



Fashioning Fat: Inside Plus-Size Modeling

Amanda M. Czerniawski

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For two and a half years, Amanda Czerniawski was a sociologist turned plus-size model. Journeying into a world where, as a size 10, she was not considered an average body type, but rather, for the fashion industry, 'plus-sized' Czerniawski studied the standards of work and image production in the plus-sized model industry. Fashioning Fat takes us through a model's day-to-day activities, first at open calls at modeling agencies and then through the fashion shows and photo shoots. Czerniawski also interviewed 35 plus-size models about their lives in the world of fashion, bringing to life the strange contradictions of being an object of non-idealized beauty. Fashioning Fat shows us that the mission of many of these models is to challenge our standards of beauty that privilege the thin body; they show us that fat can be sexy. Many plus-size models do often succeed in overcoming years of self-loathing and shame over their bodies, yet, as Czerniawski shows, these women are not the ones in charge of beauty's construction or dissemination. At the corporate level, the fashion industry perpetuates their objectification. Plus-size models must conform to an image created by fashion's tastemakers, as their bodies must fit within narrowly defined parameters of size and shape an experience not too different from that of straight-sized models. Ultimately, plus-size models find that they are still molding their bodies to fit an image instead of molding an image of beauty to fit their bodies. A much-needed behind-the-scenes look at this growing industry, Fashioning Fat is a fascinating, unique, and important contribution to our understanding of beauty.

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