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## Intimacy For Sale: The Interior Landscape of Social Media

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# Intimacy For Sale: The Interior Landscape of Social Media

Senior Project Submitted to  
The Division of the Arts  
of Bard College

by  
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# I

## NTRODUCTION

A half-naked woman lies in bed, gravely gazing into the camera, one hand digging into the bed's mattress, the other hand delicately grazing the side of her smooth, bare leg (Figure 1). Her hair falls far down her back, mirroring the creased fabric of the blanket. Her image, although penetrative, lies in stark contrast to the bedding and wallpaper surrounding her. Small rectangles reveal different parts of the female body, ensuing a montage of sexuality. Breasts, butts, hands, thighs, waists all create a halo effect behind the seated, centered woman. The bed emotes a vulnerability and questions the identity of the onlooker. A postulated gaze. An unclothed woman. It all sounds eerily familiar. Except in this example, the onlooker doesn't necessarily hold the power. The viewer, suggested by the look in her eye and the affirmative, defiant pose, seems to be intruding on a particularly intimate moment. By nature of the bed, the center of the image, it is assumed that this space is a private space. A place of intimacy.

This woman is Kim Kardashian and the image is an advertisement posted on Instagram for her shapewear brand, Skims. Kim Kardashian, the American media personality, famous for her reality television show, *Keeping Up With The Kardashians*, is not revolutionary in her exploitation of privacy and sexuality for the sake of selling a product. The product and the bed are conflated in an attempt to sell whatever it is the consumer desires: sex, beauty, comfort. The bed is familiar, it is a place everyone can relate to, an emblem of privacy. Our desire to consume is manipulated and encouraged by our desire to feel safe and secure.

Consumer culture has profited off the representation of privacy, or rather the lack thereof, for decades now. The obsession with celebrity personalities and the nuclear family “home” took over Americanization and suburbanization in the mid-20th century. Artists like Andy Warhol used celebrities, famously Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley, to analyze the phenomenon of fame and the so-called “pop icon.” The repetition of images and the removal of the artist’s hand questions both the durability of the image and the alienating nature of fame. Advertisements and magazine clippings commodify the exploitation of the home and private life, curating what becomes naturalized as a private space made public. These obsessions have only continued to grow, perhaps unconsciously, through the establishment of social media, widening this dissonance between surface and reality.

Today, celebrities have significantly less privacy than the pop icons of the 1960s and 70s. This obstruction of privacy relates to the reconstruction of the very definition of celebrity itself. What defines a celebrity today? What once was specific to famous actors, models, and artists, the “celebrity” now characterizes new kinds of careers, such as the Instagram influencer or reality television stars. Their path to success is heavily reliant on the complete obstruction of a private life. Reality TV stars, like Kim Kardashian, instrumentalize their private lives to make money off the commodified fantasy that their viewers know them deeply and personally. Social media accounts sell pictures and videos of themselves that document their entire days and put their homes and bodies on public display. This concept is something I would like to term “public privacy,” which refers to the deliberate illusion of transparency and familiarity within many consumer-producer relationships. This illusion makes the consumer unable to identify their own position as consumer. To explore this phenomenon, this thesis will study how consumerism uses

visual culture, particularly on image-sharing platforms such as Instagram and Youtube, to instrumentalize and normalize “public privacy.” We will be using two major sites of privacy—the bed and the kitchen—to analyze how social media portrays private life for the exploitation of capital.

Consumer culture has been studied critically in the context of anthropological and economic relationships, as well as in relation to the traditional advertisement (billboard, magazine ad, etc), but has yet to fully encapsulate the manipulation and exploitation of the consumer mind through digital media. Overstimulation has made our minds immune to the constancy of consumerism. It is through visual culture and the constructions of digital and architectural space that consumption is able to operate. What is the distinction between public and private space as explored in social media? The public sphere refers generally to the realm of social interactions and public exchanges. In the context of consumer culture, the public sphere refers to social space as in reality television, social media, and Youtube. Within these spaces, there is a consistent appropriation of private life. For example, we think we know influencers personally based on small snippets of their daily lives. How does the construction of privacy manifest itself as a tool for capital? In other words, does the representation of privacy actually make consumers want to consume more? Do feelings of security and comfortability arise from representations of privacy and intimacy? And how has the representation of “public privacy” become naturalized in popular culture?

In order to understand the relationship between private life and consumer culture, we can use Roland Barthes’ work to draw upon semiotics and discuss the function of the myth in advertisements. Barthes argues that a sign is the conjunction of the object’s mental concept—the



signified—and its representation in language and sound patterns— the signifier.<sup>1</sup> Barthes takes this relationship a step further to say that the sign can itself signify a new sign, the myth, in which new signified meaning is created. For example, the linguistic sign BMW (signifier) denotes a kind of car (signified), but a BMW, being very expensive and luxurious, also connotes wealth (myth). Oftentimes, there is a range of connotations attached to the sign. This myth, Barthes insists, is human made; it does not form naturally. A myth usually communicates some political or cultural message about the world through the sign. Furthermore, according to Barthes, the myth distorts the message in an effort to eliminate all other possible meanings, naturalizing a construct to feel as if it has always existed.

Advertisements use myths to naturalize consumption. By using signs that connote meaning to the consumer, advertisements attach mythical significations to products; advertisements create meaning.<sup>2</sup> Ad's connotations oftentimes are unconsciously recognizable to the consumer—advertisements address the consumer subliminally, through pervasive cultural domination and colloquial language. This interaction becomes emotive and personal through the exploitation of the subject's privacy. Essentially, consumers are not buying things, they are buying meaning—usually this meaning pertains to a certain social significance that makes us feel better about ourselves. That is to say, ads function in our real world as signs connoting the buyer's good taste, youthfulness, trendiness, or some other ideologically valued quality.

Influencers have become the modern tool for advertising products, with their entire identity functioning as myth. When an influencer posts an advertisement for a product, the

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1972, 221.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, London: Marion Boyars, 1978, 71.

consumer is not interested in the product for what it says it does—clearing breakouts, cooking food in style, etc—they desire the product because it brings them closer to *becoming* the influencer. Emma Chamberlain, an American youtuber and internet persona, is known for her humor and “laid-back” personality; she has 10.9 million followers on Instagram and 9.59 million subscribers on Youtube. She has a contract with the skin company “Bliss,” in which she periodically posts “sponsored” posts (Figure 2). The photo and caption operate together in interesting ways. On one level, the linguistic and visual signs in the post denote quite simply that the product will give you clear skin. But given the admiration and popularity of the influencer, the sign takes on the identity of Emma Chamberlain herself, connoting free-spiritedness and youthful energy. The identity of the influencer is the myth. This myth is constructed by the representation of the influencer’s private life and personality.

Privacy is instrumentalized by consumer culture in a variety of ways. Advertisements, at least in the U.S., function by creating a sense of lack within the consumer, deliberately conflating the consumer’s desires and needs and the values being commodified by popular culture. This reciprocal relationship works so that consumers recognize themselves in their commodities. The consumer’s genuine needs are disguised by false needs; the advertisements really only serve the interests of those who own and control the commodities’ infrastructures. This false sense of intimacy—that the ad knows exactly how to satisfy the consumer—reaffirms the obliteration of the consumer’s privacy. The consumer is under the false pretense that their needs are constantly met, blurring the distinction between private and public spheres of reality.

On a more active level, advertisers also use the *representation* of privacy as a tool for capital and consumption. For example, take this advertisement for duvet sets from IKEA (Figure

3). The image depicts a couple, in the privacy of their bedroom, the man half-heartedly getting dressed as the woman attempts to pull him back into bed. The text reads “Now, home is an oasis. And she’s in no mood to leave.” IKEA produces the myth that their duvet sets preserve the happy, in-love couple and create a space of comfort and joy. The myth being employed here is instrumentalized by the representation of privacy. By buying the duvet set, you are buying a satisfied private life. In fact, the relationship between represented privacy and the consumer goes beyond the visually attractive qualities of the image, but plays into the greater consciousness of mass culture and the fabrications of societal values, such as relationship status, class, and comfort. Intrusively and almost inappropriately, the advertisement manipulates our desires and opinions to effectively fit the blueprint of what they want us to be.

The German cultural theorist Siegfried Kracauer observes in *The Mass Ornament*—originally written in the 1920s and 30s and later published in 1963—the radical shift in the individual within the context of mass production and consumption. Though these observations took place in Weimar Germany in the 1920’s, they can still help us understand American society today. Kracauer used the term “ornament” as a way to understand how mass society operated, which he argued was essentially its own ornament.<sup>3</sup> The ornament, architecturally speaking, functions to embellish a space and later stand as the cultural marker, or signifier, of that space. The symbolism of the mass ornament speaks to greater cultural manipulation and embellishment. What is the mass and how does it function? Who bears the ornament? And how does this ornament come to represent itself? Kracauer writes,

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<sup>3</sup> Siegfried Kracauer & Levin, T. Y., *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995, 76.

The bearer of the ornaments is the mass and not the people, for whenever the people form figures, the latter do not hover in midair but arise out of a community. A current of organic life surges from these communal groups—which share a common destiny—to their ornaments, endowing these ornaments with a magic force and burdening them with meaning to such an extent that they cannot be reduced to a pure assemblage of lines.<sup>4</sup>

The conception of the mass automatically assumes a sacrifice of the individual. The mass subsumes the identity that is given to them through the media and artificial representations of the world. This parallel structure implements societal control. How does Kracauer's theory apply to social media? I would propose that social media is an extension of the mass ornament. The conceptualization of the mass, via platforms such as Instagram, strengthens the consumer-influencer relationship. The mass has no sense of individuality; it belongs to a culture that places all its meaning on capitalistic ideals embedded in vapidty and temporality. Yet simultaneously, there is a superficial sense of "belonging" that manifests, in which the individual seeks comfort and resolution in the concept of the mass. There is no sense of differing, no opportunity to be alone. The mass can be likened to the millions of users sharing images on social media, where information tends to blur and replicate and repeat. We post photos to feel attached to society, yet our attachment makes us feel even more alone and disconnected from other people.

It is important to note that Kracauer focuses on the production of mass culture rather than the consumption of it— we see this in his many examples of the mass assembly lines and the legs of the chorus girls. His stress on efficient production is emphasized in the duality of the "hands of the factory workers correspond[ing] to the legs of the Tiller Girls [a famous Chorus

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<sup>4</sup> Siegfried Kracauer & Levin, T. Y., *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, 76.

Line]... a series of formal operations carried out on meaningless parts.”<sup>5</sup> The operations, such as the legs dancing, produce patterns similar to the movements of machines: “lines, rotations, repetitions.”<sup>6</sup> Does Kracauer’s theory of the mass ornament still hold today, in the era of social media? Can we relate the production of the assembly lines or chorus girls to the influencers of social media? There is an interesting relationship between consumers and influencers. People generally associate influencers with advertisers— they sell things to us. While this holds true, it might be productive to think of the influencer simultaneously as the mega consumer; their job is to depict themselves consuming. Society’s conflation of consumption and production is what makes consumption so appealing. Producers, such as Kracauer’s factory workers, are used as weapons for the structuring of mass society’s desires and thoughts.

Guy Debord makes an argument that revises Siegfried Kracauer’s conception of the mass ornament in his *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), insisting otherwise that the spectacle “is not mere decoration added to the real world,” but “both the result and the goal of the dominant mode of production.”<sup>7</sup> Debord takes Kracauer’s theory and applies it to the social relations of his time. The spectacle entertains the idea of infinite mimicry. The spectacle takes from real life, falsifies that reality, which then in turn becomes a real product of that reality. “Conversely, real life is materially invaded by the contemplation of the spectacle, and ends up absorbing it and aligning itself with it.”<sup>8</sup> How can we apply Debord’s conception of the spectacle to the investigation of

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<sup>5</sup> Siegfried Kracauer & Levin, T. Y., *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, 79.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>7</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books, 1994, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 8.

social media? To begin, social media's architecture in and of itself requires consistent speculation. The constant exploitation of images and information echos societal surveillance. This lack of privacy is subsumed in the role of the influencer, whose public internet presence is used to falsify the consumer's reality. The overstimulation of images and products convinces the consumer that they need more than they do. Does the essence of the influencer correlate to the conception of the spectacle? Perhaps it is not simply the influencer but rather the implicit, overbearing design of social media that elicits such power and control, as insisted in Debord's argument.

If we expand our definition of the advertiser to encompass the "influencer," modern society proves to be much more pervasive and invasive than initially perceived. Marina Lapade's *Youtube: Theater for Gen Z's Hyperreality* argues that "although the influencer represents a sense of unbridled honesty to create an intimate relationship with their viewers, the social bond has been co-opted by larger companies looking to profit off the influencer's aura of authenticity."<sup>9</sup> The influencer has penetrated all aspects of modernity; they command the public space without our even realizing. Real life begins to mirror the commodified world of the influencer, whose public standing allows for the naturalization of this new reality. "The world we see is the world of the commodity."<sup>10</sup> But the influencer not only controls the world of the commodity—the influencer is the commodity. Their value is dependent upon the values placed on them by the spectacle; a disposable identity based on the mechanisms of consumption.

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<sup>9</sup> Marina E. Laprade, "Youtube: Theater for Gen Z's Hyperreality" (2020), *Senior Projects Spring 2020*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 29.

Curated and cultivated by the influencer is the manifestation of a private realm where the relationship between consumer and commodity remains sanctified. Objects of privacy are exploited in this manner so as to limit exposure to the mechanical operations of capitalism. The consumer's desire to remain in denial of their indulgent practices demonstrates the need for access to these sites of privacy. Examples of these sites of privacy include, but is not limited to, home interiors (bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens), gardens, cars. Social media has radically transformed the way the public conceives intimacy and privacy. On platforms such as Instagram and YouTube, the constant sharing of images and videos has become normalized. The architecture of the platform demands an overdose of images, a state of constant flux that makes the viewer immune to the level in which private and public life has become conflated. Advertisements appeal to private life to rationalize the consumer's desires for consumption.

