



Paris  
Refashioned

1957-1968

Colleen Hill

NOVEMBRE 1952

# TOUT FAIT, TOUT PRÊT

ROBERT RANDALL

1. Franck et Fils. Manteau réversible : 39.000 fr.



# Paris, Prêt-à-Porter, and Women in the French Fashion Press, 1956–1965

Alexis Romano

A photograph by Robert Randall in the October 1952 issue of *Vogue* featured an elegant *parisienne* with a cool, averted gaze wearing a coat – sold by retailer Franck et Fils – while crossing a hazy square (fig. 121). Readers would have recognized this well-known view of the city as the Place de la Concorde, the home of monuments of French history, government, tourism, and fashion, for the city's main luxury shops were located just north of this square. Paris had long been associated with luxury trades, sumptuous clothing production, and, from the mid-nineteenth century, haute couture. From this point, the city's presence in fashion imagery, along with the trope of the *parisienne*, broadly served to construct a picture of haute couture's fashionability, as well as consecrate Paris's centrality in fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Randall's photograph illustrated how this formula continued to function with the addition of readymade dress, which slowly appeared in French magazines' fashion representations from around 1950. The magazines' new direction accompanied the work of manufacturers and consultants who took steps to modernize and improve production and the image of the industry. Although Randall's photograph was featured in "Tout Fait Tout Prêt à Porter" (All Ready, All Ready to Wear), *Vogue's* regularly occurring prêt-à-porter section begun earlier that year, it used visual conceits similar to Randall's photographs for the magazine's March 1952 issue: showcasing haute couture clothing in typically iconic spaces, such as on a bridge next

**121** A page in *Vogue Paris*, October 1952, featuring a photograph by Robert Randall. © Robert Randall/*Vogue Paris*.

to the Seine, with the Eiffel Tower in the distance, and in the Place de la Concorde as here.<sup>2</sup> Familiar imagery welcomed modernity, in the form of the fashion industry, in a reassuring way. However, new discourses began to penetrate the symbolic construction of fashion that had traditionally relied on the visual interchange of Paris, women, and haute couture. Thus, with the application of an accessible and readily available (“tout fait”) garment, Randall’s photograph was reinvested with meaning, and values linked to readymade dress, that transformed an elite *parisienne* into an active participant in a fast-paced society. Although fashion magazine language is commonly conceived around the notion of novelty, here, set against the context of great national changes that took place in 1945, notably the Liberation and women’s suffrage, language assumed compelling meaning.

Prêt-à-porter developed in postwar France against the backdrop of heightened modernization in terms of industrialization, women’s lives, and Paris’s physical landscape, characterized by large-scale urbanization, the demolition of working-class areas, and a large push to the city’s new suburbs. The fashion press reflected tensions implicit in change, foregrounded in its presentation of readymade dress. Through the examples of glossy, expensive *Vogue* and the middle-range weekly, *Elle*, first published in 1920 and 1945 respectively, this essay asks how readymade dress, an element of the postwar industry and epitome of practical clothing for the “everyday,” was figured into magazines’ pages, in ways that both shifted and drew from Randall’s 1952 image – namely, its means of constructing and visualizing Paris, women, and dress. Despite their inherent differences, both publications dispersed the quotidian in text and image, in terms of journalists’ descriptions of garments and women’s activities, and photographers’ means of presenting city spaces. This essay questions how magazines, in so doing, connected to wider currents of thought in the postwar period, and draws on the writings of Henri Lefebvre in particular.

During the 1950s, Lefebvre conceived the second volume of his *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, published in 1961, which identified the quotidian as a postwar concern, and contended that everyday life had become disconnected from historicity and the world’s natural cycles amid rapid industrialization and capitalist production. His text endeavored to locate and critique the quotidian in order to counter the alienation experienced by individuals in the modern world. This essay seeks to show how readymade dress, and the discourses it drew on, also exposed the everyday in ways that both embraced and renounced modernity – in connection to ideas of Lefebvre and his contemporaries Roland Barthes and Guy Debord, in terms of descriptions of consumer society and urban interaction – and how this shifted over the course of the period studied.

The first section studies the ways Paris was visualized in photographs in the mid- to late 1950s that spoke to the modernization of the industry and city, and to modernism in imagery. The next two sections consider bodies that inhabited spaces, studying them in relation to women's wider placement in France from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s. In particular, they question how magazines visualized these elements around a discourse of access, narrative, and movement, in the context of heightened focus on women in legislation and the prevalence of readymade clothing, which by the mid-1960s magazines were featuring more than haute couture or clothing patterns. Importantly, these shifts took place in tandem with photography's rise in French fashion magazines. New visualizations thus also reflected developments in photographic technology, from handheld cameras to the moving image. Throughout, this essay questions how the production of imagery informed fashion's new symbolic construction and readers' ways of seeing.

