

The Power of the Fangirl: Marketing Practices & *The Hunger Games*

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“The Power of the Fangirl: Marketing Practices & The Hunger Games”
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Jessica Bay

If we think of the early days of media fandom, we can conjure images of Star Trek fans with [CLICK] Spock ears or green body make-up scattered around meeting in small conventions and confusing the “regular” people (the public) they encountered when moving to and from those spaces. Fans existed on the outskirts of society and were kept there by society, corporations, and members of the group themselves. In 1986, Saturday Night Live aired a now infamous skit generally called “Get a Life” (Jenkins 2013), in which Shatner [CLICK] yells at his “fans” at a fake convention to stop following him around and to go out and “get a life.” While the skit was supposed to be a parody, it has widely been understood to represent Shatner’s actual feelings regarding fan interactions and can certainly be read as a reminder of the positionality of fans and their practices as “not normal” or, in Warner’s terminology, “counterpublic.” The skit and other popular culture representations of the “geek” or fanboy confirm the outsider status of those in the counterpublic, reminding us that [CLICK] “ordinary people are presumed to not want to be mistaken for the kind of person who would participate in this kind of talk or be present in this kind of scene” (86).

That was the past, but I would like to suggest that corporations, in particular, have repositioned the fan, moving them from the outskirts of society to the centre in order to refocus their marketing campaigns on engaged and committed consumers. [CLICK] In doing so, they have made fans in general a public – while also turning the public into fans. Now, I’m not suggesting that all types of fan or fan practices have been accepted into the fold [CLICK] – furies are obviously still the butt of every joke and teen kpop fangirls are still denigrated and disregarded publicly by the majority (despite their buying power), but a large section of media fandom has been reconfigured as the main audience for mainstream television and film. [CLICK] We see marketing campaigns explicitly referencing fans, either without differentiating between sports fans and media fans or directly referencing media fans. [CLICK] Creatives, executives, and producers are speaking directly to fans on social media. Many have come to equate “the audience” with the fandom – which is a fair assumption when engaging online given the members of the audience who seek them out online ARE active members of the fandom – but by equating the two, these “powers that be” or people in control of the content and direction of the marketing and future of that content are indicating that the audience members they choose to address are the most engaged – the fans. They are hoping to normalize fan-like behaviour.

[CLICK] One of the ways that corporations have worked to refocus fans at the centre of their business and, in the process, remake them as a public, is through paratextual content in the form of mostly digital and often transmedia marketing. Here I’m using the concept of the film paratext suggested by Jonathan Gray (from Gerard Genette’s concept of the literary paratext) where this material is not always traditional advertising (though it can serve that purpose). Essentially, this is extratextual content connected to a film that may be meant to advertise the film but does not necessarily consist of movie posters or trailers. With the campaign for The

Hunger Games, in particular, Lionsgate is not necessarily looking to bring in a mass audience, but an engaged one – a group of people who will buy into the apps, watch the YouTube videos, go to the Hunger Games Experience, and buy every new edition of the films. But, the online marketing actually started with fans themselves.

[CLICK] In 2011 a fan site started up offering a place for fans to login and interact with story elements as a member of Panem – the nation that is the setting for the Hunger Games. Nicola Balkind tells us that Lionsgate followed the Panem October site with one of their own – [CLICK] The Capitol and began competing with the fan-run site. Eventually, the fan site was forced to shut down over a cease & desist order issued by Lionsgate and fans migrated over to the “official” website.

[CLICK] They developed, over the life of the franchise, websites intended to both advertise the films and engage fans linked to their YouTube channel, multiple apps and social media accounts, the Hunger Games Experience (currently at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas), the Lionsgate Entertainment Theme Park in China and the Hunger Games rides at Motiongate in Dubai, Hunger Games Concert and other experiential marketing sites. The websites are The Hunger Games Explorer, Capitol Couture, and Revolution which led to District 13.

In the lead up marketing for *Catching Fire*, the second film, [CLICK] Lionsgate released a brand new website – Capitol Couture. This website is intended to act as a magazine-style site offering fans new material with a focus on fashion and make-up and in the style of the overly extravagant Capitol itself. This site blurs the lines between reality and fiction [CLICK] by placing information about real-life designers, for example, side by side with information about Cinna – a designer from within the film’s story. The site provides entertainment for those interested in the films – both narratively and in terms of the meta text (the real life designers were all involved in costume designs for the film, for example). It is like one big easter egg for fans of the series, while also providing content not in any of the canon texts (the books or the films). This is the beginning of the transmedia advertising Lionsgate produced for the film.

[CLICK] As the story progressed with the release of the films, the Capitol Couture website also progressed so that the final issue indicates a new direction for the “magazine” in relation to the film’s story. [CLICK] This issue includes covert interviews with the leaders of the revolution in District 13, rather than tips on how to get Effie’s particular style.