To explore this question I deploy two spaces of privacy: the bed and the kitchen. Each site will be taken as a reference point to analyze the different ways popular culture produces privacy. I will also investigate how influencers in social media instrumentalize those spaces and concepts to sell products. Each chapter will be examined through the lens of semiology and critical mass theory, as developed by the authors previously mentioned: Barthes, Kracauer, and Debord. More importantly, I will be using visual culture to ground my research and ideas. Social media behaves as a prominent tool for discourse and image production. I will examine both social media's relationship to the image and its manipulated construction of a new visual language within the framework of consumer culture.

The first chapter will focus on the visual culture and representation of the "bed" in social media as a site of intimacy. There is a historical tradition in art to represent the bed against

themes of sexuality and vulnerability, i.e. the nude women and displays of birth and death. Maya Annika Teich argues for the bed as an Art Object, as “having what might be termed an ‘agency’.”<sup>11</sup> This agency leads the viewer to project their own desires and experiences onto the image: lust, love, rest, etc. Given the social significance of the bed as an object in art, how do influencers construct the bed as a site of intimacy and the center of a private sphere? How do influencers use the bed, a site of intimacy, to sell a product? Today, the construction of the bed in social media and popular culture reveals one’s most private, genuine self; a place where anything is possible, from sleeping, to eating, to working, to being intimate with someone else. The construction of this universal site is advertised explicitly on social media through representations of nudity and intimacy, particularly using the female body. This chapter will use Calvin Klein’s “In Bed With...” series as a primary example of this exploitation of privacy. The YouTube series features celebrities, models, and influencers explicitly, and rather sexually, depicted in arguably the most intimate visual object, the bed. Privacy as doubly exploited in both the bed and the platform of social media allows for the construction of manipulated, intimate storytelling.

The second chapter will emphasize the “kitchen” as a site of social reproduction and the duality of its representation between art and social media. As witnessed in artworks like Carrie Mae Weems’ *The Kitchen Table Series* (1990), the kitchen has historically operated as a dichotomy between oppression and intimacy. *Social Reproduction Theory*, as devised by historian and activist Tithi Bhattacharya, deepens our understanding of social oppression and capitalist exploitation through the exploration of “care” labor, such as child and house work.

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<sup>11</sup> Maya Annika Teich, "Embedded: The Bed as an Art Object" (2020), *Senior Projects Spring 2020*, 5.



Using the site of the kitchen as the symbol for capitalist social repression, this chapter will analyse the ways in which the kitchen is employed by influencers on social media. Using food “vloggers” and food magazines, such as *Binging With Babish*, this chapter will uncover the nuanced, commodified relationship between the privacy of the kitchen and the publicity of social media.

We all have a personal stake in the matter of social media and privacy. Social media only continues to grow, extending its legs to the far reaching corners of society, promoting biased and subjective modes of thought, and capitalizing on the consumer’s consistent, uncontrollable need to consume. America’s debilitating consumption plays into the internet’s algorithmic, ceaseless refresh button. We scroll ourselves directly into erasure. Our individuality, our privacy, is at stake in the wake of a dissociating reality. How might we transform the objectification of the bed and the kitchen to release ourselves from the hounds of mass culture? Perhaps the ways in which mass culture instrumentalizes these sites of consumption can be reversed to shed light on the problematic conflation of the private and public spheres and reclaim individuality in the midst of an ever-growing, conformist popular culture.

# 1 THE BED

In 2019 Calvin Klein, an American fashion company specializing in underwear and loungewear, launched the YouTube series ‘In Bed With...’ as part of its #MYCALVINS campaign. There are a total of five episodes in the campaign, released between December 2019 and March 2020. Each episode was filmed in a hotel room, two in The Equinox Hotel and three in The Edition Hotel, both in New York City.

Apart from the overall white and minimalist aesthetic, what these five YouTube advertisements share is the centrality of the bed in the narrative. The bed is represented in a variety of different ways in these short videos. Claudia Sulewski uses her bed as a painting studio, Kendall Jenner eats inside her bed, Rickey Thompson uses his bed as a place of dance and exercise, Evan Mock even dyes his hair in bed. Each bed is represented with fluffy comforters and multiple pillows, an emblem of luxury, that the influencers are constantly rolling around in, jumping on top of, and laying across. What kind of space is the bed for these influencers? What does the bed mean to Calvin Klein?

Each episode begins with the influencer opening the door to the camera and inviting the viewer inside their hotel room. They each sit in the same, white hotel bed while answering a series of questions in the same back-and-forth format as a traditional interview. Here we do not hear the interviewer, instead the questions are written in text overlapping the image on the screen. This frames the setting as an intimate one-on-one conversation with the influencer, assigning the role of interviewer to the viewer. The very site of the bedroom also frames the

space as a private space. The hotel bed commands the visual space of every episode—the specificity of the *hotel* bed being an important distinction here. The feeling of privacy is not constructed by accessibility to the influencer’s private space, as would be if these episodes took place in their own homes. Privacy manifests itself solely in the representation of the bed. The generalized hotel bed belongs to nobody; the construction of pillows, blankets, and sheets visually implement familiarity and privacy by nature of their universality. We need not enter the influencer’s home to feel as if we are being “private” with them. The bed, whether in a hotel or not, establishes privacy as universal.

This YouTube series features celebrities, models, and influencers inviting the viewer to “get in bed with them” while answering a series of personal and career-focused questions.<sup>12</sup> Each interviewee wears Calvin Klein (CK), between lingerie and lounge clothing. The subjects are explicitly, and rather sexually, depicted on top of a bed, a space that has historically functioned as the extension of the self, a private domain, and a physical representation of sexual intimacy. The loungewear suggests comfortability and alludes to a separation of outdoor and indoor space. The visual cues of the bed and CK pajamas immediately suggest intimacy and privacy. Not only that, but the platform of social media allows for the construction of intimate storytelling. The difference between a billboard advertisement and a YouTube video is that the latter requires agency. The choice to click on a video and watch the entire duration blurs the boundary between ad and entertainment. The space of Youtube also requires some form of privacy; it is experienced on either a phone or computer, usually in private spaces such as the bed or couch.

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<sup>12</sup> Calvin Klein, “In Bed With Kendall Jenner | CALVIN KLEIN,” YouTube video, 7:55, December 19, 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpJ\\_XO-jDQ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpJ_XO-jDQ8).

The brand states that “‘In Bed With...’ is an original Calvin Klein series featuring friends of the brand, unfiltered and in conversation with us.”<sup>13</sup> The word ‘unfiltered’ suggests a conscious effort to evoke authenticity and informality on the part of the campaign. ‘Unfiltered’ today also connotes raw beauty and genuinity, especially given the excessive use of filters that alter somebody’s image in social media, such as Instagram or Snapchat. To be ‘unfiltered’ implies an honest and unbeautified representation of one’s self. Can we really define the campaign as ‘unfiltered’? Can we define anything on social media as ‘unfiltered’? Is there not irony in scripted authenticity?

The videos were directed by Talia Collis and produced by Dayna Carney. Talia Collis, British fashion director, has worked on many fashion campaigns and is most well known for her work with Vogue, particularly the series ‘Diary Of A Model’.<sup>14</sup> Dayna Carney, likewise, is the senior video producer for Vogue magazine. Dayna Carney produced some widely popular Vogue series, including but not limited to ‘73 Questions With...’, ‘Day Off’, and ‘Unfiltered’.<sup>15</sup> Each of these different productions involve the interrogation and documentation of celebrities’ “unfiltered” private lives. For example, the widely popular ‘73 Questions With...’ follows celebrities into their homes through a rapid-fire series of questions as they lead us around their living rooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and bedrooms, usually performing mundane tasks such as making coffee or packing suitcases. The appearance of privacy in these productions operates through the visual representation of the celebrities’ private homes. The bathroom they brush their

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<sup>13</sup> Calvin Klein, “In Bed With Kendall Jenner | CALVIN KLEIN”

<sup>14</sup> Talia Collis. (n.d.). Retrieved November 24, 2020, from <https://www.taliacollis.com/>

<sup>15</sup> Creative production. (n.d.). Retrieved November 24, 2020, from <https://daynashouse.com/>

teeth in, the kitchen they cook dinner in, the bedroom that they sleep in every night. The visual constructions of privacy are more successful than the actual interview.

The characters involved in Calvin Klein's campaign clearly brought ideas from their previous work of how to construct a mock privacy to the set of 'In Bed With...'. The conception of the "public private," the documentation of a person's intimate, interworking life, is in full effect here. Privacy is being constructed in the production of CK's campaign, but is the privacy of each individual actually representational? How is privacy manifest in the operation of a director, producer, camera crew, makeup artist, etc? How do the visual aspects of the production, such as the representation of a bed, allude to this sense of privacy?

Calvin Klein could not have picked a more eclectic mix of influencers and celebrities to represent their aspiring audience. In order of release date, the five "friends of the brand" that the #MYCALVINS campaign features are: television celebrity Kendall Jenner, Instagram influencer Emma Chamberlain, vlogger Rickey Thompson, lifestyle YouTuber Claudia Sulewski, and celebrity skater and model Evan Mock. Each character already instrumentalizes visual culture in their lives, whether through product sponsorships or daily vlogs, to fabricate their own commodified, "unfiltered" personas. Calvin Klein's utilization of the influencer in this campaign comments on the monopolizing reality of consumer culture and its effort to weaken the appearance of strategized advertising.

Influencers, in the same way as celebrities, have become objects of obsession and fantasy for their fans. A desire to click on every photo and watch every video that features these "celebrities" eventually carries the fans to Calvin Klein's campaign series. Sarah Arayess and Dominique Geer argue that "using influencers (bloggers, vloggers, or other content creators) as a

part of a marketing strategy is very common these days...[and] is often a problem on social media, as it is difficult to distinguish (hidden) advertisements from other posts.”<sup>16</sup> This phenomenon creates a risky relationship between followers of these influencers, the consumers, and themselves, the advertisers. Disclosure of how much their opinions on social media are true or based on contract and salary is not always clear. This plays out in the form of an Instagram post, a YouTube video “sponsorship,” or sometimes even the brand directly using the influencer on their own (YouTube ads, social media accounts, billboards). Because of the obsessive nature of the relationship between influencer and their large fanbases, influencers function quite well as brand ambassadors. The desire to purchase the sponsored product correlates more to the identity of the influencer than the actual product itself. The identity of the influencer becomes the myth.

Calvin Klein, founded in 1968, has always used famous celebrities for their ad campaigns: Brooke Shields in 1980, an overtly sexy campaign for CK jeans, Kate Moss and Mark Wahlberg in 1992, the famous topless shoot of the models in only CK underwear and jeans, Eva Mendes in 2008, a controversial, unedited, and naked commercial for CK perfume, and Justin Bieber in 2015, whose superstar status and good looks have become the face of CK in recent years. The significant difference between the previous campaigns and the ‘In Bed With...’ series is the clear implementation of privacy through the presence of the bed and appeal to “unfiltered” conversations. None of the previous campaigns implemented visual culture to the same extent that is happening in the Youtube series.

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<sup>16</sup> Sarah Arayess and Dominique Geer, "Social Media Advertising: How to Engage and Comply," *European Food and Feed Law Review* 12, no. 6 (2017), 529.

Let's take a look at the first episode of the series starring Kendall Jenner, reality television star and supermodel, released on December 19, 2019 (Figure 4). The video opens to a closed door filmed as a point-of-view shot. Point-of-view, or POV, shots establish a position between the character and whatever the character is looking at. In this case, the position of the cameraman allows the viewer them self to subsume the role of interviewer. The door opens to Kendall Jenner, who says directly to the camera "Hey guys, it's Kendall Jenner. Come get into bed with me!" This interaction in the first five seconds of the video initiates the relationship between Jenner and the audience. The reference to "guys" and the invitation to "get into bed" connotes a casual, and rather intimate, relationship to the viewer. Jenner wears a two-piece Calvin Klein lounge set— a matching sports bra and sweatpants. The clothing is not meant for outside wear, it suggests intimacy, sexuality, and comfort.

Jenner right away jumps into bed, followed immediately by the first question of the video, "What's your favorite thing to do in bed?" (Figure 5). The adherence to the bed theme provokes a dissonance between influencer and advertisement. What does the bed have to do with Calvin Klein? Although never explicitly advertised, CK seems to be using the bed to target the promotion of its loungewear and lingerie. The connection between the bed and the private life gives an appropriate space for the advertisement of "private" clothing. Jenner's answers fabricate a mold of private life: details of her favorite movies to watch in bed, food to eat in bed, the time which she goes to bed. At one point she even receives a phone call from rapper Travis Bennett, whom she actually invites to get into bed with her. They casually lay in bed, discuss their friendship, and share a box of pizza (Figure 6).

This divergence functions on many levels. First, it creates an illusion of intimacy and personal connection to Jenner. The viewer gets a window into her personal life behind the cameras and screens. Second, the presentation of the bed as a social site creates new opportunities for consumerism and design. Lastly, the representation of Jenner's fascinating, private life operates in conjunction with the myth that Calvin Klein will provide you with this life. One of the very last questions asked is "If you could gossip with one person in bed, who would it be?" to which Jenner chooses American icon Marilyn Monroe so she can "talk about the things [about Marilyn] that no one else really knows." This ending is ironic and self-referential, given we have essentially just gossiped in bed with American model Kendall Jenner while she talked about things "no one else really knows." Needless to say, the privacy disclosed by Jenner in this video is inauthentic, given it has more than 2 million views on Youtube.

Calvin Klein's "In Bed With..." series instrumentalizes the privacy of their subjects for the success of the brand's campaign. Yet, the privacy represented here, a consensual, staged privacy, questions the nature of what privacy even means. The setting, the bedroom, in theory would elicit a position of vulnerability, but the very lack thereof demonstrates that the bed becomes a synecdoche for a privacy that is not actually there. In reality, nothing is private in these shots, it is rather the appearance and performance of privacy. These performances push the values of intimacy, comfort and quality that Calvin Klein strives for. Soft cotton, perfect, comfortable fit, warm sleepwear, fluffy blanket, cozy night-in. Each episode is made to feel like we are one-on-one with each influencer, getting to know them personally and how they behave in their private lives. You too, can be a celebrity, when wearing your own Calvins. The function of the representation of privacy in this campaign is to appeal to the consumer's fantasy and



desire to get to know and become their favorite influencers. This obsession with fame is satisfied by the claim CK is making, that celebrities are essentially just like us. Wearing luxurious loungewear and lounging in bed will bring you closer to influencer status; CK therefore becomes synonymous with such status. The representation of privacy, at this point synonymous with the representation of the bed, attains desire for the brand. But really this privacy is just a construction. Beyond the screen is a multitude of cameras, lights, makeup and people. The bed is not a bed, but a hotel bed. Intimacy is a constructed myth for the sake of consumer culture.