### Modernization of the City and Industry, Mid- to Late 1950s

As shown earlier, magazines typically used iconic and luxurious places like the Place de la Concorde in their mythologization of Paris fashion, so that, as Agnès Rocamora has noted, "the Parisian fashion geography is often narrowed down to its front region, its luxurious side."<sup>3</sup> The juxtaposition of haute couture garments against iconic monuments and privileged spaces also served to equate the clothing with a Parisian timelessness and value. According to Lefebvre, anything in the city that aspires to "prestige or influence" connects to monuments "so as to exploit their age-old authority."<sup>4</sup> They functioned as symbols in an otherwise industrialized space that connected people to history, and defined their bourgeois position in the "social text."<sup>5</sup> Accepted ideas about the social identity of models were thus in conflict as the iconic Paris visualized in the press slowly disappeared with the increased presentation of readymade production during the 1950s.

New urban representations were illustrated in the October 1, 1956 issue of *Elle* in an editorial that pictured *couture en gros* clothing, the high-end, readymade production that magazines almost exclusively presented during the 1950s. In the article, journalist Claude Brouet described a shift in the fashion industry in which she explicitly positioned readymade production as the new and innovative faction: "Bravo la confection française! The bet is won. Won by the young manufacturers of 'Prêt à Porter' who rescued French *confection* from its routine."<sup>6</sup> The accompanying photograph by Lionel Kazan presented a model in a coat by Albert Lempereur, president of the *Fédération française de l'industrie du vêtement féminin*, the main readymade clothing syndicate, and a manufacturer who worked to improve the

image of *confection* (as prêt-à-porter was known prior to the mid-1950s). Kazan's model stood in front of blurred horizontal lines that represented the frenzied mass-populated city (fig. 122). Martin Harrison traced the use of blur in fashion photography to the 1945 publication *Ballet*, which comprised photographs of several ballet companies by Alexey Brodovitch, *Harper's Bazaar's* art director. Harrison noted that "his use of blur to suggest motion addressed the spirit rather than the letter of ballet: the primacy of emotional qualities, of fluidity and spontaneity."<sup>7</sup> In 1956, *Elle's* deployment of "blur" evoked motion, that of urban speed, as well as the spontaneous or momentary element of time. It also connected Paris *couture en gros* to New York's modernity and fashion industry.

Hélène Gordon-Lazareff created *Elle* in 1945, after spending the war period in New York working for *Harper's Bazaar* and the women's section of the *New York Times*.<sup>8</sup> During this time, she would have observed considerable advances in the American sportswear industry in relation to France. Although *Elle* first photographed readymade garments in 1948,<sup>9</sup> it and other magazines were forbidden from identifying their manufacturers.<sup>10</sup> These regulations changed around 1950, at which point *Elle* featured rare readymade editorials with named makers. This development was due largely to the work of fashion editor Annie Rivemale and her assistant Claude Brouet, who discussed her expansion of the readymade clothing division on her arrival in 1953.<sup>11</sup> From about 1954, the pages of the press presented readymade garments to a perceptibly greater extent. Brouet, who became *Elle's* fashion editor in 1965, preferred to feature readymade production because "ideas that were very new and adaptable to the life of everyone weren't coming from [couture]."<sup>12</sup> With the appointment of Edmonde Charles-Roux as editor of *Vogue* in 1954, female professionalism in the press can be seen to have had direct ties to the presentation of more practical, accessible garments.

Likewise, magazine images employed "realistic" photographic techniques to depict the changing city that, from the 1950s, was characterized by a new energy after its occupation during the Second World War. The growth of mass motorized transport was a tangible reminder of urbanity. From the mid-1950s, new traffic lanes and curb parking appeared at the expense of Paris's trees, pavements, and, according to many, tranquillity.<sup>13</sup> In Kazan's original photograph, an automobile was clearly speeding behind the model, but when cropped for publication, only a blurred flash became visible. The blur signified the urban while rendering "the complexity of the city readable."<sup>14</sup> It retained the speed, noise, and excitement of the modern city but, when separated from the model, was less intimidating to the viewer. As such, national concerns over rapid modernization were played out in the

122 A photograph by Lionel Kazan included in *Elle*, October 1, 1956. © ELLE/SCOOP.



fashion press in terms of visual and textual representations of the city and readymade dress, both implicated in the country's industrial projects.

That photograph in *Elle* captured well the electric push to modernize both industry and city, and presented fashion that would parallel and keep up with the speed of the changing city. Such photographs "that achieve a truly dynamic movement," as Christine Moneera Laennec has argued in relation to late 1920s and 1930s fashion photography, "work in such a way as to evoke various mechanized processes, not the least of which was the mass production and commercialism that by this time had become central to the fashion industry."<sup>15</sup> It is telling that similar visual representations can be ascribed to French imagery from the 1950s, as France's industry lagged behind that of other industrialized nations, such as the United States. These photographs reflected the industrial production behind readymade dress, and defined it as a component of a rapidly modernizing France. The connection between *confection* and mechanized processes was clearly reinforced by the next set of images in this spread, under the heading "Les robes qui démarrent" (dresses that start up). One image pictured six models stacked in a diagonal line surrounded by rows of wheels in perfect precision (fig. 123). Clothing and women were conflated with the automobile, the period symbol for urban speed and modernity, and the consumer object that most clearly referenced industrialized assembly-line production.

