

ANNE STEYER

# Fashion world rejects realism

**O**K, I'll admit it. I buy Mademoiselle magazine.

Worse yet, I actually have a subscription.

I don't mean to be a traitor to my gender. I just can't resist the dazzling writing and the brilliant fashion layouts filled with useful, pertinent information and clothes I can afford.

Plus, I bought the subscription trying to win the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes.

I should have used better sense. No one wins.

This month's issue has some can't-wait-to-read-it articles, the kind that make me put down my international history book just to take a quick peek. Articles such as "Makeup secrets that will make you blush."

This of course is a clever play on words. For those who grew up in the cheek-free '80s, blush is a cosmetic that colors the cheeks, thus giving the wearer the illusion of a constant "girlish" blush.

I stopped wearing blush after my initial makeup fascination in the ninth grade, giving up cherry blossom blush along with my blue/grey/silver eye shadow compact.

But the cutting-edge makeup, health and beauty articles aside, the most fascinating part of September's Mademoiselle is the story on the new beauty ideal: "Model Wars—a front-line report."

That's right, you've got it. There's a war going on in the fashion pages of women's magazines. There's even a front line, one that such serious journalists as Mademoiselle's can go down into, to give the on-the-spot reports from deep inside the fashion industry.

The players in this war-torn arena are the supermodels and the waifs, involved in cutthroat model-eat-model warfare.

This gripping article is subtitled, "radical changes in fashion have sparked a model rebellion."

A rebellion from what, I might ask. Earning \$10,000 to \$25,000 a day



**I was bony, with jutting clavicles and elbows coming out of nowhere. But those days are long gone, lost in the years that followed high school, lost in the discovery of beer and rich chocolates.**

for standing around looking beautiful, with 10 to 12 people fussing over your appearance, some man spritzing your thighs with water to help you appear sweaty and moist?

Damn, that kind of hard work I can handle. Modeling waifdom here I come.

I scoured the article, looking for clues on how I might become the next great superwaif, taking the mantle from Calvin Klein model Kate Moss. Clues to how I might pose topless with an underwear-clad Marky Mark.

Requirements I found included: girlish straight hair or choppy, short boyish hair. Next, thinness to the extreme, bordering on anorexia. Third, the innocent look of youth, new fresh faces untouched by the world. Fourth, grunge, thrift-store-style clothes, just a little too big. Fifth, smallish breasts. What! Smallish breast in a fashion magazine! Eureka, I've found my true calling.

Translated this all means an anorexic woman-child, makeupless, in her big brother's clothes with hair that is anything but big.

So I ask myself, where do I fit in here? Well, I have short, choppy boyish hair and I don't wear much makeup. I wear boys clothes that are too big for me and I definitely meet the final requirement—I have smallish breasts.

I fit in almost all the categories—well, I'm not exactly youthful, having passed my 25th birthday months ago—except the most important one: thinness to the extreme, bordering on anorexia.

I am nowhere near being too thin. Once I had a mere 128 pounds on

my 5'9 frame. I was bony, with jutting clavicles and elbows coming out of nowhere. But those days are long gone, lost in the years that followed high school, lost in the discovery of beer and rich chocolates. No more mannequin modeling at Miller and Paine, no more bridal shows or photo shoots.

I think I'm out of luck in the supermodel category also. It subscribes to an altogether different fashion ideal—tall and big. Tall bodies and big hair.

I'm tall and big, but in all the wrong places.

Supermodels tend toward lots of makeup too, with glossy lip shine and tight, tight clothes only a supermodel could afford.

Not my style either. Tight clothes are uncomfortable and I don't like anything on my face shinier than my nose.

I do have a mole on my face just like Cindy Crawford, though. Except models and the fashion industry call it a beauty mark. I think it's a mole. And on my face besides.

Where do I fit in? In another magazine perhaps, but definitely not in the fashion ideal. Rather, in the fashion reality.

Maybe this is why I read Mademoiselle, to see what is completely unattainable and unhealthy. To reaffirm to myself what is healthy, natural and real—what is me.

That, and of course, to win the sweepstakes.

Steyer is a senior English and history major, an arts and entertainment senior reporter and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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