## **BED AS SEX**

Within the context of Western art history, the representation of the bed would probably be most associated with traditional genre paintings called “reclining nudes.” The subjects of this genre are nude women depicted reclining atop a bed or couch as a way to communicate aspects of a person’s class, status, or personality. The reclining nude’s bed creates a shockingly different space from the bed of social media. The nude’s bed does not represent a space of familiar, comfortable, private life, but rather relies on the exploitation of the female body and postulation of the male gaze. The male gaze gives men power to perceive the female body as an object of surveillance and objectification. If intimacy is a constructed myth for the sake of consumer culture, what does the instrumentalization of intimacy—through the representation of the bed—provide for these paintings? What does the representation of the bed contribute to the sexualized, commoditized fantasy of the female body?

Both Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and Manet's *Olympia*, classic examples of the reclining nude, use detailed brush strokes, dynamic composition, and a revered use of color to reveal sensuality, all reinforced through the vehicle of the woman's sexuality: the bed (Figures 7, 8). The representation of the bed in both these paintings signifies the deep seeded correlation of women to sexual objects. The women's place in society is structured around the bedroom, the domain of domesticity and men's sexual pleasure; the artists who depict this relationship are just mirroring what society has already established. The objectification of the women in these paintings is clearly coming from outward sources, considering both women's eye contact and body language that suggests a presence beyond the physicality of the painting. The bed acts a prison for the woman, confining and trapping her inside the world of the man. She does not have agency; she is likened to the bed itself, mere property or furniture. Not only are these women presenting themselves as desirable, but they also become a form of social currency. The viewer can imagine Olympia confined to her bed as a plethora of different men use her body for their own private pleasure. The bed in this case signifies her self-objectification.

Social media has revolutionized the bed as sexuality, as more and more women turn to posing and using their bodies as sexual commodities. Although the male gaze is still operating within social media's confines, it is the self-objectification by the woman that delineates her patriarchal meaning. Kim Kardashian commodified her sexuality for the promotion of her shapewear company Skins (Figure 3). Kardashian advertised the company with an instagram photo of herself reclining nude in bed, but the meaning was far from the nudes of Titian and Manet. Kardashian reclaims the male gaze and voluntarily looks out to us; the male gaze does not operate in the same way. Her powerful gaze affirms the presentation of her bed as a site of

production and a representation of female modernity. The bed is commodified, but its production value directly profits Kardashian herself. Although the social media bed continues to connote sex, its representation has become less overt due to the reversal of power in the presentation of female sexuality. It is not that the bed has completely transformed its meaning in social media, but rather the conception of the bed that has changed. The bedroom today is a place of expression, of genuinity, where one reveals their inner, authentic self. Whether through band posters, photographs or particular bedding, one expresses their likes and dislikes quite explicitly. Through social media, sharing photographs and videos of one's bedroom connotes a deliberate impression of one's personal identity. Yet, once the image contains the representation of the woman alongside her bed, there is still an implicit desire to sexualize her. The connection between the bed and sexuality is inseparable. The difference between the reclining nude's bed and the social media bed is the agency with which sexuality and intimacy is represented. The women of social media have a direct role in their objectification.

## **BED AS WORK**

In her installation piece first exhibited in 1999 at the Tate gallery, Tracey Emin uses the presentation of a bed to physically characterize herself and her emotional traumas (Figure 9). While the Calvin Klein bed and Kardashian bed represent curated, commodified power, Emin's bed exemplifies the bed as identity and an object of uncured intimacy. The work consists of her unmade bed with scattered items and trash scattered on the ground beside it. Emin disclosed she

got the idea for the installation during an emotional breakdown she suffered. During that period she did not leave her bed for four days.<sup>17</sup> Utilizing life events for the production of work reveals an autobiographical facet to Emin's art. The artist discloses her private life through the presentation of her bed.

The bed is unmade, with soiled sheets and wrinkled blankets hanging off the sides. Around the bed, empty cigarette cartons, alcohol bottles, period-stained clothing, lubricant, condoms, crumpled tissues depict a Tracey Emin under distress. The work is gaudy and unfeminine by societal terms and Emin unabashedly reveals her sexuality and habits. Emin reclaims the stereotype of the manic, menstruating woman. The bed functions as a physical denotation of temporal space-- the space of the artist's self identity—as well as vehicle for Emin's traumatic activities.

The bed's inherent emptiness also suggests an undisclosed presence, as we are to imagine Emin occupying the space within the bed. In a sense, Emin herself is the physical embodiment of the bed. Rather, the bed takes the place of her own body. The emptiness also allows the viewer to place themselves inside the bed, reveling in and sharing the loneliness and psychosis that Emin presents. The bed is both performative and participatory, it reveals an aspect of private life that is usually never revealed, while simultaneously asking us to relate to this revelation.

The revealing, honest quality of Emin's work opposes the basic facets and identities of social media and popular culture. Emin acknowledges that private life is not always beautiful, it is ugly, sad, and challenging. Social media irons out every triviality and minor imperfection,

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<sup>17</sup> Alina Cohen, "Tracey Emin's 'My Bed' Ignored Society's Expectations of Women," Artsy, July 30, 2018.

revealing a flattened and dishonest perception of reality. Instagram falsely advertises itself while Emin candidly presents herself in her work. Social media applications necessarily promote the exploitation of everyday life through the constant sharing of images, where people tend to overshare and centralize their personal lives, yet its curated nature and false representation of real life directly opposes the essence of Emin's work. The reasons for sharing on social media are not always transparent, leaving lots of leeway for romanticization and selectivity. Emin's representation of private life is effective through its storytelling and visual lending of a lived human experience, the bed being an effective personification of self and trauma.

Hugh Hefner's infamous bachelor pad, the Playboy Mansion, became the primary blueprint for the male, primal space of the bachelor.<sup>18</sup> Hefner's presentation of the bed, his bachelor bed, is different from any of the beds we have looked at thus far in its specificity to production and power. Hefner's bed is an emblem of his male identity; the bachelor bed represents gender identity, precisely masculinity.

Images of Hefner's bachelor pad have become a cultural icon since the release of his Playboy magazine in 1953. The bachelor pad, Jon Patrick writes, was "a place where men could luxuriate in a milieu of hedonistic pleasure, [it] was the spatial manifestation of a consuming masculine subject that became increasingly pervasive amid the consumer boom of the 1950s and 1960s."<sup>19</sup> The bachelor pad centers around the bed. The sleek, modern design primarily functioned for the purpose of sexual activities; all the spatial qualities and architectural designs of the Playboy pad pointed towards the bedroom. Hefner sits in his circular bed amidst the work

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<sup>18</sup> Jon Patrick, "When PLAYBOY Informed Sexy Design & Made the Bachelor Pad a Cultural Tradition," of Iron & Oak, December 19, 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

of his magazine spread out all around him (Figure 10). The derived meaning is quite literal: his work is his bed, and his bed is the representation of masculine identity.

Hefner's bachelor bed is a rotating bed, meaning it can function as many different things (work table, TV couch, sexual playground, sleeping platform, etc), establishing the bed as the center of the house. Paul Preciado writes that "it worked as a rotating mechanism, transforming vertical into horizontal, up into down, right into left, adult into child, one into many, dressed into nude, work into leisure, and private into public."<sup>20</sup> The endless transformation of private to public, and vice versa, that took place within the bachelor pad established the bed as a precipitate between stage and intimacy. Unlike social media, Hefner's bed was not a construction of manipulated intimacy. Its goal was not genuinity and privacy but a powerful representation of masculine identity.

The construction of public, private space is caused by the intentional reversal of domesticity and intimacy to work and pleasure by the bachelor bed. Thus far, the bed has often symbolized the treatment of women and their sexuality and/or identity, and their sometimes powerless or mentally unstable characters. Is there a correlation between gender identity and the bed? Preciado argues that if "the bed...is represented as intimate, reproductive, and domestic when...used by a female body, the same designs...become public and productive when the occupant of the bed....was the heterosexual white male bachelor..."<sup>21</sup> The public privacy of the

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Preciado, *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics*, New York: Zone Books, 2014, 140.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 142.

bachelor bed corresponds to masculine power and work, the “center of economic and sexual production.”<sup>22</sup>

Although the inner workings of social media and the bachelor bed function quite differently, a reality television show aired that overlapped both, creating a revised edition of Hefner’s bed. In 2005, “The Girls Next Door” first aired on E! Network, following the life of Hugh Hefner and his personal “Playmates” in the Playboy Mansion. The show aired for five years, exploiting the inner workings of Hefner’s bachelor pad and the personalities and “real lives” of each of the characters. The representation of the bed became the foundation for the simulation of private life. In the reality TV show, Hefner’s iconic bachelor pad operates beyond individual notions of sexuality and performance, it functions as a dual space of consumerism and fantastical exploitation.

## **BED AS STAGE**

On March 29, 1969, Yoko Ono and John Lennon invited the press into bed with them as they celebrated their honeymoon. In what became known as the “Bed-ins for Peace,” Ono and Lennon laid down on a hotel bed with white sheets in white pajamas for over two weeks. The beds were generic hotel beds: white sheets, white pillows, white comforter. Either king or queen sized, the mattress was big enough to hold both bodies and whatever else they decided to bring into bed with them—guitar, flowers, food, newspapers, books, and once even a full-sized bike.

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Preciado, *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture and Biopolitics*, 140.

They wore a standard costume throughout the whole performance—their pajamas. Lennon donned a silky, white, striped pajama set while Ono went with a long, white, collared nightgown (Figure 11). In every photo documenting the two week performance, the couple is wearing the same exact outfit, as if they are characters on a television show that never change appearance.

The performance circulated during those two weeks—the first taking place at the Hilton Hotel in Amsterdam and the second at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal. During those performances, the young couple posed in front of the hotel window in the room (Figure 6). With the light facing behind them, the windows cast the couple as shadows. Photographers had a hard time taking pictures that would be legible and responded by shooting almost every photo at a 45° angle. The set up of the room was an intentional decision made by Ono and Lennon.

Upon researching both hotels and the layout of their standard hotel room, it became clear this decision to move the bed in front of the windows was made by Ono and Lennon. In both the Amsterdam Hilton and Montreal Queen Elizabeth, the beds are never on the same side as the window, but either directly facing it or to its side (Figures 12, 13). There is a natural discourse between the bed and the light produced from the window; the relationship creates balance. The conscious decision to move the bed suggests a motive that correlates directly to their performance and documentation. With the window being behind the bed, the light from behind casts Ono and Lennon as shadows. The natural, romantic play of light between the bed and other objects in the room is lost, hindered by the bodies of Ono and Lennon.

In some photos, there are flowers placed on the window sill, which blocks a portion of light so that their heads are not in complete darkness. The flowers also frame the couple and create a background for the stage of the bed. The flowers provide decoration, in addition to the



signs taped on the window that read “Hair Peace” and “Bed Peace,” that create context and visual stimulation for their performance.

What is the reasoning behind the decision to place the bed in such a way that the performers, the leads, are cast as shadows? All other visual cues present the bed as a sort of stage—the framing of the bed in the middle of the room, the placement of the characters on top the bed, the photographers and reporters placed behind the bed. But if the bed is the stage, why did Ono and Lennon decide to place the light behind them rather than on them? Ono and Lennon consciously stripped their roles as performers from the standard treatment of light, i.e. a spotlight. The treatment of space is almost disorienting, it separates itself from the generic hotel room.

There are multiple interpretations of this manipulation of space. To begin, the windows give the audience a view of the landscape and city that sits behind the performance. This is important because it draws attention to the dichotomy between protest in the streets and protest in the sheets, as per the Bed-in. Their sit-in, or Bed-in, lasted two weeks, but was part of a greater campaign known as the “War is Over” campaign that took place over the entire year. What later involved billboards, posters, and benefit concerts, Ono and Lennon’s peace campaign was a year long trail that advocated for world peace and the end of war, the Vietnam War in particular. A protest, or sit-in, usually takes place on the street or public area—a public reclamation of space—in order to express disapproval or dissent. Although essentially a performance, Ono and Lennon describe their Bed-in as a protest. Therefore, the window is deliberately placed in order for Ono and Lennon to position themselves within the city. The

window provides a visual access to the street and its political connotations without the limitations and pressure of public demonstrations.

The backlit light also represents the couple as spectral, indulging in the performance and desire-to-be-seen aspect of their relationship. The shadows that form on the bodies of Ono and Lennon change the appearance and temporality of the couple. Ono and Lennon exude a quality of transcendence and other-worldliness through the absence and spatial quality of the windows' natural light. John Lennon's long hair and beard are even reminiscent of Jesus Christ and connotations of spectral idealization that come with him. They seem to be appearing and reappearing as though they are not even real people. The spectral quality in their performance is reminiscent of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, particularly the scene in which Kim Novak's character emerges from the green light as almost a ghost, see through and not quite there (Figure 15). Hitchcock uses green in his film to echo the old-school theater tradition of using green lights to suggest an uncanny or other-worldly presence. The same tactic is being played out in Ono and Lennons' performance, except through the use of dark shadows and backlit light.

This spectral quality, however, is consistently different from the role of light in social media today. Light is not spectral, very far from it, and is consciously used to illuminate the subject in full, shadowless light. "Selfie lighting" is a term commonly used today, referring either to the encompassing and ethereal quality of natural light or the dramatic and full-bodied use of artificial light, through products such as ring and flood lights.