[CLICK] Finally, the Revolution site was set up as a response to the Capitol. All of the content surrounding these sites was updated on a timeline roughly in time with the release of the films allowing the story of the films to play out “in real life” on the digital screen. [CLICK] Again we see a very visually-enticing spectacle, but we see even fewer story elements. Users can sign up for updates and follow the revolution on twitter, Beyond that, however, fans have very little to actually do on the site. [CLICK] fans were also encouraged to add their names to the Pillars of Panem, thereby signing on to join the revolution. They were also challenged to share trailers and other video content with their own social media networks in a competition for number one fan.

Abigail de Kosnick, working from Tiziana Terranova's work on the early days of the internet, discusses the ways in which this kind of sharing and fan-made content acts as – mostly unintended – advertising for the producer.

[CLICK] content created by fans for other fans does the work of advertising as a by-product as does content created and shared by fans for and with non-fans or casual viewers. This involves solicited material for producer-run contests as well as unsolicited content that is then shared by creators/actors/etc. with their massive social media networks. It also involves sharing trailers with friends and family on twitter and facebook or creating react videos on youtube to trailers, for example. While some of that content may come with some sort of reimbursement such as film-related swag or a shout-out on a huge social media account, much of it is entirely uncompensated.

[CLICK] I should mention here that fans are (often) complicit and/or aware in these scenarios. They are individuals and autonomous, but they often see this as work with the “reward” of further (and perhaps better) content they support vs the content they don't – backlash when they are “betrayed” for their intense loyalty is harsh! [sharing trailers to get a sequel. Sharing hashtags to keep a show alive or a character/ship running] This is often a much more nuanced conversation than one group consistently having more power than the other.

[CLICK] Lionsgate's promotion of The Hunger Games here uses paratextual material that extends the film story while awaiting new installments in the series. The real power of such a campaign, however, lies in the free labor provided by fans in sharing content with a wider audience. What remains to be seen is whether this direction will be profitable and if corporations can sustain and contain a top-down creation of fandom when conflict arises between producer and audience. In the meantime, remembering that Lionsgate is a special case due to their position as a mini-major studio and that the interest in employing a dedicated fan audience is not a new concept in any form of content distribution, I still think we can see that the desire to consider the fan as the driver and indicator of sales and general audience purchasing trends is something with which the film industry is currently experimenting.

the content of this marketing campaign by Lionsgate was intended for a fan audience and an audience made up of young fangirls (or the concept of a young fangirl in any case). These fans are knowledgeable, savvy, and active. They don't need Lionsgate (or someone like me standing in front of the room explaining everything) to tell them which material is canon, which is “real,” and which is new. [CLICK] So who are “fans” and what ARE their practices? You've probably all seen the images in popular culture — many of which I referenced earlier. Some place fans as very much outside of regular society even as corporations like Marvel and Disney are working very hard to make everyone a fan to some extent. [CLICK] Fans engage with content that they enjoy by consuming it voraciously through constant rewatchings, discussions with other fans, and often in-depth analysis that fan scholar Paul Booth has called the new Media Studies. Fans also seek out information about the content they enjoy and they can create new content based on it including, but certainly not limited to, fan art, fanfic (stories written in the world or using

the characters of the product they enjoy), cosplay (costume play or homemade costumes connected to their favourite products and characters, often with some twist on them), filk (music based on their favourite product), meta (analysis of the product itself), fandom wank (in-fandom drama), fanvids (videos featuring the product), websites, spoof twitter accounts, etc.[CLICK] In fact, Early fandom often starts with the toys we are given to us by our parents. Think about your first Barbie or superhero figurine. When children play with these toys, they don't always follow the prescribed stories provided by the manufacturer — I know my Barbies didn't always drive their motor home ... sometimes they drove GI Joe's Jeep while Joe was stuck in the camper with the kids! And Luke Skywalker sometimes showed up to ask Skipper out for a date instead of always fighting Darth Vader. These early reimaginings of well-known narratives and character roles are early examples of fanfiction. [CLICK] Katherine Larsen & Lynne Zubernis talk about fans as having three different categories of activeness. These sites are made for this middle, analytic group in that they seek out more information than casual fans, but they are often engaging in semi-public spaces populated almost entirely by fans. Obviously, Lionsgate is interested in all fans regardless of engagement, but my research into the spaces and material they have created for this film so far suggests that they are most interested in this middle of the road group more than others. These fans seek out new information regarding their interests and they share that information widely — most importantly, they share it OUTSIDE of fandom alone, whereas more engaged and productive fans are very clearly sharing their fanart, vids, and fic for other fans who understand both the original material AND fandom as a whole.