Side by side, dress and cars became shiny, streamlined, and "magical" goods. This imagery coincided with Roland Barthes's essay, "The New Citroën," in which he characterized the Citroën DS, which appeared in 1955, as a "magical," "superlative object."<sup>16</sup> Barthes described the cars as motionless, just as stiff clothing contained the immobile models in the photograph. He did not invoke their speed or "power," but preferred to focus on their "spiritual and object-like" qualities in his description of the emerging culture of consumption that invested consumable items with supernatural meaning.<sup>17</sup> His demystification project can be likened to Lefebvre's goal of uncovering truth in the everyday.<sup>18</sup> Barthes portrayed the automobile as a display object: "In the exhibition halls, the car on show is explored with an intense, amorous studiousness: it is the great tactile phase of discovery, the moment when visual wonder is about to receive the reasoned assault of touch (for touch is the most demystifying of all senses, unlike sight, which is the most magical)."<sup>19</sup> *Elle's* pages displayed a similar impenetrability: in their enclosed garments, models could not move, and wheels alone could not start (*démarrer*). The imagery worked against *Elle's* underlying message, which, presupposing a change from home-sewn or locally made clothing to *confection*, instructed women readers to adapt, to renew their

123 A photograph by Lionel Kazan included in *Elle*, October 1, 1956. The original image was reproduced as one of five positioned diagonally on the page, and this version shows the photographer's crop.  
© ELLE/SCOOP





Likewise, Willy Ronis joined other French photographers who sought to capture the elusive yet familiar “everyday” in Paris, a notion that, against rapid modernization in the 1950s, took on a new significance.<sup>25</sup> Like his fellow members of the humanist photography agency Rapho, such as Brassai, Robert Doisneau, and *Vogue* contributor Sabine Weiss, Ronis was largely informed by photojournalism, as well as the flexibility afforded by new equipment. Through a technique that he described in 1951 as “*chasse aux images*” and “reportage,” Ronis used “his camera with the aim of catching the fleeting aspects of the external world.”<sup>26</sup> Aided by his 35mm Foca camera that allowed for photography *sur le vif*, Ronis sometimes employed reportage techniques to achieve high graphic energy such as blurred motion, informal framing, and close-ups, that resulted in a duality, between stillness and speed (see figs. 122, 124). Along with others, such as Weiss, Robert Randall, and Henry Clarke, Ronis fostered the fusion of the developing fields of photojournalism and fashion photography. This meant that in the pages of the fashion press, the everyday served as a means of access to the city.

The blur images attempted to carve out the individual, to separate woman from the confusion of the city and from its mass population. Protected from the modern city and “framed” within the magazine page, Ronis’s model illustrates Hilary Radner’s idea of photographic containment, in that she is “carefully posed for the camera, immobile, her body fully and conspicuously displayed, captured in its entirety,” “rather than asserting its independence.”<sup>27</sup> Containment can be viewed here as a symbolic shield and disassociation from modernity for women and the industry. The hesitant and backward-looking aspects of these images corresponded to collective fears of modernity, as well as women’s ambiguous national position during the 1950s and early 1960s. It was as Claire Duchon pointed out: “women – who only ever appear in the Civil Code as wives, never as autonomous beings – are treated in an inconsistent and capricious way, as either dependent or responsible, seemingly at random.”<sup>28</sup> Their status as citizens with unequal rights contrasted starkly with rhetoric that endorsed modernity in urban planning, technology, and fashion. Women may have acutely sensed this disconnection between reality and magazine text and imagery during the late 1950s, in view of the fact that no legislation for their rights had passed since they had been given the vote.

### Everyday Paris and Women in Movement During the Late 1950s

From the late 1950s, in parallel with growing expressions of discontent seen in women’s literature, women’s groups, and legislation, the women’s press displayed a heightened interest in subjectivity, narrative, and movement. Concurrently, the gap between staged and “real” street scene narrowed as

photographers drew from documentary photography for graphic presentation and quotidian content. Although women were pictured as actors in accepted feminine activities, they were increasingly shown as multifarious in relation to Randall's 1952 photograph. For example, the August 1957 issue of *Vogue* featured a spread that highlighted the lives of two real women, photographed by Sabine Weiss (fig. 125). The documentation of actual people (albeit those who belonged to the upper echelons of Paris society) in their daily lives, spoke to magazines' interweaving elite and everyday discourses in their promotion of readymade clothing. The clothing presented, by brands such as Chloé and the equally expensive couture readymade label Givenchy-Université, sold in high-end boutiques such as Henry à la Pensée, would not have been accessible to a wide audience. However, focus on the space of everyday Paris served to reposition fashion as informal and practical, as well as complicit in the construction of an active woman. Through the clothing's description, the magazine presented a more diverse femininity, and the models took on new roles, exemplified by one of the women photographed, a surgical assistant who enjoyed art. According to the text, she had chosen to wear knitted and other practical readymade garments "that correspond to her professional life."<sup>29</sup>

Their daily activities, pictured in a grid-like pattern, took them from interior, such as homes and shops, to exterior spaces. Weiss employed the street as a connector, grounding the network of activities that formed the feminine sphere. Lefebvre similarly positioned the street as poised between public and private spheres, and considered it "a place of passage, of interaction, of movement and communication, it becomes, via an astonishing volte-face, the reflection of the things it links together, something with more life in it than those things themselves. It becomes the microcosm of modern life."<sup>30</sup> For Lefebvre, the street represents the everyday and is where "the life of the large industrial city is at its most original and authentic."<sup>31</sup> His thinking was grounded in the idea that the everyday encompasses basic and repetitive as well as negative, unnoticed aspects. Weiss's series of images conveyed this duality and visualized the street as the place of Lefebvre's passage, from interior to exterior and from the mundane to the lived. Veiled by mundanity, her street also contained movement and life.