The title *Bed-in* deliberately echoes traditional "sit-in" demonstrations. The definition of a sit-in is written as "a form of direct action that involves one or more people occupying an area for a protest, often to promote political, social, or economic change. The protestors gather

conspicuously in a space or building, refusing to move unless their demands are met.” This refusal to move is interruptive as it implies an outside force at odds with the protesters’ actions. Ono and Lennon’s “bed-in” demonstration co-opts the visual strategies of the “sit-in,” such as the signs posted to the windows and the consistent occupation of space over a long period of time. A sit-in usually implies the exercise of endurance and discomfort for long periods of time, usually in a public space. The couples “bed-in” defeats this purpose, the hotel bed being an emblem of luxury and ease. The play on words with “Bed-in” already necessarily breaks the point of a sit-in, it is quite self-conscious and self-critical of its legitimacy to begin with. Ono and Lennon are in control of the temporality and positioning of their sit-in.

Ono and Lennon’s protest takes place in a hotel bed with all the accommodating pleasures that come with it including but not limited to a luxurious, comfortable bed; room service; cleaning services; and items of leisure such as books, instruments, and good company. A Canadian magazine, *WestJet* magazine, released the room service orders of Ono and Lennon on the 50th anniversary of the Bed-in in 2019, courtesy of the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth hotel in Montreal (Figure 14)<sup>23</sup>. Over twenty orders are listed for the week, an exceptionally high number, including items such as broiled filet of sole, grilled halibut, fresh fruits, turtle soup, sirloin steak, lamb chops, rice pudding, and lots of tea. In addition, in the copy of the original housekeeping notes from the Montreal hotel, a quite extensive list of demands are written that give detailed orders on how many times a day the suite needed to be vacuumed, odd requests made by the guests (e.g. cage for white mouse), a request to clean John Lennon’s shoes, and

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<sup>23</sup>Julie Van Rosendaal, “Here’s What John Lennon and Yoko Ono Ate During the Montreal Bed-In,” *WestJet Magazine*, May 24, 2019.

many more similarly ridiculous and demanding appeals (Figure 16). Coupling this, a photo of Lennon and Ono standing off to the side of the bed waiting while a maid changes the sheets and fluffs the pillows, emphasizes the power dynamic between the couple and the site of their sit-in (Figure 19). Once again, Ono and Lennon are in control. Quite interestingly, the list is titled at the top “Notes on John Lennon’s stay at the Queen Elizabeth” and one note refers to the couple as “John Lennon plus wife.” There is no mention of Yoko Ono’s name.

What can we make of the peace campaign with the knowledge that Ono and Lennon spent their Bed-in quite simply in luxury? Does the comfort of their stay take away from the message that they were preaching? How does the bed signify the absence of action and endurance that most protests consist of? The reference of the stay to “John Lennon’s stay” suggests an instrumentalization of celebrity presence. Yoko Ono’s identity as a successful performance artist is erased in the presence of her famous rock star husband. The campaign, notably, was a celebration of their marriage—a public event that involves the followings of both participants, both John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

Yoko and Lennon were not alone in bed. Although physically they were the only ones inside the bed, the couple constantly entertained visitors, mostly reporters and photographers interviewing and documenting them (Figure 17). This places their bed within the public sphere, as a stage, or position for public viewership. Their protest was made to be consumed and watched, as a performance. The representation of privacy is utilized through the representation of the bed to appeal to the audience. Not only is the bed the space of a sit-in, but it captures a glimpse of the married life of celebrities John Lennon and Yoko Ono. The reporters and

photographers that live on the other side of the bed symbolize the public as a whole—they are our ticket in to watch the performance.

The couple used their honeymoon as a weapon for viewership in their peace campaign. To make sure that images of their “Bed-in” installation/event/performance circulated around the world, they produced and released a film subsequent to both performances titled *Bed Peace*, which runs a little over an hour and captures the chaotic excitement that constituted the couple’s protest.<sup>24</sup> The directors listed for the film *Bed Peace* are Yoko Ono and John Lennon themselves, with filming credits to Nic Knowland, Franco Rosso, Malcolm Hawley, and more. The film reveals the full extent to which Ono and Lennon were never alone, contrary to what some of the photos may suggest: the couple dressed in matching pajamas, reading the newspaper, with coffee and cigarettes at their side (Figure 18). What lay adjacent to this scene was a plethora of cameras and faces. How does their utilization of public privacy create admiration and trust from the public? What purpose does the bed provide for Ono and Lennon? How does the specification of the hotel bed reaffirm the couple’s message? Essentially, the entire performance over the course of two weeks was a publicity stunt.

Due to the generic nature of the hotel bed, it doesn’t even matter when or which hotel they reside in—the performance took place in two different cities and hotels. The staging of the sit-in, through posters and flowers, is a mere backdrop for the real performance occurring on the hotel bed. The hotel bed here functions quite similarly to the bed of social media. To make this

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<sup>24</sup> Yoko Ono, “BED PEACE starring John Lennon & Yoko Ono (1969),” YouTube Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRjjiOV003Q>.

comparison it helps to think about who the viewer of Bed-in is. Clearly pointed at the entire world, Ono and Lennon are asking anyone to listen to their protest; the piece begs a viewer.

Yet through this seeking, a clear viewer conquers: the fan. John Lennon, front man of the world-famous British rock band The Beatles, had an enormous fan following and fame that extended to Ono herself. Lennon and Ono together were the emblem of fame. Fans would tune in to anything Lennon was involved in, including his Bed-in for Peace protest. Newspapers and magazines that documented the entire thing and the short film that was released subsequently provided a decent viewing platform for the public. The conception of the fan provides an essential connection to how the bed is treated in social media. The bed of social media provides an outlet for connection and communication; it centers the celebrity or influencer on a private stage. The example of Ono and Lennon in bed is a blown up example of what every influencer attempts to do in bed: formulate an audience and spread a message.

The documentation is similar to social media in that it captures photos and events exactly as the participants wanted themselves to be represented, Ono and Lennon themselves directing the film and choreographing the performance. The magazines and newspapers were the vehicles for their representation, functioning similarly to platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. The utilization of public privacy creates a feeling of acquaintanceship and comfort with the couple. For the fan in particular, the representation of privacy makes him or her feel seen by the celebrity--they are respected enough to be given a glimpse into the celebrity's "personal" life.

In thinking about this comparison, is it possible to consider Ono and Lennons' performance not as a protest of commercialization, but rather a furthering of it? In the official

Youtube video of “Bed Peace starring John Lennon and Yoko Ono,” on Yoko Ono’s official YouTube channel, Yoko Ono writes:

They approached the task with the same entrepreneurial expertise as an advertising agency selling a brand of soap powder to the masses. John & Yoko's product however was PEACE, not soft soap, and they were determined to use any slogan, event and gimmick in order to persuade the World to buy it.<sup>25</sup>

Although the motives behind the protest can remain uncalculated and genuine—interests in world peace, anti-War sentiments, etc—the performance itself becomes a commodification of the couple’s marriage and fame-ship. Let us not forget that this performance is a commemoration of the couple’s newly married status—or rather an instrumentalization of their marriage for the end goal of commodifying themselves. They chose to have their honeymoon in every major magazine and newspaper, displayed publicly for all to criticize, congratulate, respect, etc. This performance activates the couple as influencer. Through their public status and constant documentation, Ono and Lennon are able to subconsciously, or rather consciously in this case, imbue messages and ideas into public discourse by means of “social” media.

## CONCLUSION

The role of the bed has shifted over the years through its representations and connotations with sex, work, and performance. From being the site of the male gaze, to a candid presentation of identity, to the representation of masculine power, to (finally) a platform for commodified

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<sup>25</sup> Yoko Ono, “BED PEACE starring John Lennon & Yoko Ono (1969),” Youtube Video.

documentation and performance. How do the beds of sex, work, and stage complicate the meanings that the bed takes on social media? Are the beds of sex, work, and stage demythologized in the process? Is the social media bed an innovation? Here I argued that the social media bed has existed long before social media. Yoko Ono and John Lennon's bed sits on the precipice of a political message and vehicle for advertising. Their bed is not honest, not revealing (in the authentic sense), and mythologizes the meaning of intimacy and privacy. The social media bed is, if not very similar to, the bed as stage. Social media is a stage, a platform, in which one presents the commodified version of themselves. The other beds help to distinguish the social media bed and demythologize the representation of privacy and authenticity that social media presents. Visual culture is instrumentalized for the illusion of influencer attainability and in support of systems of commodity capitalism.



## 2 THE KITCHEN

What exactly do we mean when we refer to the kitchen? Very generally, the kitchen is the room or area of a home or restaurant where food is prepared, cooked, and consumed. In addition to food, one might associate the kitchen with family gatherings and intimate domesticity. The definition of the kitchen can extend in multiple ways; one's experience of the kitchen differs drastically from person to person. My experience of the kitchen has changed significantly throughout the different stages of my life. There is the kitchen I grew up in: a small, L-shaped kitchen with green walls and white cabinets and a mother who didn't like to cook. I would learn to cook and bake there from my grandmother and various YouTube videos. Not growing up with a father figure, the kitchen was never a place of male labor. Even when male friends and relatives came to visit, their place was at the kitchen table, not the kitchen sink. Moving into my first apartment, the kitchen transformed into a social space for group dinners and discussions at the dining table. In my small apartments, the kitchen was a site for leisure and work: partying, reading, writing, eating. Generally, my college kitchen still remains a site of female labor; my male friends rarely partake in cooking or cleaning. On the other hand, my experience with the professional kitchen, as in my food service jobs, are strictly male-dominated. In my experience, the chefs are almost always male while the front-of-house, waiting jobs are more often than not given to women. There are many different kinds of kitchens that exist for different purposes and arise out of various social and historical constructions. Is it possible for the kitchen to be defined universally?

This chapter will look at how social media introduces two different kinds of kitchens: the social reproduction (domestic) kitchen and the professional kitchen. The domestic kitchen has historically functioned as a site of unpaid labor and domesticity. Professional kitchens, on the other hand, placed inside restaurants and food service parlors are sites of paid labor and entertainment. The kitchen of the housewife, exemplified by Martha Rosler and analyzed by Silvia Federeci and Tithi Bhattacharya, is the site of social reproduction and embodiment of women's oppression. The professional kitchen is dominated by male-identifying chefs who deploy cuisine into entertainment and art and are credited with professionalism and paid labor. Is the domestic kitchen less valuable than the professional kitchen? Has the kitchen surpassed the domestic field? How can we use the kitchen to define the role of labor in past and present systems of social reproduction? This chapter will also look at social media and how platforms such as YouTube instrumentalize the visual architecture of the kitchen in cooking videos and vlogs. The lifestyle influencer, a (mostly) female subdivision of social media, blends the binary between domestic and professional labor. Is social media demythologizing the kitchen? What role does the kitchen take in social media? Is social media finally correcting the dual, gendered kitchen?

## **SOCIAL MEDIA KITCHEN**

Jenny Welbourn, better known as “Wear I Live,” is a plant-based, low impact lifestyle and beauty vlogger with a decent following of nearly 300k on YouTube. According to her blog,

she focuses on “what we’re wearing, how we’re wearing, and its effect on the planet and its people.” A popular series on her channel features “What I Eat in a Day” videos, in which she films herself cooking breakfast, lunch and dinner, usually advertising her meals as “plant-based,” “easy,” and “realistic” (Figure 20).

The short, almost 12-minute video follows Jenny around her kitchen, capturing all the meals and snacks she eats throughout the day with step-by-step instructions on how to cook and prepare everything. She includes all the ingredients in text on the screen as they are being used, playing the role of the TV show cooking host. She films herself in action— chopping, pouring, stirring, serving— and features standard kitchen utensils and appliances as the subjects of each clip— blender, knife, pan, rice cooker, wooden spoon, plate, fork (Figures 23-26).

At around a minute and a half in, Jenny introduces the sponsor of the video, Haus, an aperitif company (Figures 21, 22). Over the course of 90 seconds, Jenny discusses the brand’s “unique,” “clean-ingredient,” and “authentic” identity model and shares her favorite products and reasons why she loves the company (delivery service, elevates evening-in, delicious flavors). She offers the viewers of the video \$10 off and free shipping when they use her code: WEARILIVE. It is clear that Jenny’s mission is not to share her personal life for pure entertainment, but to make money. Advertising brands is her job. She so excellently and carefully positions the brands she works with within her branded social media presence so that her sponsors appear authentic and true to herself. Clean-ingredient, plant-based, and delicious— Jenny has created a link between her personal identity and her sponsorship’s identity.

Much can be said about the role of intimacy in Jenny’s advertising strategy and how privacy is misconstrued for the sake of consumerism and commodity capitalism. She’s been

seated in her kitchen, coffee in hand, talking about her decision to switch to decaf coffee when she suddenly shifts to promoting these cool, new, delicious aperitifs that she's been loving. Jenny seems real, down to earth, and has good taste: why not trust her?

But there is something else at play here besides the instrumentalization of intimacy in Jenny's case. Jenny is a part of a greater YouTube subdivision that includes fashion and lifestyle blogging, beauty vlogging, and DIY design. These activities are framed through binaries that automatically associate themselves with femininity; fashion, makeup, and beauty are socially constructed for the consumption of women. For this reason, most of the social media creators in this category are women. Within this category of content creators, the home is used as an extension of the self and the production set in which their videos take place. Lifestyle vloggers use these private spaces, such as the kitchen, as sites for product placement. In the case of the kitchen, these (mostly) young women are paid to advertise kitchen appliances, products, and services. If Jenny is playing the role of the advertiser, a paid job in her case, how can she be a product of oppression? Media scholar Brooke Erin Duffy writes:

The reference to social media activity as labor may initially seem puzzling, given that individuals seem to take great pleasure in their online activities. While the division between labor and leisure has always been knotty, particularly for women, the ascent of digital media renders this divide doubly problematic given the myriad ways in which commonplace acts of self-expression—"liking" a brand's Instagram post, reviewing the latest gadget on Amazon, or updating one's social media profile—generates value for media and marketing institutions.<sup>26</sup>

Duffy uses the term "aspirational labor" to describe the work that influencers do: "a mode of (mostly) uncompensated, independent work that is propelled by the much-venerated ideal of

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<sup>26</sup> Brooke Erin Duffy, *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work*, New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2017, 7.

getting paid to do what you love...a career where labor and leisure coexist.”<sup>27</sup> Social and commercial constructions of gender and femininity are crucial to the aspirational labor system because they rely on women’s role as producer and consumer. The labor of aspiration “has conceptual similarities to traditional forms of “women’s work” (domestic labor, reproductive labor, care labor), which have remained invisible despite their central role in servicing the engines of capitalism,” thus situating aspirational labor in a cultural history of unpaid female labor with lineages traceable to systems of patriarchy and commodity capitalism.<sup>28</sup>

In the case of Jenny Welbourn, her labor transcends the framework of Duffy’s aspirational labor system in that the reality of getting paid to do what you love is no longer an ideal. Jenny reclaims the site of the kitchen as a place of paid, (somewhat) enjoyable labor. But that doesn’t completely rectify the relationship between gender and the kitchen, which prevails through the exploitation of female consumerism. Why is Jenny compensated for her labor in the kitchen? Because she advertised an alcoholic beverage from an aperitif company. Who is she advertising it to? Her (mostly) female viewers, according to her own analytics. Although Jenny appears to profit from this interaction, she is only a tool used by commodity capitalism to appeal to feminine insecurities and desires to further fuel consumerism.

