



Smithsonian American Art Museum

## **The Vogue of Art: Representations of Artists in American Fashion and Lifestyle Magazines, 1923–51**

Alexandra Davis  
Predoctoral Fellow (at National Portrait Gallery)  
University of Pennsylvania

My dissertation charts the changing image of the artist in American fashion and lifestyle magazines from 1923 to 1951. These dates span Condé Nast Publications' hiring of modernist photographer Edward Steichen for its staff in 1923, and the featuring of Jackson Pollock's paintings in a 1951 *Vogue* fashion shoot by Cecil Beaton. By engaging in close visual analysis of published images of artists and placing them in a larger cultural context, my study ties developments in the depiction of artists to the trend of increasing interconnectedness of art and American consumer culture. Through a systematic survey of three decades of *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, and *Harper's Bazaar*, the era's leading fashion and lifestyle magazines, I examine three themes: the use of the contrasting media of caricature and photography to characterize the figure of the artist; the intersection of the spheres of art and fashion through the celebration of novelty and celebrity; and the diversity of the modern art market with regard to identity, geopolitics, and artistic affiliation. Providing an essential addition to the narrative of American artistic identity, my dissertation underscores the ways in which the public representation of artists during the second quarter of the twentieth century anticipates postmodern art practices and artistic personas of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, in its chronological scope beyond the traditional break of 1945, my study emphasizes the continuity between pre- and post-World War II in the narrative of the development of the image of the artist in American society.