Increasingly during the 1950s, images documented women's existence in the everyday and non-iconic city, as opposed to their exhibition and containment. Such photographs of French readymade dress fall under "outside fashion," as Martin Harrison describes a genre of fashion photography that evolved in postwar New York and coincided with the declining influence of the European couture houses and the rise of the readymade market.<sup>32</sup> Like the *Vogue* spread (see fig. 125), this photographic mode is characterized by the move from studio and domestic *mise-en-scène* to street



*Ci-dessus.* Pour le week-end, un confortable manteau à ceinture nouée, en veau velours blanc. Mc Douglas chez Marie-Martine : F 60 000. Echarpe de soie Anquetil.

*En haut à droite.* Pour les jours frais, un cardigan en gros tricot vert olive à grand col bordé de côtes. Korrigan-Lesur chez Minny : F 9 900. Perles Schneider.

*Ci-contre.* Pour un déjeuner, un tailleur de flanelle bordé de ruban de gros-grain noir. Givenchy-Université chez Minny : F 36 000. Chapeau S.P.M. pour S. Roger.

*Ci-dessous.* Pour venir « poser », un ensemble : robe droite en lainage pied-de-poule et veste « de boucher » en lainage anthracite. Chloé chez Marie-Martine : F 48 000.



photography. This shift brought about an emphasis on movement, Harrison argues, and presented a new feminine ideal grounded in activity as opposed to a “passive,” contained woman.<sup>33</sup> Through a focus on their movement in Lefebvre’s place of passage, in these pages women carve out a space for themselves in the city, armed with, as Rebecca Arnold has asserted in relation to New York of the 1930s and 1940s, “a particular sense of urban identity, demonstrated by a way of moving through the streets, and taking possession of surrounding space.”<sup>34</sup> By association and through the activity of reading and handling the magazine’s pages, readers themselves assumed an active value attached to urban movement.

Women’s agency implied by their freedom of movement was echoed in magazine texts that positioned the fashionable woman as the architect of her self-presentation. Although the low price of readymade clothing was an important aspect of its promotion, rather than stress cheapness, which connoted poor quality, journalists portrayed the garments as tools in women’s active styling – a clear departure from couturiers’ mandates. It thus corresponded to the 1950s trope of the rushed yet in control woman in French fashion imagery, in the context of growing female professionalism.<sup>35</sup> This could be observed as late as the October 14, 1960 issue of *Elle* that included an editorial entitled “Pressée mais organisée” (Rushed but organised). The accompanying images by William Connors presented hurried women as they walked purposefully through the city’s spaces: a café, out of a telephone booth, in an office, and next to the subway. Interspersed among the larger photographs in the article were illustrations with clothing coordinated and laid out. Two examples superimposed clothing, accessories, and mathematical tools over recognizable maps of central and outer Paris. This clearly equated readymade clothing with women’s wider and more rapid movement across the growing city. Coupled with the discourse of fast-paced lifestyles, this was an essential component in the new construction of fashionability, which presented a creative, resourceful, and productive woman who efficiently moved between professional and domestic spheres. One page featured a model whose books and office setting indicated her professional role (fig. 126). Impeccably dressed in a knitted suit sold at the fashionable boutique Laura, she relied on her movement to be attractive, creative, and productive. Her readymade clothing was equally active in this presentation, as it guided her throughout the day from work to evening and leisure. Magazines promoted readymade dress as practical, necessitating minimal articles of clothing and changes of dress. Accessories and separates, easily produced industrially, epitomized this practicality and creative potential. Swift, elegant, and demure, her move-

125 A page in *Vogue Paris*, August 1957, with four photographs by Sabine Weiss.  
© Sabine Weiss/*Vogue Paris*.

ment and *bureau-théâtre* (office-to-theater) suit would soon take her out of the picture frame.

The image clearly departed from the convention of still, posed models in its presentation of a woman walking purposefully, as if there was no photographer who blocked her path. In her study of women in movement in fashion photography, Hilary Radner explains the function of their displacement: "She is an image in flight that defies stasis. The image is her 'trace' – it cannot represent 'her' as such. The formal construction of space enhances the visual impression that the model's place is elsewhere, beyond the gaze of the camera."<sup>36</sup> The model became the trace, or the blurred movement of urban speed, as described in the previous section. This movement in turn became the "plot" of the image, signaling the activities of the model's busy lifestyle. As such, the photographer's means of visualizing the model in the *Elle* spread painted a portrait of modernism that scholars such as David Harvey connect to a "unified representation of the world, or picture it as a totality full of connections and differentiations."<sup>37</sup> The image implied the documentation of a purposeful and "lived" existence. Through her movement, Radner contends that "the model makes visible a sense of agency that extends paradoxically beyond her function as image."<sup>38</sup> Here, however, the model seemed to act out rather than actualize her agency. Imagery of women in exaggerated movement concealed their ambiguous reality. Like the notion of modernism's totality, as Harvey describes, the perfect overall picture was a false one. Visual imperfections, as the following section discusses, hinted at a postmodern shift, suggesting that the gap between image and reality narrowed.

