While the general public engages in varying levels of it, the models and modeling professionals I spoke to for this study claimed they felt as though they were never off duty and were always at work to produce the right “look” in person, in photographs, and online. Model agents made it clear that it matters where models live, where they eat and shop, and on which airline they travel. As this chapter explores, some respondents reported being told explicitly by their agents they had to put on the show all the time, even if they were just running around the corner to do an errand, mindful of the impression they might make as they are out and about, conscious of their online image created by the photos snapped of them in fashionable neighborhoods or at social events and posted to blogs or websites dedicated to documenting the modeling world. It seems like a lot of work, but models who really want to “make it” report trying to make it look fun to be exposed in this way, to be “on” all the time, to be out there in the spotlight, as often as humanly possible.
the ideal for the whole population. Simultaneously, however, the body’s vitality and mutability also came to be favored, as a biopolitics of beauty emerged, organizing and regulating publics at the level of population, as a standing reserve, always already in need of enhancement and optimization, ready for a close-up, in need of that makeover. In tandem with these developments, modeling work took on characteristics that prompted some of my respondents to refer to it as “the life,” a state of working that felt to many like having to be “on” all the time. In the transition from day job to total lifestyle, playing the role of being a model—sashaying about in crinolines, carrying a hatbox containing waist cinchers and war paints (the badge of the model’s trade), while ducking into movie theaters to make oneself scarce between calls—gave way to the casual street chic, “I only dress up on the runway” attitude of today, where models live the part, hiding the effort required to make looking glamourous seem easy and like something everyone should do.

Conclusion
Elizabeth A. Wissinger

In this chapter, I situate the book’s findings about modeling, embodiment, and technology in the debates about affect stirred up by the age of the blink. It considers the theoretical ramifications of imaging regimes, glamour labor, digital culture, affectivity, and technological changes in early 21st century. Placing questions raised by looking at modeling work and its cultural impact addresses debates about the differences between affect and emotion. The chapter also treats debates in neuroscience about affect and affect studies, discussing the theories of Massumi, Thrift, Leys, Ledoux, and James-Lange.

The Photo Shoot
Elizabeth A. Wissinger

In this chapter, I situate the book’s findings about modeling, embodiment, and technology in the debates about affect stirred up by the age of the blink. It considers the theoretical ramifications of imaging regimes, glamour labor, digital culture, affectivity, and technological changes in early 21st century. Placing questions raised by looking at modeling work and its cultural impact addresses debates about the differences between affect and emotion. The chapter also treats debates in neuroscience about affect and affect studies, discussing the theories of Massumi, Thrift, Leys, Ledoux, and James-Lange.
In this chapter, I treat how changes in the goals and methods of the fashion shoot. The value of what the model did changed from the 1900s discovery that a person’s image could be owned by them and worth money to the carefully staged and scripted studio shots prevalent from the 1920s through the 1950s, to the far more intense and invasive practice of getting one’s “soul sucked out” by the camera lens, as one model described it, to being given the puzzling direction to try to look like a rat (as the former supermodel Cindy Crawford reported). This chapter tracks shifts in photographic modeling, from using models as mere props to an intense experience in which the model is expected to reveal herself utterly to the camera. Models’ stories about photographic sittings and shoots reveal how affective lability or mania became a valuable factor in modeling work for the camera in the age of the blink.

Scouting
Elizabeth A. Wissinger

in This Year's Model: "Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour"

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Here I outline how the turn toward affective branding has shaped a new image regime facilitating the model industry’s rapid expansion into a global network, broadening the field for scouting of prospective models, intensifying competition and turnover as a result. Increasing interest in tapping into affect’s vitality has intensified glamour labor as model managers have sought tighter control of their charges. This chapter tracks how the tightening of control over models was met with a widening field of scouting for new recruits to the industry. As the public’s exposure to and interest in fashion has grown apace, fashion weeks have proliferated beyond the traditional fashion hubs, and scouting for new models has reached into ever-more remote regions. Consequently, modeling contests have grown in size and number, modeling agencies have opened offices in dozens of countries, and fashion has become “news” as television shows and websites treating fashion became commonplace. Banking on the new value of mutability, model scouts ranged farther afield in search of that precious combination of features that might make millions. The age of the blink facilitated this expansion, converting more of the population into a standing reserve, made ready for their makeovers by a steady diet of reality television and twenty-four-hour access to the newest fashions, updated by the minute.
This chapter documents the racial parameters of the fashion aesthetic. While models of color are more prevalent in high-fashion images today, historically the modeling industry has been closed off from taking the kinds of risks that involve troubling the idea of “fashion” as dictated the given signs and symbols that have evolved within the corporate world. For black models the repertoire for creating a marketable look has traditionally been limited by stereotypes and cultural assumptions, which shape black models’ glamour labor in specific ways. Their self-branding has demanded more intense forms of bodywork and self-commodifying, at times using their race as part of their brand, while at times essentially erasing their racial characteristics by straightening their hair or pushing their bodies to fit a Euro-American standard. While my respondents experienced their race as something they created or dissimulated according to client’s whims, at the same time they were keenly aware of how their work was shaped by prevailing expectations of what “race” should look like, indicating the power of pre-existing racial tensions into which they must fit the aesthetics of the look they build when doing glamour labor.

I explore in this chapter how, in recent decades, modeling work has come to require embodying the ideal of a malleable body, especially since the 1980s and 1990s, when digital technologies facilitated the desire to manipulate appearances, since digitization enabled an infinite malleability of appearance down to the tiniest pixel. Modeling work increasingly became the work to always be ready for, or in the process of, transformation, and in so doing, models glamorized this practice for the general public.
I describe in this chapter how the increased effort to harness hard-to-manage forms of “affective” energy accelerated the demand for models to sell brands and how eventually, in the form of the supermodels, models became brands themselves. The inauguration of the supermodels brought the transition from a girl who models to the 24/7 supermodel icon and the supermodels who became the quintessential glamour laborers who were never off duty. Facilitated by newly far-flung webs of cable television and high-speed communications, the supermodels became household names. This transition laid the groundwork for the rise of mass fashion and the spread of glamour labor to the general populace. Prior to the regime of the blink, the fashion show, for instance, was nothing like the branded dazzle with which we are currently familiar.

In this chapter, I document how advertising’s need to send a specific, meaningful message to an interested consumer shaped the work of model management in its early days. At that time, 1900s fashion designers, such as the incomparable Lucile, tightly controlled their mannequins, molding them into the “look” of their particular house. Mid-century models were given specific instruction in which expressions to wear and how to feel for a particular shoot. With the developing importance of capitalizing on the value of experiences and the body’s changeability, however, modeling work evolved into the professional free-for-all that it is today, where it is anybody’s guess what look clients will want from one moment to the next. Similar changes surfaced in methods for obtaining and portraying the ideal body recommended to models in published manuals of modeling “advice.” This chapter also explores how the popular language of model management draws back the curtain on how we envisage the “ideal” worker as a culture, since
changes in instructions given to models over the years interestingly have
dovetailed with significant changes in productive technologies during
the same timeframe. This connection becomes particularly evident when
tracing the advice given to models in modeling manuals from the 1920s
to the 1960s, described here.