modes of discipline, forms of pleasure, and opportunities for subversion are identified in an examination of how individuals are addressed and the ways in which they are expected to respond. Key modes of address that compel the consumer to consume are: sadistic commands communicated in adverts, TV programmes and magazine articles; a fetishistic gaze that dissects the body into parts to be improved through commodification; and a hystericized insistent presence that compels the consumer to present their body for critique and appreciation that is exemplified in the selfie.

Woolley interprets the visual characteristics of different types of selfies, including #fitspiration, #thinspiration, #fatspiration, and #bodypositivity to understand how they relate to current body ideals. Healthism and culture bound illnesses such as hysteria and eating disorders are examined to demonstrate the impact of commodified body ideals on consumers' bodies. An analysis of thinspiration images (photographs of emaciated bodies shared on pro-eating-disorder blogs and websites) suggests that the anorexic body represents the logical (and fatal) end point for the idealised body in consumer culture. Fat acceptance selfies suggest there is a fourth mode of address, empowering presence, that has the potential to liberate consumers from the 'trap of visiblensness' produced by the other three modes of address. In conclusion, the book identifies some creative methods for producing selfies that evade commoditisation and discipline.

Dawn Woolley is an artist and research fellow at Leeds Arts University examining consumer culture, social media, and gender. She completed an MA in Photography (2008) and PhD by project in Fine Art (2017) at the Royal College of Art. Her artwork is a feminist critique of consumer culture, encompassing photography, video, installation, and performance to draw attention issues of sexualisation, objectification, and idealisation. Recent solo exhibitions include; Recent solo exhibitions include; "Consumed: Stilled Lives" bildkulture galerie, Stuttgart (2022) and Perth Centre for Photography, Australia, (2021).

The book launch event will be held Friday 21 October 2022, 5:30pm - 7pm at the Leeds Arts University Postgraduate Hub, Blenheim Walk campus, Leeds Arts University, LS2 9AQ. Free entry, refreshments provided. Further information at: [www.leeds-art.ac.uk/dawn-woolley-book-launch](http://www.leeds-art.ac.uk/dawn-woolley-book-launch)

-ENDS-

## Notes to editors

For images, interviews and further information:

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## Publication information

Consuming the Body: Capitalism, Social Media, and Commodification  
Dr. Dawn Woolley.

Published by Bloomsbury Publishing

[www.bloomsbury.com/uk/consuming-the-body-9781350225299/](http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/consuming-the-body-9781350225299/)

## Launch event

Friday 21 October, 5:30 - 7pm

University Postgraduate Hub, Blenheim Walk campus, Leeds Arts University, LS2 9AQ.

[www.leeds-art.ac.uk/dawn-woolley-book-launch](http://www.leeds-art.ac.uk/dawn-woolley-book-launch)

Press are invited to attend the launch event. If you would like to attend please contact [sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk](mailto:sophie.millerwallace@leeds-art.ac.uk) or [klara.piechocki-brown@leeds-art.ac.uk](mailto:klara.piechocki-brown@leeds-art.ac.uk)

## About Leeds Arts University

Founded in 1846 as the Leeds Government School of Art and Design, Leeds Arts University has contributed significantly to the development of art education in Britain and across the world. In 2016 the University was granted Taught Degree Awarding Powers, and in 2017 was awarded full university status, making it the only specialist arts university in the North of England.

Leeds Arts University has been recognised for its industry-standard facilities at the Whatuni awards (winners in 2019 and 2016, runner up in 2020), and was announced winner for Student Support in 2020. In 2021 Leeds Arts University appointed acclaimed musician Skin to the role of Chancellor.