### Subjectivity, Filmic Spreads, and Walking Subjects, 1960–1965

From the mid-1950s, "reality" in fashion imagery, as argued above, was constructed by narrative and everyday Paris, bolstered by editorials that presented "real" women. New means of visualizing the city, exemplified by the techniques of Ronis and other humanist photographers, captured real time and urban speed. Furthermore, images that visualized the fragmentary moments of everyday time through blurred figures and informal cropping resonated with magazines' interest in realism and accessible readymade dress. Such imagery illustrated the trace of moving image technology in still fashion photography. Peter Knapp had become *Elle's* artistic director in 1959, resulting in editorials that showed his method of extracting images from video to capture movement and reality. Knapp stated, "Like many others, I was fascinated by repetition and decomposition of movements. I often wanted to show the entire contact sheet as a result."<sup>39</sup> This was real-

**126** A photograph by William Connors featured in *Elle*, October 14, 1960. © ELLE/SCOOP.







ized in the April 8, 1960 issue of *Elle*, which featured a film roll on the top border of the page. This visualized the process of image recording and instructed viewers on how to look, since, upon inspection, they might have imagined themselves filmed as one of the models walking on the streets of Paris. Informed by new practices of looking in the context of increased television viewing in France of the 1960s, readers may have conflated moving imagery and heightened realism. Likewise, Brouet recalled this shoot and connected movement, reality, and readymade dress: "One time I remember that Peter Knapp said that we were going to make a film . . . To have the girl in the process of crossing the street. . . . we went as far as that, to make a film rather than photos to really show how it was in life."<sup>40</sup>

Moving imagery thus influenced photographers such as Knapp, William Connors, William Klein, and Fouli Elia, who sought to express reality between fleeting and extended action, to depict the fragmentary, inconsequential, fastidious, and residual moments of everyday time, in ways that recall the ideas of Lefebvre. Similarly, "Paris Promenade," an editorial in the April 21, 1961 issue of *Elle*, distinguished itself from both traditional full-page spreads in fashion magazines and those that showcased women posed against the backdrop of the iconic and beautiful city, as seen in Randall's 1952 photograph. Instead, William Connors was concerned with the interaction between average women and city spaces. On one page, in contrast to the model pictured in the upper right section who peered at the antique glasses within a shop, the image at the bottom left depicted a woman with an outward gaze stepping into the street (fig. 127). That image was cropped to be long and narrow, seemingly interrupted by a text panel and the start of another photograph that continued onto the next page. This layout, marked by intermittent yet continuous imagery, presented a new filmic presentation of fashion. Elements of the city, street, car, and stranger were presented to the viewer as though cropped from a larger picture; hurried moments of a longer period, Connors's attempt at capturing "real" life with a camera lens.

The article drew on visual techniques of contemporary cinema such as *Nouvelle Vague*, at its height in the early 1960s, in its depiction of fragmentary moments and everyday reality.<sup>41</sup> Readymade dress was appropriate in this spread, which showed the fashion of glamorous women in their daily lives. The models were on display but not posed as fashion models, just as film directors sought "naturalism" over "arranged" visual compositions. This was the basic premise of this cinema, signaled earlier in Alexandre Astruc's 1948 essay that predicted of the age of the "camera-stylo." That is, Astruc envisaged a cinematic form that resembled a language rather than a spectacle, forgoing "the image for its own sake, from the immediate and

127 A photograph by William Connors featured in *Elle*, April 21, 1961.  
© ELLE/SCOOP

concrete demands of the narrative, to become a means of writing just as flexible and subtle as written language."<sup>42</sup> Many French directors applied these notions, which included the use of non-professional actors and the *scénario-dispositif* over pre-established scripts. For instance, in *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962), Agnès Varda included a sequence in a café with simultaneous conversations of secondary characters in her goal of documenting reality and capturing Lefebvre's residual everyday. Fashion images that were cropped, fleeting snapshots of everyday life, also inadvertently applied Astruc's concepts.