One of the most prominent examples of kitchen design is the Levitt & Sons kitchen, which “vividly underscored the ways in which gender, consumptions, domesticity, and

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<sup>27</sup> Brooke Erin Duffy, *(Not) Getting Paid to Do What You Love: Gender, Social Media, and Aspirational Work*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 9.

technology converged in the American kitchen during the mid-twentieth century.”<sup>29</sup> The Levittown kitchen completely changed the architecture of the modern, American home. When before the kitchen was closed off and separated from the social rooms of the home, the Levitt kitchen reinvented itself as a “built in, all electric, color-coordinated kitchen that flowed out to the informal dining area...a command center...that would become...the center of family life.”<sup>30</sup> The open concept design informed the design of the countertops and electronic gadgets, which were now visible and part of the social, entertaining rooms of the house (Figure 27). The Levitt kitchen’s emphasis on advanced, domestic appliances and technology (yet still fashionable) suggests that the kitchen, more than any other room in the house, became the symbol for so-called “modern living.” The gadget-filled kitchen also presupposes the housewife as the beneficiary of these new advancements; the new, efficient kitchen makes it easier on the housewife to perform her tasks. An ad from Electrical Merchandising in 1957 depicts a woman reclined on a couch in the middle of her kitchen, smoking a cigarette while robotic hands and levers prep, cook, and clean (Figure 28). The housewife’s subsumed, unpaid labor is not redefined but rather reemphasized by the architecture of the new kitchen. The Levitt kitchen design reformed space and domestic labor in the American suburban house of the mid-twentieth century, informing all subsequent kitchens thereafter.

What can we say, then, about the kitchen of social media? Is the lifestyle influencer a modernization of the housewife? How does consumer culture play into the dynamic between

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<sup>29</sup> Curtis Miner, “Pink Kitchens for Little Boxes: The Evolution of 1950s Kitchen Design in Levittown,” In *Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania*, edited by Harris Dianne, by Upton Dell, 243-80, Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010, 244.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 244.

domesticity and female labor? There is an important relationship between the middle-class housewife and consumerism—the housewife is the ultimate consumer. “As Evelyn Sharp put it, the woman is ‘queen of consumers’, because she is the family buyer: the co-operative housewife ‘is the New Woman of the masses’.”<sup>31</sup> Shopping was so integral to the housewife identity that it eventually transformed from mere functional activity of women into a form of leisure.

Magazines and television also helped foster a female culture of consumption. YouTube is the modern magazine of the 21st century; product placement and product advertising assist the cycle of money that controls consumer capitalism. A need-based desire controls the housewife in the kitchen, from advertisements for tupperware to aperitifs, that are recognized as necessary demands for domestic labor. In order to be successful in the kitchen, she must buy tools and appliances that only further her oppression. If the influencer is the modern housewife, what does her paid labor foster for the social media kitchen? Is the social media kitchen a professional kitchen disguised as a domestic kitchen? If so, what does that say about social media?

## **SOCIAL REPRODUCTION KITCHEN**

Feminists for decades have been discussing the kitchen as a site of exploitation. They often point to the unwaged labor extracted from millions of female domestic workers, “unmasking the socio-economic function of the creation of a fictional private sphere, and thereby

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew Hilton, "The Female Consumer and the Politics of Consumption in Twentieth-Century Britain," *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 1 (2002), 117.

re-politicising family life, sexuality, procreation.”<sup>32</sup> What point do feminists make by using the kitchen as an example of their oppression? How is the creation of the private, domestic sphere connected to the mechanisms of capitalism as a whole? How is the kitchen in particular a space of social reproduction?

Martha Rosler, feminist and social justice activist, created the 6-minute film *Semiotics of the Kitchen* in 1975 as a feminist critique of the role of gender in the kitchen. The film begins with a closeup of a chalkboard, one that would theoretically hold grocery lists, with the name of the film written out, “Semiotics of the Kitchen” (Figure 29). The camera pans out to reveal the setting of the film: a traditional, domestic kitchen and Rosler in the center. There are shelves holding cookbooks and miscellaneous applications on the left, an oven range in the center, and a refrigerator on the right. Rosler stands in the middle with a small island countertop in front of her. The film appropriates the kitchen and traditional TV-style cooking segments of the 1960’s in order to critique the kitchen as an institution of misogyny.

Rosler begins listing the alphabetical order of kitchen utensils and appliances, from apron to tenderizer, and demonstrates their uses in the kitchen (Figures 30, 31). She stares deadpan and stiff into the camera and her speech is limited to the vocabulary of the kitchen. Her movements are constrained and the reenactment of each kitchen object becomes progressively more violent and abstract as the film goes on. Rosler is eager to detach herself from the calm, collected, and traditional image of the housewife. The knife, for example, opposed what we would normally consider a kitchen function when Rosler used it to repeatedly stab the air as if committing a

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<sup>32</sup> Silvia Federici, “Social reproduction theory: history, issues and present challenges,” *Radical Philosophy*, 2019.



murder (Figure 32). The repetitive nature of Rosler's presentation of each object reinforces the repetition of household labor and illustrates her imprisonment in domesticity.

The insistence on assigning each object an alphabetical letter, with the exception of U, V, W, X, Y, which are assigned by her body, symbolizes the established social role of characters in the kitchen. It also demonstrates the importance of identifying the language and signs of structures and their ideological meanings within cultural and social fields. Rosler reveals the instrumentalized position of women through her insistence on order and mechanism. But the aggressiveness associated with each object suggests her desire to break the order and escape the prevalence of female domesticity. Rosler's actions combine both violence and comedy— using the ladle to throw contents into the other room and the kitchen knife to stab her victim— as a tactic to confront the conditions of gendered and class-specific labor. Rosler states that “When the woman speaks, she names her own injustice.”<sup>33</sup> The kitchen is the woman's injustice and Rosler is trapped within the language of domesticity.

Silvia Federici, an Italian-American scholar, activist, and theorist of domestic labor, is one of the most influential socialist feminist thinkers of the 20th century. She comes from the same generation of feminists as Martha Rosler, continuing the dialogue pertaining to gendered economic oppression in the kitchen. Federici is an advocate of the idea that domestic work is unpaid labor and she argues that it is an exploitation upon which all capitalism rests. She was a founder of the Wages for Housework movement in the early 1970s and published the book *Wages Against Housework* in 1975, which has come to be the writing most commonly associated with the movement.

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<sup>33</sup> “Semiotics of the Kitchen.” *Electronic Arts Intermix: Semiotics of the Kitchen*, Martha Rosler.

Federici critiques the way capitalist societies have failed to recognize or support what she refers to as “reproductive labor.”<sup>34</sup> This term does not simply refer to bearing and raising children, but encompasses all the work women do in sustaining life— feeding, caring for, cleaning, supporting, and keeping safe. This work could be unloading the dishwasher or giving your sick child a bath. Although this kind of work is essential, our economy tends not to compensate or acknowledge it as such. Federici argues that this blatant disregard for reproductive labor is unjust and intolerable.

Mainstream feminism has largely ignored domestic labor. The success of women is historically measured by their presence and empowerment in the workplace, which is obtained by hiring child care and housework from less economically advantaged women for low wages. Even then, women with full-time jobs and outsourced help are still disproportionately responsible for maintaining a home and caring for children. And the women who are paid to do domestic labor (nannyng, house cleaning, elder care) are badly paid and denied workplace benefits; these jobs are also mostly held by immigrants and women of color. The New York Times Magazine, quoting Oxfam research, found that, “if American women made minimum wage for the work they did around the house and caring for relatives, they’d have earned \$1.5 trillion in 2019...Globally, the value of that unpaid labor would have been almost \$11 trillion.”<sup>35</sup> Housework and child care activities, such as shopping and cooking, are defined as having no value, or even more absurd, as leisure.

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<sup>34</sup> Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework*, London: Power of Women Collective, 1975.

<sup>35</sup> Jordan Kisner, “The Lockdown Showed How the Economy Exploits Women. She Already Knew,” February 17, 2021.

Federici makes the important distinction between capitalism's manipulation and exploitation of the waged, working class and the subtle and mystified violence that is perpetrated against the unwaged houseworker. As exploited as they might be, Federici claims, the poorly paid laborer—such as the factory worker, construction worker, etc— is not identified by their work. “The difference lies in the fact that not only has housework been imposed on women, but it has been transformed into a natural attribute of our female physique and personality...”<sup>36</sup> The combination of physical, emotional, and sexual services involved in the role of a woman is what makes her job as housewife (servant) so unrecognized and burdensome.<sup>37</sup> Federici demands wages for unpaid “care,” domestic work as a political perspective and revolutionary strategy to make unrecognized work more recognized, to demythologize and disrupt the systemic reliance of capitalism on the unwaged work of (mostly) women, and to subvert the role capital has invented for women as the natural and social “housewife.” In Federici’s own words,

To say that we want wages for housework is to expose the fact that housework is already money for capital, that capital has made and makes money out of our cooking, smiling, fucking. At the same time, it shows that we have cooked, smiled, fucked throughout the years not because it was easier for us than for anybody else, but because we did not have any other choice. Our faces have become distorted from so much smiling.<sup>38</sup>

Women are not naturally subordinate or servile. Domestic labor is not a “labor of love.” Work is work, and women must be compensated as such.

Tithi Bhattacharya, a Marxist scholar and activist within a later generation of feminists, expands and revolutionizes Federici’s kitchen. Bhattacharya places the additional weight of

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<sup>36</sup> Silvia Federici, *Wages Against Housework*, 76.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

social reproduction on the kitchen, among other places. She argues that domestic work is not just unpaid labor, but unpaid social reproduction. She defines social reproduction as “the activities and institutions that are required for making life, maintaining life, and generationally replacing life...“life-making” activities.”<sup>39</sup> Bhattacharya frames social reproduction under both maintenance activities— like giving birth, cleaning, feeding, washing clothes—and maintenance institutions, such as schools and hospitals. Social reproduction also provides a lens through which we can understand life and its basic sources of wealth: human life and human labor. Bhattacharya argues that the capitalist lens is the opposite of life-making: it is thing-making or profit-making. Capitalism has no consideration for how things impact people. Bhattacharya argues that activities and jobs within the social reproduction field are severely undervalued because capitalism is a thing-making system, not a life-making system. Most of these activities and jobs—teaching, cleaning, nursing—are dominated by women workers. And because capitalism does not value them, they are severely underpaid and under-protected.

Bhattacharya explores the relationship between private and productive spheres in Marxist terms. Under capitalism, the production of commodities and the reproduction of labor power is unified. She quotes Marx’s discussion of the production of the worker: In *Capital*, vol. 1, Marx writes,

The capitalist process of production, therefore, seen as a total connected process, i.e. a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Sarah Jaffe, “Social Reproduction and the Pandemic, with Tithi Bhattacharya,” *Dissent Magazine*, April 6, 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Quote found in: Tithi Bhattacharya, “How Not To Skip Class: Social Reproduction of Labor and the Global Working Class,” *Viewpoint Magazine*, Oct. 31, 2015.

The worker can leave an individual workplace but she cannot opt out of the system as a whole, so long as the system still exists. In this sense, the private and productive spheres begin to blend together, and the laborer under capitalism has no choice but to participate because “the worker, whose only source of income is the sale of his labor-power, cannot leave the whole class of buyers, i.e., the capitalist class, unless he gives up his own existence...he does not belong to this or that capitalist, but to the capitalist class.”<sup>41</sup>

Cleaning dishes, cooking dinners, mopping floors, wiping countertops: these are the labors of the housewife that go unnoticed and uncompensated. The housewife’s assigned role assumes the identity of women as solid and interchangeable. How is the kitchen a space of social reproduction? The term social reproduction is used by Federeci and Bhattacharya to describe the unpaid work that women in households perform, largely work in the kitchen, that concerns the maintenance of human life. It encompasses the forms of caregiving and housework that produce and maintain social bonds. This form of exploitation, they argue, is one of the main drivers of the capitalist system because this kind of unpaid work, which is necessary to the household, maintains a radicalized gender divide that reproduces workers indefinitely. Women are unquestionably attached to the labor of homemaking, leaving men to enter the workforce of paid labor and women to maintain the wellbeing and health of the family. The creation of the private, domestic sphere is part of the mechanism by which capitalist society has been reproduced. Kitchens are at the center of the household and within this domain, women labor to ensure family members are fed, entertained, and cared for. The kitchen represents labor; it is either

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<sup>41</sup> Tithi Bhattacharya, “How Not To Skip Class: Social Reproduction of Labor and the Global Working Class.”

associated with cooking and cleaning or social entertainment (as in the Levitt kitchen). Unlike the bed, the kitchen is not a site of intimacy and comfort; it is a site of social reproduction.

