Abstract

Headline: What does fashion look like: a study of fashion picture stereotypes in Washington community magazines

My professional analysis was related to my summer 2012 photography internship at DC Life Magazine. During the internship I photographed fashion shows and models in Washington, and for the analysis I read and compared fashion pictures in Washington local magazines. I found the fashion pictures used in community magazines share many similar qualities, and by studying the similarities we can learn how local fashion magazines visually represent females.

My research question is “what are the stereotypes in fashion pictures of Washington community magazines”. The research method used in this project is qualitative content analysis. By comparing the pictures and analyzing the photographic characteristics, I sum up the stereotype of local magazines’ fashion pictures as: white blonde curvy model, emotionlessness, gender-specific and average-priced dress code, and traditional style of photography (including eye-level angle, no distortion, low contrast, mild tone and balanced lighting). The results reveal the way the public visually determines female beauty. It can be helpful in future media studies of female social roles.