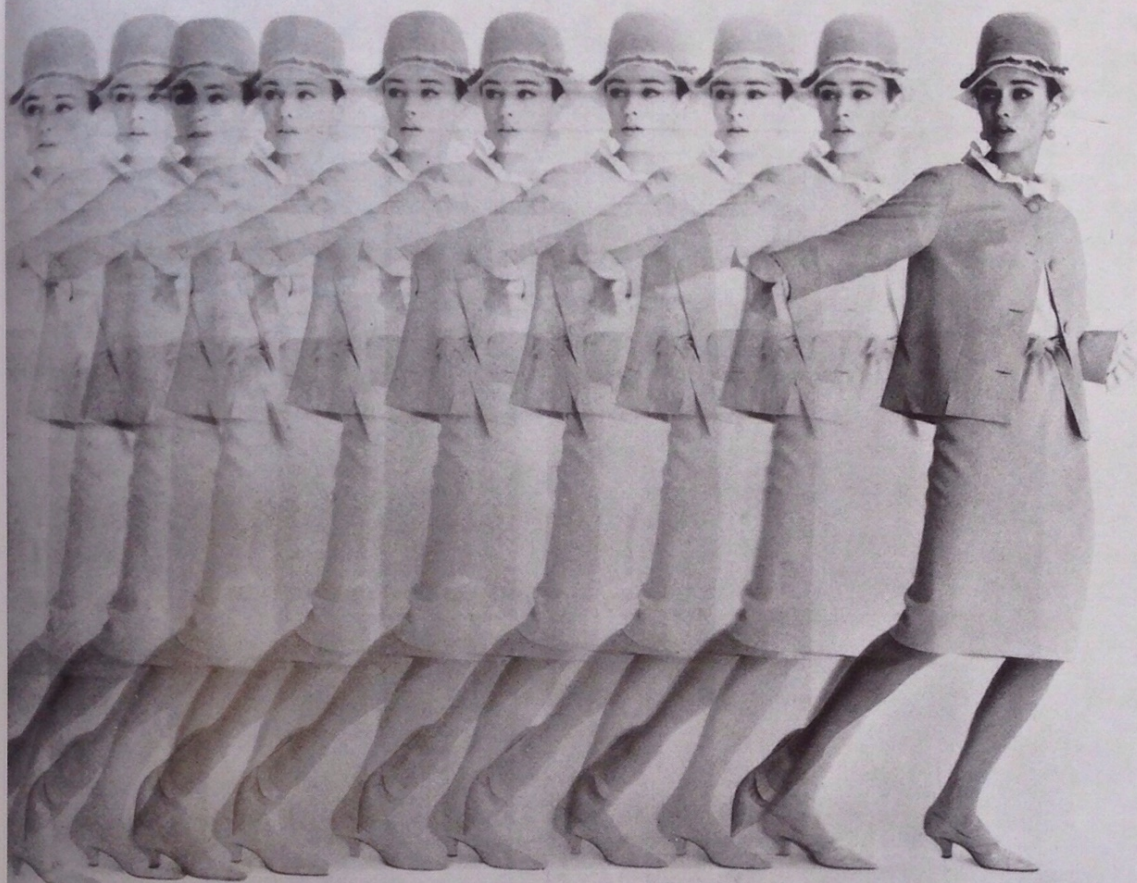
Like the cinema's abstract plotlines, photographs such as those by Connors hinted at a narrative. The imagery, as Charlotte Cotton has described cinematic photography, triggered readers' collective unconscious and imagination, so that "meaning is reliant on investing the image with our own trains of narrative and psychological thought."<sup>43</sup> Through the input of the reader in the *Elle* 1961 spread (see fig. 127), for instance, a narrative dared to unfold, one that questioned the psychological state of its female subject. This differed from 1950s narratives that are distinguished by containment, hesitation, forced productivity, and totality. Albeit ambiguous, the narrative began by negotiating the model's access to the city, her step into the street made easier by the front inverted pleat of her readymade skirt, sold at the popular Paris boutique Réal, "to walk easily."<sup>44</sup> Through filmic viewing, readers could replicate this movement.

During the 1960s, magazine discussion of movement was foregrounded in clothing's fabric and construction, as an article on readymade collections in the February 1961 issue of *Vogue* attested. The author described a suit by Chloé as enabling movement, through the "elasticity of [its] pink wool crepe, the casualness of [its] open jacket" and the "ease of [its] skirt, gathered at the waist."<sup>45</sup> The accompanying images were by William Klein, who had worked in moving imagery by this time, and may have considered movement as an expression of realism.<sup>46</sup> They pictured the sequential steps of one model, so as to visualize her slow motion, which directly correlated to the text that equated the material qualities of garments with their capacity for wearer movement (fig. 128). Yet, as opposed to earlier imagery that portrayed readymade dress as a tangible tool of models' physical action and productivity, this text considered movement as a surrogate for women's internal questioning and decision-making:

Being in movement is a question of choice. You will get there by wearing easy skirts, fluid lines, supple fabrics. Your time is one of movement, don't forget. So, renounce all that isn't of your period.

**128** A page from *Vogue Paris*, February 1961, with a photograph by William Klein. © William Klein/*Vogue Paris*.

LE POINT DE VUE



VOGUE

VOUS MET  
DANS LE MOUVEMENT

Être dans le mouvement est une question de choix. Vous y parviendrez en portant des jupes aisées, des lignes fluides, des tissus souples. Votre temps est celui du mouvement, ne l'oubliez pas. Alors, renoncez à tout ce qui n'est pas de votre époque. Avant de choisir, posez vous toujours la question : "est-ce une robe dans laquelle je pourrai bouger, courir, dans laquelle je serai à l'aise sur la passerelle d'un avion ou en montant en voiture?" Vogue vous dit : pensez "mouvement", et votre choix sera le bon. *Ci-dessus* : un tailleur qui caractérise les impératifs de cette mode : souplesse du crêpe de laine rose de Gerondeau, désinvolture de la veste ouverte sur une blouse très féminine avec ses ruchés, en crêpe de soie blanc de Ducharme, aisance de la jupe froncée à la taille sous une ceinture nouée. Chloé chez Selena, tailleur NF 410, la blouse NF 165. Bijoux Péladan. Gants Neyret. Escarpins Hollywood. Chapeau de René Pochet pour Chloé.