Is the social media kitchen one of social reproduction? What role does the domestic kitchen play in social media? Jenny Welbourn's kitchen, a domestic kitchen, is a site of paid labor. Through advertising, she is compensated for her work in the kitchen. Through compensation, Jenny fundamentally redefines Martha Rosler's kitchen. She happily uses her knives to cut vegetables, her pans to fry tofu, her blender to make smoothies. The objects of Rosler's oppression are the objects of Jenny's paid labor. She is paid to cook, and more importantly, she is paid for the presentation and utilization of her home kitchen. What, then, is Jenny's relationship to capitalism and production? What does it mean in social media to be a woman in the domestic kitchen? Even Jenny Welbourn, who appears to have revolutionized care work (domestic cooking), is still merely a housewife who has no choice but to participate in the capitalist class. Her work revolves around advertising products that only further the oppression of the working class and contribute to the structural reliance of capitalism on the female laborer. Is the kitchen furthering and impeding her oppression? Although Jenny's care work is no longer unpaid, the visual culture of the woman in the kitchen is still at play, and the companies who sponsor her (and similar female lifestyle vloggers) instrumentalize care work and social reproduction for the sake of consumer culture.

## SOCIAL KITCHEN

Feminists have claimed the kitchen as a site of social reproduction, unpaid care work, and the exploitation of women in capitalism. But there is also other work that happens in the kitchen from the perspective of the black matriarch, as exemplified by artist Carrie Mae Weems and theorist Angela Davis. How do they use the kitchen as a social space for the black community? How does their kitchen differ from the social reproduction kitchen and social media kitchen?

Carrie Mae Weems uses the kitchen in her *Kitchen Table Series*, originally published in 1990, to underline the story of the domestic caretaker and reveal her relationships as mother and wife as positioned by the kitchen table. Weems' character, played by herself, performs various care tasks, such as braiding hair, doing makeup, hugging, and kissing, labors not necessarily associated with the kitchen. The performance of care problematizes the space of the kitchen outside marxist theories of domestic labor. Does Weems define her kitchen within the boundaries of the social reproduction kitchen? Is she demanding compensation for her domestic labor? For Weems, it is more the absence of the kitchen and the emphasis on the table that repositions and reimagines the possibility of women. Weems reconstructs the kitchen as a social space, specifically a black social space, rather than a kitchen of unpaid labor.

Weems' series consists of twenty black and white photographs of the artist seated at the same table, under the same hanging lamp, with varying objects and people surrounding her. The work is a mediation on domesticity and the ways in which black women are portrayed. In "Untitled (Eating Lobster)", Weems sits with her partner at the dining table, which holds two plates of lobster, beers, and cards (Figure 33). The hands of both figures are very prominent in

this photograph: the man's hands wrap around his mouth, mid-bite, hastingly devouring his dinner; the woman holds a cigarette in one hand and lovingly holds her partner's head in the other. Weem's face is meditative and thoughtful, an embodiment of pure love. She leans forward in her chair, her lobster untouched on the plate, and takes in this moment at the dinner table with her whole being. For Weems, domesticity is a familial pleasure. The kitchen table is a social space of love and gratitude for the black woman.

Angela Davis, American political activist and racial theorist, writes about the plantation kitchen in *Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves*. She argues that male supremacist ideology of white America as well as the patriarchal traditions of Africa dictate the role of women on the plantation: she reproduced children and also cooked, sewed, washed, cleaned, and raised children for all. But for the black enslaved woman, there was a strange code switch within domestic work, Davis reminds us. She notes that "in the infinite anguish of ministering to the needs of the men and children around her, she was performing the only labor of the slave community which could not be directly and immediately claimed by the oppressor."<sup>42</sup> This labor included raising and nurturing children, attending to sick family members, and fostering the love and care for the whole community. Domestic labor was the only meaningful labor that sustained the slave community by creating a social space for it. Davis argues that by "performing the drudgery which has long been a central expression of the socially conditioned inferiority of women, the black woman in chains could help to lay the foundation for some degree of autonomy, both for herself and her men."<sup>43</sup> But slavery could not function as

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<sup>42</sup> Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no. 1/2 (1972), 87.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.



such, and so the women had to be released from the oppressing myth of femininity, which rendered her equal to men. Still, Davis argues, black enslaved women used their place in domestic life to “assume dimensions of open counter-insurgency.”<sup>44</sup> Domesticity became an important source of survival for the slave community and played a pivotal role in “nurturing the thrust towards freedom.”<sup>45</sup>

Davis points to the importance of black women and the labor they perform on behalf of their families. For the black enslaved woman, domesticity was one of the only ways she could give back to her community and actively resist the chains of her oppression. Weems exerts this in her photo series: her kitchen table repositions the black woman at the center of her community, creating space by caring and loving others. The kitchen, maintained by Weems’ work, presents itself as the heart of the black community.

How does the kitchen as a social space deepen our understanding of the social media kitchen? Does care work translate to social media? The concept of “self-care” is a popular term on Instagram posts and YouTube videos of beauty and lifestyle vloggers. It refers to the performance of care for the self, such as taking a bubble bath, doing one’s skincare, or cooking a comforting meal. Jenny Welbourn, “Wear I Live”, posted a video in 2020 titled “spaghetti self care, money stress, life changes: 20something vlog.” In a short sequence, she opens a bottle of wine, puts on a clay face mask, eats spaghetti in bed, and watches TV. A text appears on screen overlaying an image of her masked face taking a bite of pasta that simply reads: “self care” (Figure 34). This sequence instrumentalizes the space of the kitchen and the bed,

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<sup>44</sup> Angela Davis, "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," 94.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 96.

exemplifying the intimacy of care work and the benefits of care work on the mind and body. The idea of the kitchen as a social space is inherently present in social media, as YouTubers like Jenny depict themselves within the kitchen for the purpose of sharing and building community. Social media is the performance of care for the self.

## **PROFESSIONAL KITCHEN**

The final kitchen to be discussed is an entirely different kind of space: the kitchen of (professional) work. The professional kitchen operates according to a positional hierarchy. The size and structure of the kitchen hierarchy depends on the size and type of restaurant. The bottom of the chain is usually the waiters and dishwashers, then the food porters (in charge of food preparation), and then at the top are the various chefs, which have their own hierarchical order. Within this hierarchy, women are excluded from the kitchen at large. According to the U.S. Census Bureau of 2019, women made up only 24% of chefs.<sup>46</sup> The professional kitchen is associated with a particular culinary design: stainless steel appliances, large countertops, and designs for organization (magnetic knife strips, pot racks, clear canisters). These designs are both stylistic and efficient. For example, stainless steel not only looks sleek and expensive, but it is more hygienic, it doesn't stain, and it is heat-proof so hot pans can be thrown right on top. Is the archetype of the professional kitchen articulated in social media? How do the professional

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<sup>46</sup> "US Census: Women Make Up Less than a Quarter of Chefs." [spectrumlocalnews.com](http://spectrumlocalnews.com).

kitchens of social media differ from the lifestyle vlogger's kitchen? And what can we learn from this comparison?

Andrew Rea, creator and star of YouTube series *Binging With Babish*, has an estimated net worth of approximately \$4 million and 8.71 million subscribers since the start of his channel in February 2016. He makes short cooking segments in which he recreates iconic dishes inspired by popular films and television shows; self-claimed to be “dedicated to discovering what the delectable (and occasionally horrible) foods from fiction actually taste like.”<sup>47</sup> From *Parks & Recreation* to *Mad Men*, Rea draws inspiration from all over popular culture and makes a wide range of cuisine from all parts of the world.

Though his kitchen has transformed over the course of his growing success throughout the years, Rea uses a consistent style and framing throughout the entire series. He always begins each episode with a clip from the show or film where the characters cook and/or eat the dish in question. It then cuts to his kitchen, the camera positioned behind the kitchen island, focused on the cutting board or area for food preparation, without himself in frame (Figure 35). He walks into frame, somewhat dramatically, with only his hands and midriff visible (Figure 36). The episodes are filmed without sound and edited afterwards with an overlaid voiceover describing each step alongside the footage.

His first episode, released on February 10, 2016, is titled “Binging with Babish: Parks & Rec Burger Cookoff.” In this very first episode, his kitchen resembles the average, modern domestic kitchen: white countertops, dark brown cabinets, a black range oven with an orange dutch oven pot resting on top. He wears a blue button down shirt with a black apron overtop, the

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<sup>47</sup> Binging With Babish. Accessed April 13, 2021. <https://www.bingingwithbabish.com/#top>.

sleeves rolled up to reveal large tattoos and a watch on his wrist. His clothing suggests masculinity and professionalism. The professionalism is reemphasized in the shot framing which cuts off his face and focuses mostly on the food and working hands. Rei's presence on social media differs dramatically to Jenny's: who begins her videos with an animated graphic that transforms a peach into a butt, whose kitchen is decorated in various colors and knick-knacks, and whose videos rely on the exploitation of her face and body (Figures 37, 38). Rei claims his professionalism through the visual props of the kitchen: apron, knives, cutting board, food processor, etc. Martha Rosler begins her film with the letter A for "apron," the uniform of her unpaid labor and oppression. She claims gadgets such as the knife and tenderizer as her weapons. Rei wears the apron, an unnecessary attire in a home kitchen, to claim his professionalism and reclaim the kitchen as his workplace. For Rei, the black apron is the symbol of his professionalism.

Rei's cooking is extravagant and expensive, most of which is for the benefit of entertainment, and places emphasis on craftsmanship and culinary precision. To make the turkey burger for the Parks & Rec episode, Rei buys a three pound turkey breast that he butchers himself and subsequently grinds in an expensive, high powered food processor (Figure 39, 40). He adds roasted eggplant, soy sauce, marmite, and anchovy paste— ingredients that the average middle class American would not necessarily have on hand. Fresh ingredients and homemade additions are a defining factor of the series. Rei's close attention to detail and accurate recreation of dishes, however extravagant the ingredients or process it may entail, is the major reason for his huge success on YouTube.

Rei's success translates also in his kitchen, both in terms of equipment and presentation. Looking at an episode released in March 2021, "Binging with Babish: Chicken Kiev from Mad Men," there are a few notable differences from the earlier episodes of 2016. The kitchen is new: it features a large brick wall with a wood burning oven, a metal cart holding various stainless steel utensils, and a double stainless steel oven, all of which sits behind a huge wooden island in the middle of the frame (Figures 41-43). His kitchen is reminiscent of many competitive cooking shows on TV, one example being Food Network's *Chopped* (Figure 44). The *Chopped* kitchen is designed to station four chefs, each with their own metal rack functioning as equipment shelving and counter-space; a stainless steel oven and range; and various kitchen tools and machines. The kitchen is designed to be as efficient as possible in order to aid the chef's many limitations, including hard-to-incorporate ingredients and twenty minute timers. Rei incorporates the central figure of the island, the industrial metal carts, and stainless steel aesthetic in his video production. In his newer episodes, Rei wears the same blue button-down rolled up, black apron, and watch, but now also wears a pair of plastic gloves, indicating an accordance to health codes and professional cleanliness. The standard kitchen uniform is repeatedly featured in TV and movies. In Bravo's *Top Chef*, each contestant wears a white button down and apron whenever cooking in the kitchen (Figure 45).

Rei's upgraded kitchen reveals a professionalization of himself. What began as a quaint apartment kitchen has transformed into an industrial, stainless steel kitchen of work. His kitchen, just like the kitchens of *Chopped* and *Top Chef*, is a staged set equipped for the aesthetic purpose of filmmaking and efficiency for culinary tasks. The staged kitchen is no longer associated with

Rei's home, but is a part of a greater industry within his brand "Binging With Babish." His kitchen is a site of male, paid labor, which the aesthetic designs of the kitchen reflect.

Efficiency and technical expertise connotes professionalism and productivity in the kitchen. Designing the optimal position of equipment and people in the kitchen and breaking down kitchen tasks into their component parts is an essential part of the professional kitchen of restaurants and food service parlors. For example, the three-sink method— separate sinks for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing— are basic components of professional kitchens. Professional pantries are highly organized and labeled for efficiency and time management. Chefs are assigned specific tasks in the kitchen for optimal productivity.

The Frankfurt kitchen, under the direction of architects Ernst May and Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, was designed in response to the war-ridden Frankfurt, Germany in the late 1920s in an effort to construct more egalitarian, modern, and affordable housing. The Frankfurt kitchen was "designed like a laboratory or factory and based on contemporary theories about efficiency, hygiene, and workflow."<sup>48</sup> Each kitchen was completed in production with a gas stove, built-in storage, a fold-down ironing board, an adjustable ceiling light, removable garbage drawer, and a swivel chair (Figures 46, 47). Storage bins were labeled to help keep things organized. Everything was carefully thought out to provide maximum efficiency and maintain cleanliness and organization. For example, oak flour containers were used to repel mealworms and beech cutting surfaces applied to resist staining and knife marks.<sup>49</sup> This design heavily

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<sup>48</sup> "Counter Space: The Frankfurt Kitchen." MoMA. Accessed April 13, 2021.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

informs the professional kitchen, which still uses particular materials and built-in-storage to maintain a productive and efficient workplace environment.

The Frankfurt kitchen was designed by Austria's first female architect, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, to ease and lessen women's work in the kitchen. The Frankfurt kitchen is thirteen feet long and seven feet wide, much smaller than most modern kitchens. Unlike the Levittown kitchen, the Frankfurt kitchen was not designed to be social or open concept; its main function was efficiency. Every design feature was made with the intention of helping women perform their domestic tasks. The smaller size was actually designed to reduce the number of steps the women would have to take while going about her work. A stool was provided so that the women could sit while preparing food, which was placed in front of the built-in worktable. The Frankfurt kitchen became the perfect example of the modern kitchen, equipped with minimalist and efficient design functions that have transferred to the architecture of the professional kitchen as we know it today. Long countertops and aluminum storage bins which once assisted the housewife have now translated into tools for the professional, male chef. The efficient, modern kitchen, originally designed by a woman for women, is now the prototype for paid, professional kitchen work, as seen on TV cooking shows and other presentations of professional kitchens.

