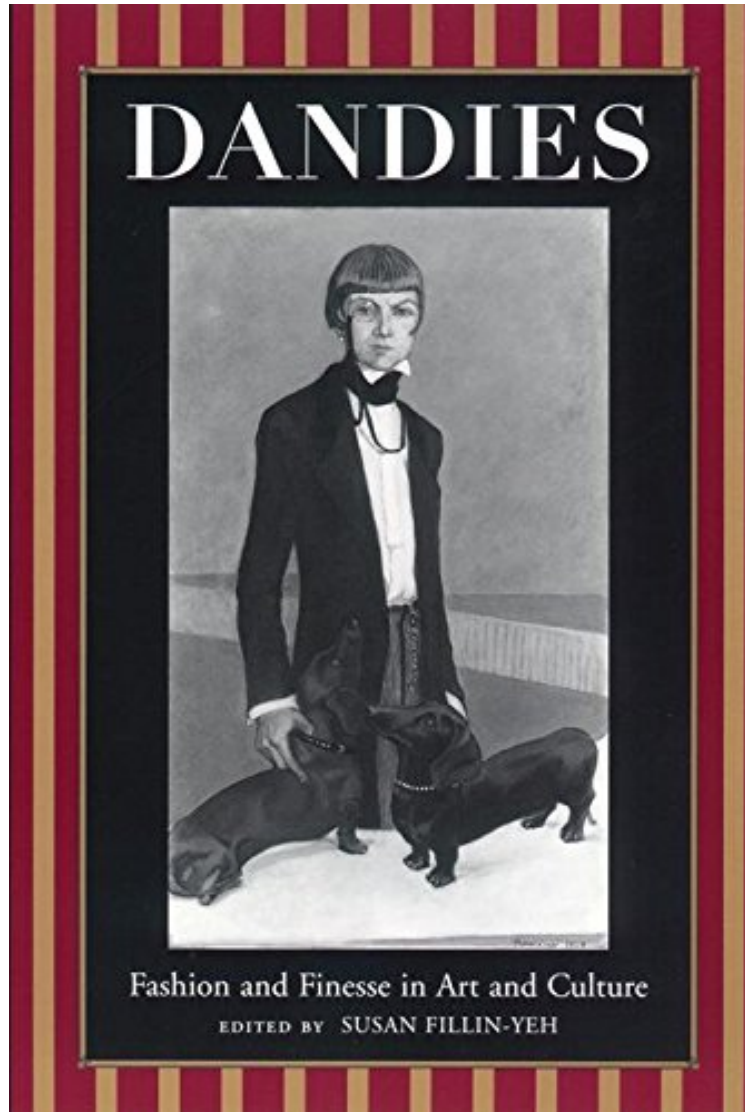


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Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture

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From NYU Press : Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture:

14 of 16 people found the following review helpful. This book title is misleading By Avid reader This book is entitled "Dandies," and, with the monocled and waistcoated Lady Troubridge on the cover, one expects an investigation on dandyism in the Western sense. Sadly, this is not the case. This book should have been named, "Sartorial display: a look at dressing up across genders and cultures." It could have been given a number of different titles, but to use the English word "dandy" misleads would-be readers. The book attempts to redefine/broaden the definition of "dandyism," which, in Western culture, is restricted almost exclusively to the 19th century and to males. In addition, dandyism is

not simply dressing up in a particular fashion--dandyism implies a whole analysis of attitude, economics and lifestyle. The essays wander into Native American dress and well into the twentieth century. There is discussion of Coco Chanel, George Sand and the Romaine Brooks set, which describe the appropriation of male Western dress. This is indeed food for thought. Nevertheless, one expects writers who write on dandyism to be thoroughly versed in the history of the dandy in his original 19th century form. In one essay, there is an illustration of sheet music from 1843 with an accompanying illustration of a man in "dandified dress." To look at this image (with the chin-framing beard, black neckcloth, waist-nipped silhouette and broad-lapelled tailcoat) and *not* mention the signature trend-setting styles of Count Alfred d'Orsay--extremely famous in his day as the international fashion leader and masculine beauty icon of the 1830s and 1840s--strikes the scholar of dandyism as astounding in its omission. All in all, this book is an anthropological inquiry into dress with its implications of class, gender and race in historical/cultural context. It is not, however, an analysis of dandyism by any stretch. For cultural anthropologists, this book certainly has its place, but for scholars of dandyism, one should examine the classic writings of Carlyle, Baudelaire, d'Aureville and the 20th century Moers.

Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture considers the visual languages, politics, and poetics of personal appearance. Dandyism has been most closely associated with influential caucasian Western men-about-town, epitomized by the 19th century style-setting of Oscar Wilde and by Tom Wolfe's white suits. The essays collected here, however, examine the spectacle and workings of dandyism to reveal that these were not the only dandies. On the contrary, art historians, literary and cultural historians, and anthropologists identify unrecognized dandies flourishing among early 19th century Native Americans, in Soviet Latvia, in Africa, throughout the African-American diaspora, among women, and in the art world. Moving beyond historical and fictional accounts of dandies, this volume juxtaposes theoretical models with evocative images and descriptions of clothing in order to link sartorial self-construction with artistic, social, and political self-invention. Taking into consideration the vast changes in thinking about identity in the academy, *Dandies* provides a compelling study of dandyism's destabilizing aesthetic enterprise. Contributors: Jennifer Blessing, Susan Fillin-Yeh, Rhonda Garelick, Joe Lucchesi, Kim Miller, Robert E. Moore, Richard J. Powell, Carter Ratcliffe, and Mark Allen Svede.

"Should be of great interest to any civilized person; the dandy, a mutation of taste, is not definable. The book offers a group of excellent essays that attempt to pin it down."-Alex Katz
"Both lively and scholarly, this is the collection many have been waiting for. At last the dandy emerges from the western European upper class (and male) closet resplendent in a rainbow of cultural, ethnic, sexual, gender and racial colors. *Dandies: Fashion and Finesse in Art and Culture* is a fascinating investigation into the constructed self, and a major contribution to art and cultural history!"-Whitney Chadwick, author of *Women, Art, and Society*
"A finely wrought ensemble of studies orienting us to a 'hyperaesthetics' of sartorial and bodily fashioning. To see such diverse ways that people have bodily troped and conceptually trumped cultural categorizations of gender, race, colonial and socioeconomic positionality is inspiring and well-just dandy!"-Michael Silverstein, University of Chicago
About the Author
Susan Fillin-Yeh is the author of *The Serpentine Lattice: Helen and Newton Harrison, The Technological Muse, and Charles Sheeler: American Interiors*.