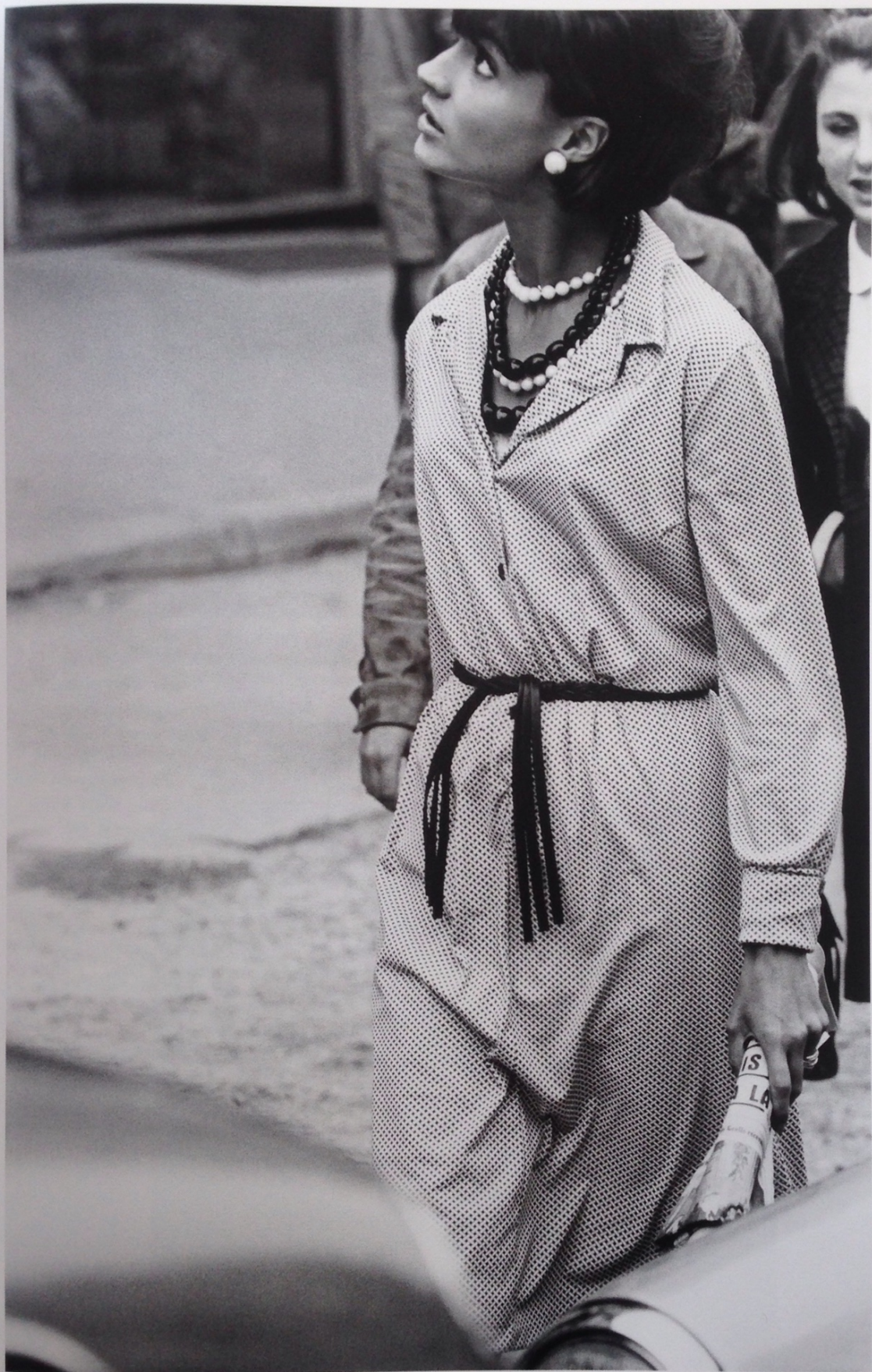
Before choosing, always ask yourself: "will I be comfortable in this dress on the gangway of a plane or getting into a car?" *Vogue* tells you: think "movement," and your choice will be the right one.<sup>47</sup>

Thus *Vogue* framed its article around a discourse of choice and movement. In this way, it connected to writings and documentaries on women's lives during the 1960s, which sought to confirm women's knowledge, with which they could make reasoned decisions concerning family, career, and health. This was also an essential message of the *Mouvement démocratique féminin* (MDF), founded in 1961 to "help women achieve their liberation and their advancement, and give them the means to make choices and achieve fulfillment according to their individual qualities, in the family, in their profession, in society, in the country."<sup>48</sup>