Given the historical role of women in the kitchen, why are professional kitchens still male-dominated? Women have always done the cooking at home, but as exemplified by Federici, that has been seen as domestic and therefore not a "real" job. The role of a "chef" is an occupation, a paid labor, and therefore historically male-oriented. If you google "best chefs in the world," every single entry given is a man out of a lineup of at least twenty chefs, with the

exception of one or two women. Women's position in the workforce is stunted by their assigned responsibility to maintain domestic life. A magazine advertisement for "Kitchen Bouquet," a seasoning sauce company, states that by using their products "right in your own home, you can rival the most tempting dishes of master chefs." The drawing features a housewife stirring the cooking product into gravy, while the ghost of a "noted" male chef seeps out of the steam (Figure 48). The woman wears a casual house dress, her hair done up, and makeup on, while the ghost chef wears a white chef hat and black apron. The crude binary between the domestic kitchen and professional kitchen is unapologetic and clearly defined in this advertisement. Women are confined to the kitchens of the domestic, private sphere, and men are given titles of "master," "noted," and "famous."

## CONCLUSION

The kitchen, different from the bed, is a political site. It is not an emblem of privacy and identity that many rooms of the home represent; it is a site for social gatherings and labor. This labor can be fulfilling, such as the carework of Weems within the black social kitchen, or a form of exploitation of the domestic woman, as performed by Rosler and examined by feminist theorists. This labor, moving away from the domestic sphere, can also be professionally recognized and awarded, as in kitchens of professional chefs, which are statistically male-oriented. It is no coincidence that social media's representation of the kitchen follows a similar trajectory in relation to the performance of gender. As a general rule, women on social media,



who present themselves within the kitchen, are usually confined to traditionally domestic tasks—such as cooking, cleaning, and eating—in their own private kitchens. The visual culture of the kitchen is intertwined within a representation of their lives. Cooking and cleaning that takes place in the kitchen are featured within vlogs and lifestyle videos, as a performance of domesticity and self-care. Men on social media, however, do not instrumentalize their lives or identities (including what they look like) as a tool or vehicle for success in the kitchen. They rely on the professionalization of their workplace and performance. The meals men cook in the kitchen on platforms like YouTube are for teaching and entertainment purposes, not as a documentation of one's life, as in videos made by female vloggers. The kitchen follows a gendered binary that does not escape even the confines of contemporary visual culture and social media. It is a complicated site that is assigned meaning from varying personal experiences and changes upon different classes, cultures, and regions. In this way, the kitchen *is* more private than not, and is instrumentalized by *all* influencers (*Wear I live* and *Binging With Babish* alike) to appropriate private life for the purpose of consumption, whether that be product placement or entertainment.

## CONCLUSION

When I first began research for this project, I was immediately attracted to the ways in which visual culture constructs consumerism. I myself have fallen victim to Instagram ads and YouTube sponsorships on many occasions, splurging countless dollars on skincare and organic supplements that I very well *don't* need. What sold me? The colorful fonts and spunky backdrops or the impression that I could look like the model or influencer associated with the product? Social media's visual culture has infiltrated the way that we think in the 21st century. A constant circulation of media and content shoved in our faces at every moment undermines our democracy. Our freedom to think and pass time constructively is stolen from the hours spent tolling on social media. I began to pay close attention to the visual culture of social media whenever scrolling through Instagram and YouTube. Ideas about nature, intimacy, and beauty seemed to be the most commonly constructed myths, especially when trying to sell something. But the representation of intimacy, and privacy thereof, is what always sold me most. It is the same reason we watch movies and television; humans are inclined to feel connected to one another. We want to know the inner workings of people— what they eat everyday, how they decorate their bedrooms, what they fear, what they love. We crave authenticity in a seemingly inauthentic age. Only, authenticity doesn't exist online, which begs the question: How does the quest for authenticity on the part of the media consumer shape social media producers' aesthetics?

To wrap up the bed and kitchen, there is one more site of privacy that I wish to briefly discuss. This space exists outside the house, as an expansion of the private space, the home

outside the home: the car. Andrea Vesentini argues in *Indoor America: The Interior Landscape of Postwar Suburbia* that post-war America and suburbanization reconciled not through the pursuit of open space, but through the relocation and expansion of the interior space.<sup>50</sup> The car functions as the primary site of this social fabrication; it is the space where the separation between the nuclear family and the remaining social fabrics of society took place. This ultimate site of privacy is instrumentalized today by social media to construct an illusion of intimacy and private life. Influencers and “vloggers” often use their cars for taking photographs and vlog footage. By operating in a place of transient, mobile space, the interior of the car feels temporary, casual, and ultimately private, making the influencer appear accessible and reliable. One example of the car’s representation in social media is James Cordon’s “Carpool Karaoke” series, which operates to affirm that the celebrity “personality” and the consumer/viewer maintain an intimate, deep relationship, reinforced through the application of the car interior.

I used social media as my jumping off point for the interrogation of privacy in visual culture and art history, but nonetheless still relied on historical and contemporary examples from other visual fields. By using various examples of the “home,” I have posed an opportunity to rethink how works of art are interpreted within the discipline of art history. I learned through my study of privacy, as represented by the bed and the kitchen, that social media is not the constructor of “public privacy” as such. An inauthentic privacy has existed already pre-social media. The fabrications of privacy and intimacy instrumentalized by the bed, kitchen, and car on social media are not innovations. Yoko Ono and John Lennon’s peace campaign operates on the

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<sup>50</sup> Andrea Vesentini, *Indoor America: The Interior Landscape of Postwar Suburbia*, Charlottesville; London: University of Virginia Press, 2018, 6.

same page as Calvin Klein's campaign: they use the bed as a stage for selling something. Julia Child's cooking show operates very similarly to Jenny Welbourn's YouTube videos: they use the kitchen as a stage for profitable domestic labor. The revelation of the home as stage is fundamental to understanding how social media operates within these spaces of privacy.

At the start of the project, I inquired about my own relationship to social media and the stake I have within it. What visual qualities make it so pervasive and manipulative? What is really being sold? We are being sold intimacy—an inauthentic intimacy—that provides a false sense of security and connection. Sites of privacy have been instrumentalized throughout art history, for different purposes, but all for the universal end of exploitation. How we choose to experience these sites of privacy reflects highly on ourselves, dependent on our positionalities. The exposition of the interior can also be used as a radical reframing, as in the case of Tracey Emin, Carrie Mae Weems and Martha Rosler. How do we hold ourselves accountable and demand a reframing of digital space? How do we transform the representations of intimacy into true presentations of authentic intimacy? I don't know the answer to these questions, but we must embrace the interior as a valuable emblem of our privacy, and withhold exploiting privacy as manipulation for consumption, along with falling for such manipulation. Social media has the potential to be a space for care work and identity, if we can only resist the conformity and conflation of public and private that is slowly scraping mass culture of all its goodness.

## Figures



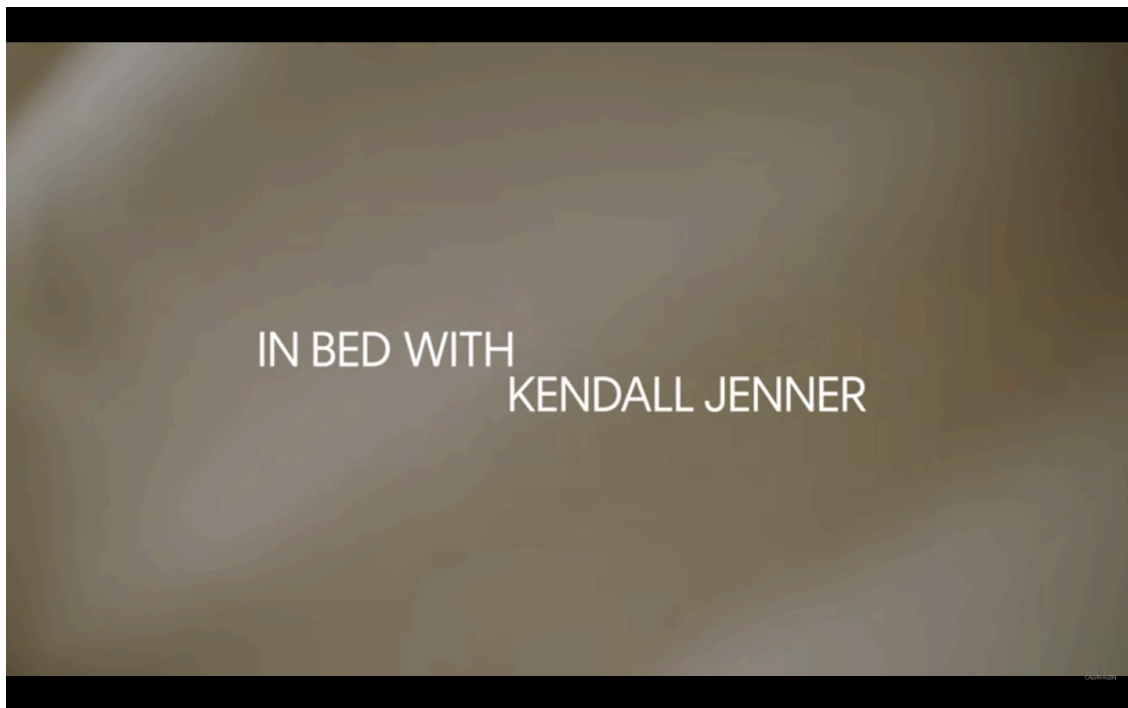
**Figure 1,** @kimkardashian, Instagram post, September 7, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CE2GdhvABRy/>



**Figure 2,** @emmachamberlain, Instagram post, August 4, 2020, [no link found]



**Figure 3,** IKEA advertisement, O Magazine, 2011, <https://ogg05.wordpress.com/2012/11/18/11/>



**Figure 4,** Calvin Klein, “In Bed With Kendall Jenner | CALVIN KLEIN,” Youtube Video, December 19, 2019, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpJ\\_XO-jDQ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpJ_XO-jDQ8)



**Figure 5**, Calvin Klein, “In Bed With Kendall Jenner | CALVIN KLEIN”



**Figure 6**, Calvin Klein, “In Bed With Kendall Jenner | CALVIN KLEIN”





**Figure 7**, Titian, Venus of Urbino, 1538, oil on canvas, 119.20 x 165.50 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi



**Figure 8**, Édouard Manet, Olympia, 1863, oil on canvas, 130.5 cm × 190 cm, Musée d'Orsay





**Figure 9,** Tracey Emin, My Bed, 1998, Tate Britain



**Figure 10,** Hugh Hefner, Playboy Mansion, Chicago, 1973



**Figure 11,** John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Bed-In For Peace, Montreal, Canada 1969, photograph by Stephen Sammons



**Figure 12,** Hilton Hotel, Amsterdam



**Figure 13,** Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal



Room Service Orders

## BREAKFAST

Orange juice

Tea, milk

Vegetable salad consisting of radishes, cucumber, hard-boiled eggs, some onions (no tomato), lettuce.

Broiled filet of sole, or poached

Scrambled eggs with crisp bacon and grilled tomatoes.

Jam and marmalade and lots of honey and butter.

Whole-wheat bread toasted (or their own special bread.

(Throughout day, served much orange juice and "Spanish Smiles" -- orange juice with honey, no eggs)

## LUNCHEON

Fried natural brown rice (served cold!)

Broiled salmon or English fish and chips.

Grilled Halibut

No potatoes but lots of vegetables: mushrooms, carrots, peas, green beans.

Fresh fruits, salads.

## DINNER

Fried natural brown rice

Turtle soup or consommé

Sometimes, sirloin steak

Lamb chops or hamburgers

Fish

Salad

Rice pudding & two-color jello

Lots of tea

(Liqueurs for guests only)

Figure 14, A copy of the original Bed-In menu from 1969, courtesy Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth



**Figure 15,** Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo*, Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures, 1958

NOTES ON JOHN LENNON'S STAY AT THE QUEEN ELIZABETH

Housekeeping Department Comments:

Floor Housekeeper was told corridor and suite were very dirty and littered with flower petals. Apparently, a Houseman had to vacuum 3 to 4 times per day since John Lennon threw flower petals into the air.

Requests: steelbrush, extra large comb, cage for white mouse.

Furniture was found in corridor without having notified the Housekeeping Department. All furniture had been taken out of the room, pictures taken off the wall; only the double bed remained in the sitting room.

Ex-employee (bell-boy) asked the Floor Housekeeper to clean John Lennon's shoes, since the shoe-shine people refused to do so.

Day of departure, suite had to be placed in order in an hour's time. John Lennon plus wife had to be asked several times to leave bed, so that the bed could be moved back into the bedroom.

Dry-cleaning staff refused to touch (for cleaning and pressing) two floppy hats which were then given to Housekeeping and the Laundry Department to be ironed.

