



Sneakers: Fashion, Gender, and Subculture (Dress, Body, Culture)

By Yuniya Kawamura



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This is the first academic study of sneakers and the subculture that surrounds them. Since the 1980s, American sneaker enthusiasts, popularly known as "sneakerheads" or "sneakerholics", have created a distinctive identity for themselves, while sneaker manufacturers such as Reebok, Puma and Nike have become global fashion brands.

How have sneakers come to gain this status and what makes them fashionable? In what ways are sneaker subcultures bound up with gender identity and why are sneakerholics mostly young men? Based on the author's own ethnographic fieldwork in New York, where sneaker subculture is said to have originated, this unique study traces the transformation of sneakers from sportswear to fashion symbol.

Sneakers explores the obsessions and idiosyncrasies surrounding the sneaker phenomenon, from competitive subcultures to sneaker painting and artwork. It is a valuable contribution to the growing study of footwear in fashion studies and will appeal to students of fashion theory, gender studies, sociology, and popular culture.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Finally, a book on sneakers for fashion scholars! No single item of clothing has played a larger role in American youth cultural history, and Kawamura does a brilliant job of recounting that history, contextualizing sneakers within the post-subcultural moment, and placing them in tension with larger debates in fashion studies.” ?*Brent Luvaas, Drexel University, USA*

“Kawamura's *Sneakers* convinces that a considered sociology of a single everyday object – albeit an infamous commodity that solicits consumer madness and subcultural respect – creates a worthy interdisciplinary global phenomenon called 'sneakerology'.” ?*Alison Gill, University of Western Sydney, Australia*

About the Author

Yuniya Kawamura is Professor of Sociology at the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York, USA. She is the author of *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion* (Berg, 2004), *Fashionology* (Berg, 2005), *Doing Research in Fashion and Dress* (Berg, 2011), and *Fashioning Japanese Subcultures* (Berg, 2012).

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