Alongside the MDF and other groups that looked to make women aware of their realities during the early 1960s, the possibility of progress loomed closer with governmental and other discussion of women's rights and autonomy. This notably included attempts to amend the marriage law, to give women more independence within marriage. In parallel, one strand of 1960s fashion photographs can be characterized by the emergence of walking and looking in anonymous Paris spaces. For example, photographs by Lionel Kazan in the June 21, 1963 issue of *Elle* featured women walking the city's spaces. Models were portrayed as curious: in looking around, they sought to understand the most banal of spaces, the limits of space, and their own bodies within it. Much of the clothing during this period was made from supple fabrics such as jersey or knits, allowing for greater movement. Likewise, the model's jersey nylon dress in one image from this issue was soft, so as not to hinder her interaction with city space and architecture (fig. 129). In contrast to the more formal and constricting garments of the 1950s, as seen in Kazan's 1956 photograph of a hesitant model in a stiff wool coat (see fig. 122), jersey and knitwear fulfilled the claims of ready-made clothing to comfort and practicality, facilitating women's movement through uncertain, narrow, and difficult city spaces. In Kazan's later image, the subject observes the surrounding spaces in a state of heightened subjectivity and interacts with it as though involved in a mental dialogue, illustrating Nancy Forgone's theory on the "process of walking" in the nineteenth century, "with its phenomenologically coherent intertwining of body, mind, and vision."<sup>49</sup>

This theme was also apparent in 1960s urban photography, cinema, and literature in the context of city renovations. In *Cléo de 5 à 7*, for example, the protagonist Cléo undergoes a psychological journey as she walks and rides by car through Paris. According to Steve Ungar, the film followed a

129 A photograph by Lionel Kazan featured in *Elle*, June 21, 1963. © ELLE/SCOOP.





## MANTEAUX

Les manteaux d'automne ont reçu un terrible "coup de jeunesse". Et pourtant, regardez-les, ils restent portables quel que soit votre âge. *Page de gauche* : un manteau droit à plis dans le dos, en pied-de-poule noir et blanc (laine et mohair) de Hallenstein. Une ceinture de cuir passe dans des coulants. Wébé : "11". *Ci-dessus, à gauche* : un manteau en toile de laine et fibranne quadrillé beige et marron de Raimon, entièrement bordé de beige. Une ceinture à la pointe des hanches. Lucien Léman : "Tibus". Foulard Guillemín. *Ci-dessus, à droite* : un manteau boutonné sous patte en crêpe de pure laine peignée marine de Schmoll. Trois plis à la jupe. Fine ceinture aux hanches, fermée par deux boutons jumelles. Gil Coutin : "Who's who". *Ci-dessous, à gauche* : un manteau sport à double boutonnage et ceinturé en whipcord pure laine bois de rose de Schmoll. Lempereur : "11". *Ci-dessous, à droite* : un manteau beige entièrement surpiqué en drap pure laine vierge de Hallenstein. Paul Bon : "Mousqueton". Bijoux de Jean-Charles Brosseau. Chapeaux Motsch. Gants Guibert Frères. Coiffures d'Elrhodes.



"spatial logic that traced Cléo's itinerary through Paris as a near-loop."<sup>50</sup> In fashion imagery such as *Elle's* of June 1963, walking similarly seems to provide a solution to mental uncertainty and confusion that corresponded to rediscovering Paris, as well as absorbing the influx of information concerning female identities and rights that was being disseminated during this period. Readymade dress, by this time characterized by a new group of named designers, such as Emmanuelle Khanh – who would have been familiar to consumers – accompanied women and eased their journey.

In imagery, the elastic and soft qualities of dress were a constant factor in editorials that portrayed models in the act of spatial interaction. Furthermore, by the mid-1960s, magazine readers were used to interpreting movement in imagery in connection to choice and agency. This may have informed their reading of an editorial in the July 1965 issue of *Vogue*, which displayed many small images by Knight Russell of women in different spaces of the city, variously walking, pausing, looking away, and looking at the camera (fig. 130). Furthermore, this depiction of a mazelike city with endless pathways and possibilities, visualized through multiple images on one page, illustrated the diversity in choice and conversation. Models walked without a defined purpose or endpoint, and let themselves be guided by a dialogue with the city, in ways that resembled the *dérive*, or drifting, the Situationists' invention for maneuvering the city and subverting the demands of the structured everyday, described by Guy Debord, the group's leader, in 1958: "Dérives involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. In a *dérive* one or more persons . . . let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."<sup>51</sup> Like Lefebvre and Barthes, Debord sought to rid the everyday of control by laws of industrialization and consumption, ideas he cemented in *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Drawing on Lefebvre's ideas of the creative potential of the everyday, Debord and the Situationists encouraged the construction of situations such as the *dérive* to foster imagination, creativity, and communication. In the photographs reproduced here, models creatively and subversively tested space as a means of reflection for future action. With the marriage law finally amended in 1965, the first legislation for women's rights since suffrage in 1945, they had no choice but to move further forward. No longer contained within interior space or closed Paris, women were in movement and transition, faced with the potential for their own transformation.

130 A page in *Vogue Paris*, July 1965, with photographs by Knight Russell. © Knight Russell/*Vogue Paris*.