**Figure 16,** A copy of the original housekeeping notes from the 1969 Montreal Bed-In, courtesy Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth



**Figure 17**, John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Bed-In For Peace, Amsterdam, 1969, photograph by Hulton Getty



**Figure 18**, John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Bed-In For Peace, Montreal, Canada 1969, photograph by Stephen Sammons



**Figure 19,** John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Bed-In For Peace, Amsterdam, 1969, photographer unknown



**Figure 20,** Wear I Live, "What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog," YouTube Video, October 27, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ln66tAjDgQc>





**Figure 21,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”



**Figure 22,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”





**Figure 23,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”



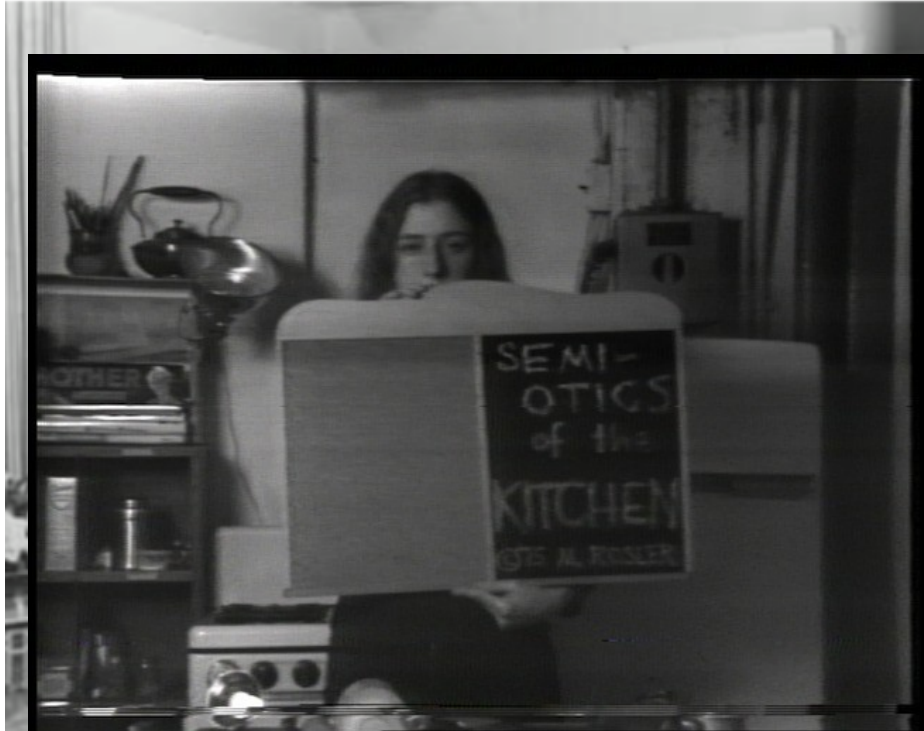
**Figure 24,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”



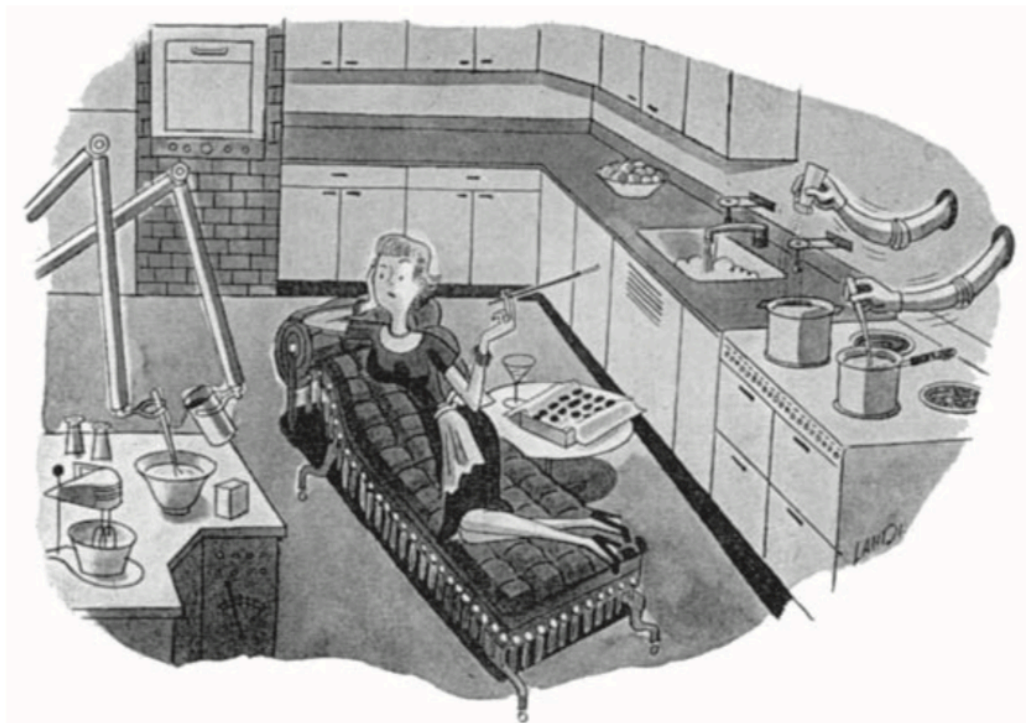
**Figure 25,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”



**Figure 26,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”

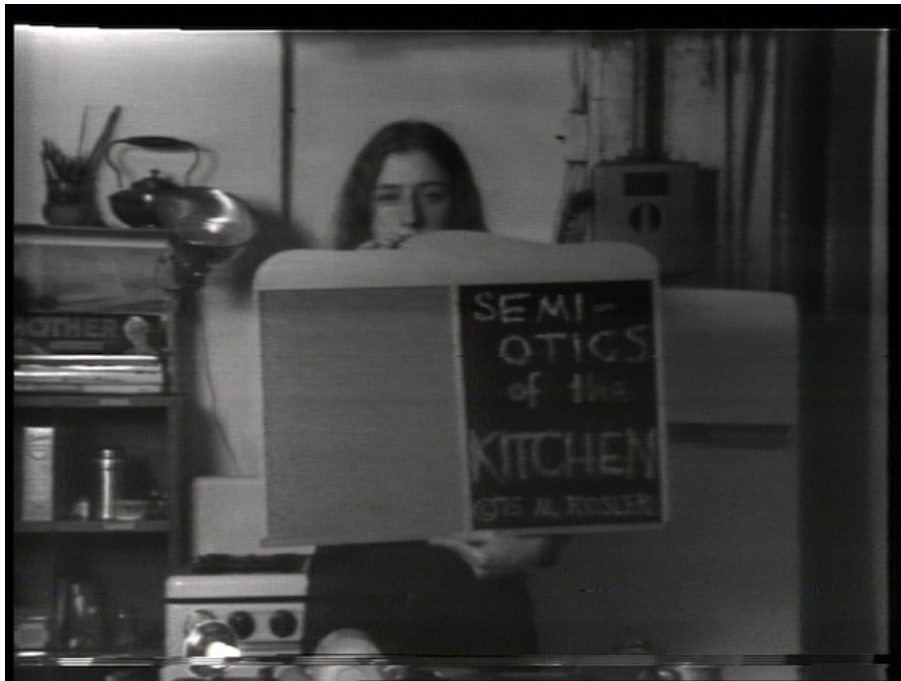


**Figure 27**, Rita Calzarette, “Philomena Dougherty in her Kitchen in Levittown, Pennsylvania,” Dempsey Digitized, accessed April 13, 2021, <http://egdempsey.com/omeka/items/show/22>

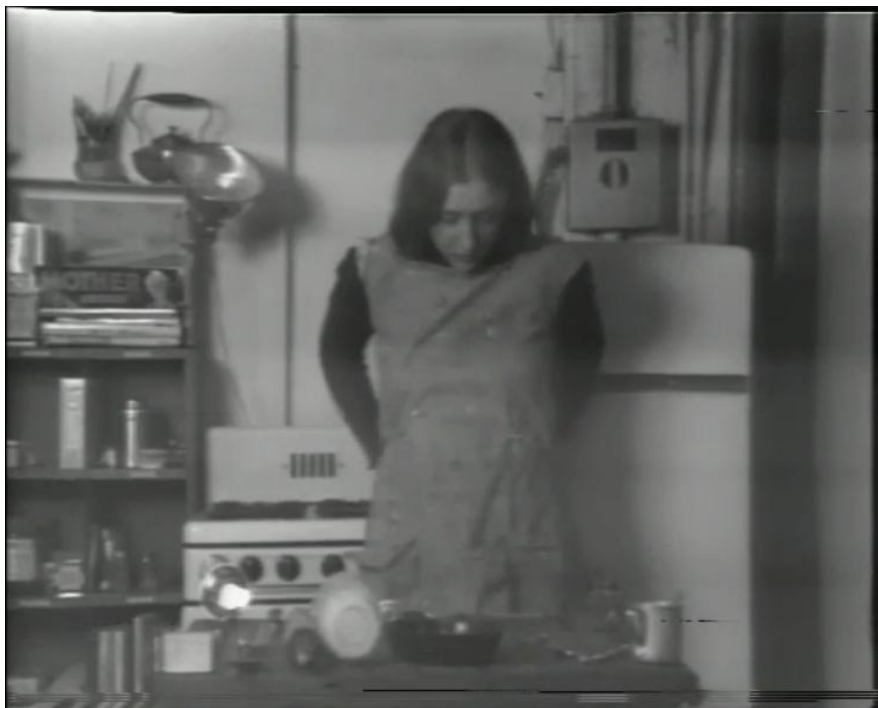


**Figure 28**, Levittown Kitchen, Image from *Electrical Merchandising*, 1957





**Figure 29**, Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, Chicago, IL: Video Data Bank, 2003



**Figure 30**, Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*



**Figure 31,** Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*



**Figure 32,** Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*



**Figure 33**, Carrie Mae Weems, *The Kitchen Table Series: Untitled (Eating Lobster)*, 1990, 38.1 x 38.1 cm



**Figure 34**, Wear I Live, "spaghetti self care, money stress, life changes: 20something VLOG," YouTube Video, June 26, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7118LXxuss>



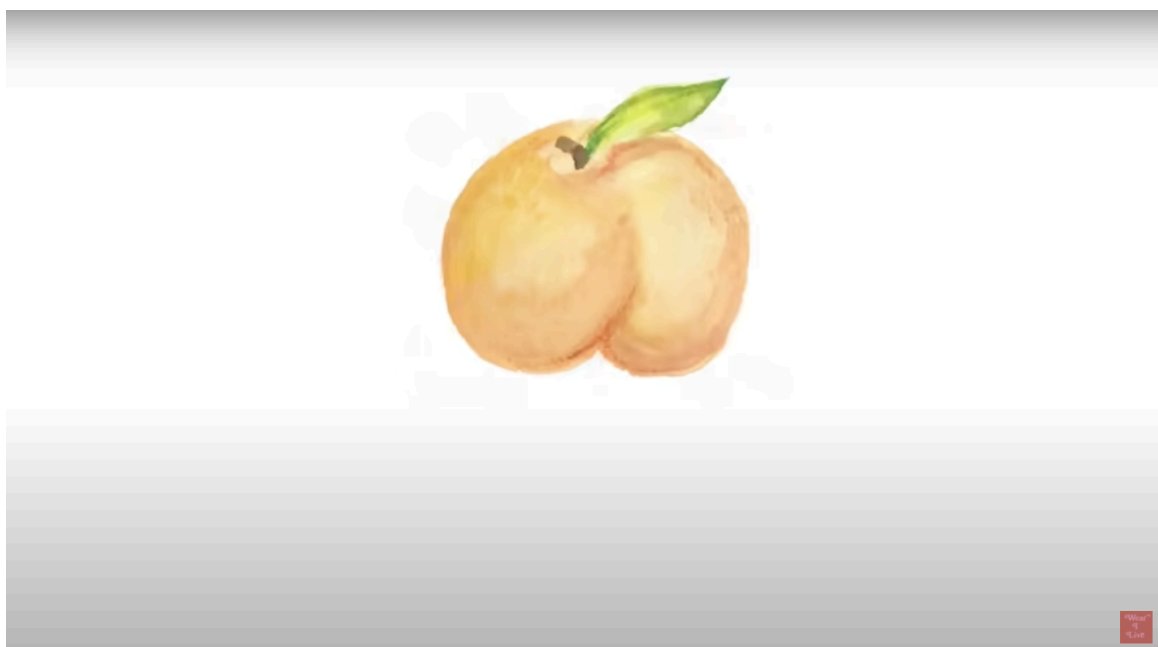
**Figure 35**, Babish Culinary Universe, “Binging with Babish: Parks & Rec Burger Cookoff,” YouTube Video, February 10, 2016, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP\\_nWuLYpJw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MP_nWuLYpJw)



**Figure 36**, Babish Culinary Universe, “Binging with Babish: Parks & Rec Burger Cookoff”



**Figure 37,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”



**Figure 38,** Wear I Live, “What I Eat in a Day: Plant Based, Easy, Vlog”





**Figure 39**, Babish Culinary Universe, “Binging with Babish: Parks & Rec Burger Cookoff”



**Figure 40**, Babish Culinary Universe, “Binging with Babish: Parks & Rec Burger Cookoff”



**Figure 41**, Babish Culinary Universe, “Binging with Babish: Chicken Kiev from Mad Men,” YouTube Video, March 2, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kf8XzD-xVGc>



**Figure 42**, Babish Culinary Universe, “Binging with Babish: Chicken Kiev from Mad Men”





**Figure 43**, Babish Culinary Universe, “Binging with Babish: Chicken Kiev from Mad Men”



**Figure 44**, *Chopped*, Food Network, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wj8q39/how-chopped-became-tvs-greatest-cooking-show>



**Figure 45,** *Top Chef*, Bravo, Season 18, <https://www.bravotv.com/top-chef>



**Figure 46,** "Frankfurt Kitchen," 1926



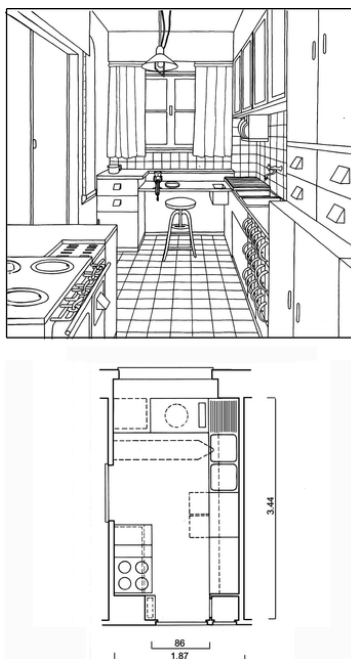


Figure 47, “Frankfurt Kitchen” plan, 1931

**THE SPIRIT OF THE CHEF  
IN YOUR OWN  
KITCHEN!**

Right in your own home you can rival the most tempting dishes of master chefs! Here's the secret—

**KITCHEN BOUQUET**  
*The Chef's flavoring for home cooking*

Transforms ordinary soups, stews, sauces and gravies into savory, savory "creations"!

Used for years by noted American and European chefs—has helped make their cooking famous!

Pure, wholesome, convenient and economical—the concentrated extract of choice garden vegetables.

**Handy Kitchen Spoon—FREE!**

To induce you to try Kitchen Bouquet, we will send—FREE—with a 1lb. Trial-size bottle—a strong, long-handled, mixing, serving-measuring spoon. Send 10c for Trial-size bottle.

KITCHEN BOUQUET, Inc.,  
Union City, New Jersey

**Famous for 50 years**

**KITCHEN BOUQUET**

Figure 48, Kitchen Bouquet, Magazine Advertisement, 1910

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