

THE GENTEEL



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The September Issue

by [Semmi W.](#) | Posted July 18, 2012

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The CR Fashion Book teaser. Source: [fashionista.com](#).

The world of fashion can be cruel. Its capitals have a history of bloodless wars, dethroned designers, models and moguls. Amidst the catfights and chaos stands Carine Roitfeld, left to fend for herself. The former editor-in-chief of *Vogue Paris* is clearing territory on an island inhabited by a tribe she once lay claim to: Condé Nast.

This September, Roitfeld will launch her own magazine, *CR Fashion Book*. While mainstream outlets like *New York Magazine* have chimed in on the buzz, the reception amongst some of fashion's elite has been murky.

When Roitfeld initially made her announcement, Jonathan Newhouse, Condé Nast's International Chairman, reportedly sent a barrage of internal emails reminding all editors, stylists and photographers that they would not be permitted to work with Roitfeld. The contractual obligations established by Condé Nast have blocked a range of industry veterans, but Roitfeld, for the most part, appears unfazed. In fact, the savvy French mademoiselle seems to have accepted the backlash as a challenge. "The page has been turned," she told *Women's Wear Daily*. "It's time to find something new, something fresh - for me and for the readers."

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While the famed stylist and editor won't be able to collaborate with the likes of Mario Testino (due to his reported contractual obligations to Condé Nast), *CR Fashion Book* will capitalise on its position as an outsider by working with fresh talent. Aside from featuring less-established writers and photographers, Roitfeld has begun to enact a series of bold moves; all of which reflect a desire to rewrite tired, industry bylaws.

The revelation of the magazine's inaugural cover choice signals just how far Roitfeld is willing to bend the rules. According to unnamed sources cited on *Fashionista*, Kate Upton was shot for the cover because Roitfeld believes that the curvy, all-American seductress is the "new Lara Stone." Upton may have scored an editorial spread in this month's *Vogue*, but her relationship with the fashion community hasn't always been cosy. In the eyes of her detractors, Upton was supposed to be nothing more than a swimwear model. Giants, like Victoria's Secret, have publicly dismissed Upton's catwalk potential, counting her voluptuous figure and blond hair as markers of a limited, commercial run. But perhaps it is Upton's status as a former outsider that has enamoured Roitfeld.

Upton and Roitfeld's unlikely pairing isn't the only item on the magazine's unorthodox agenda. Unlike other outlets, Roitfeld has limited advertisers to small spreads, with no ads appearing in the magazine's front-end section. Fashion Media Group LLC (the company that will be publishing *CR Fashion Book*) has set the cover price at US\$9.95 and projects more than 100 pages of advertising in first 288-page issue. To date, Roitfeld has attended meetings with potential advertisers, gaining the interests of key power players including Gucci, Chanel, Giorgio Armani, Cartier and Louis Vuitton.



Kate Upton in *Vogue*'s July issue.
Source: *vogue.com*.

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Other nonconformist tactics include an exclusive focus on long-form articles synergising the worlds of art, fashion and culture. Clearly, Roitfeld is attempting to give birth to a new form of fashion journalism; one where tailored clothing and couture pieces are discussed in ways that relate back to ideas and topics that exist outside fashion's insular world of name-droppers and extravagant personalities.

Each issue will be centered around a general theme (like music). In the mock-up presented to advertisers, the magazine's debut is titled, *Issue 0 - Obsession*. While the magazine will be published in English, Roitfeld is aiming to feature stories in different languages (with an English translation in the back pages). She told *WWD*, "I hope people will want to keep it - trendy and timeless at the same time."

There is no doubt that Condé Nast will continue to rule much of Manhattan but in the meantime, Roitfeld will raise her publication's flag in the East Village. The question, however, of whether Roitfeld can survive on an island whose fashion chief appears ready to boot her off, is something that can only be decided when the pages begin to turn.

This September will mark a referendum in fashion politics. While some members of the elite will continue to pledge their allegiance to the traditional party of choice, others, even from within the Condé Nast nest, just might be curious enough to defect all together. Or, as King Newhouse might put it: commit an act of treason.