[CLICK] Visitors to the sites have been encouraged to identify with the overindulgent members of the Capitol. Making use of the voice of the Capitol here is very interesting because, of course, the Capitol represents the antagonists of the film series. [CLICK] When Cover Girl came out with a line of make-up that allowed users to recreate the look of the Districts, but from a decidedly Capitol perspective, fans displayed their frustration and the lack of understanding they felt the marketing team had of the story itself. the interest in tie-in marketing with beauty products is not new in Hollywood so the fact that Lionsgate has partnered with Cover Girl is not surprising, but the use of the marketing — particularly in light of the content of the films themselves — is somewhat strange. [CLICK] Fans showed their frustration online in the same spaces Lionsgate had created for them to share (approved) fanart and through the (again, approved) tags on tumblr and twitter. The fans openly criticized both the studio and their licensing partner in the very spaces and ways that they were using to communicate with them. This critical analysis and retaliation showed first that fans are not necessarily as easy to control as corporations may sometimes think, and that they are, perhaps, acting as the new digital media scholars that Paul Booth (2010) has suggested.

[CLICK] I would suggest that corporations have worked hard to incorporate fans into the public/general audience in order to encourage an audience of engaged consumers, but also to control fan practices. Warner suggests that “[c]ounterpublics are spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative, not replicative merely” (88), and this is the type of content that fan studies has, and continues to, celebrate for the past 30 years. Corporations, however, are increasingly hiring community managers and instigating fanart advertising campaigns, in part, to control the type of content that is widely distributed

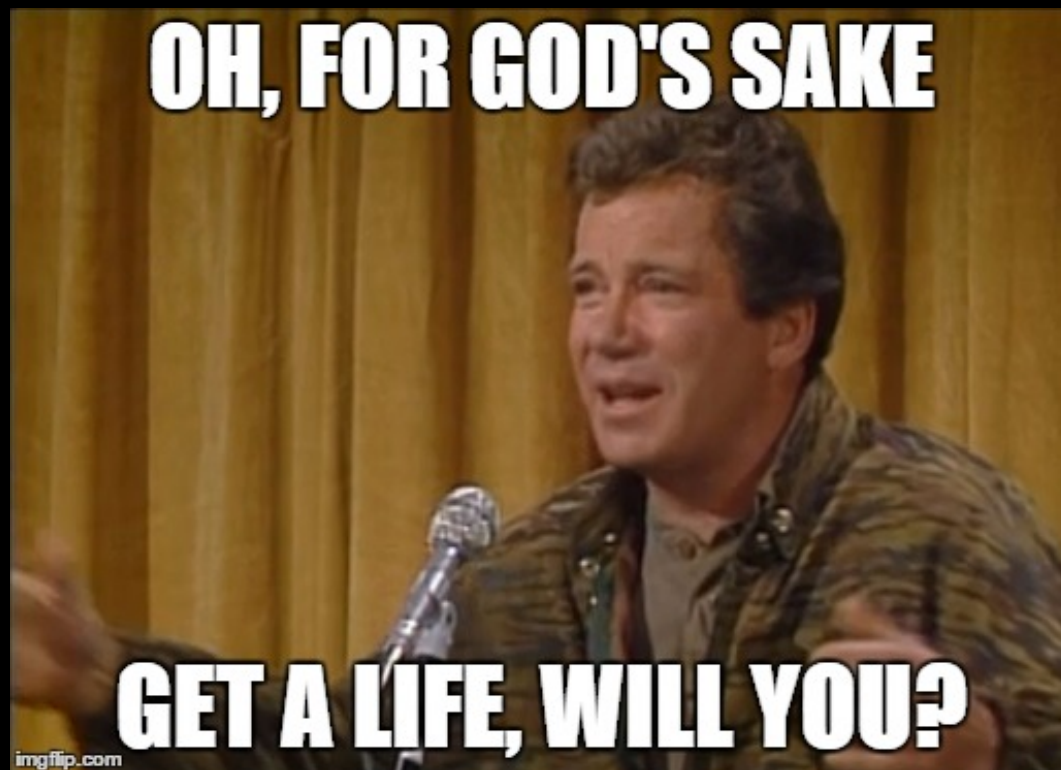
among large media fandoms online. [CLICK] At the same time, the corporate reconfiguration of fans from a counterpublic to a public has financial benefits for them and ensures more people are willing and able to engage with content as a fan, which could lead to more accountability from those same corporations in the form of better marketing or better representation in our media. [CLICK]

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Image: <https://io9.gizmodo.com/in-the-1970s-cosplay-wasnt-all-that-different-from-eve-5790530>







BRACE YOURSELVES...



THE FANGIRLS ARE COMING

imgflip.com

IT'S A FAN THING

IF YOU LARP FOR MORE
THAN 12 HOURS PER DAY,
WHICH IS YOUR REAL LIFE?

SYFY



WHO WOULD WIN IN A FIGHT...
KIRK OR PICARD?

SYFY



Eric Kripke ✓

@therealKripke



[#Timeless](#) is in the final 5 for People's Choice New Drama. Show 'em the power of our fandom & VOTE OFTEN! [#spnfamily](#) vote.peopleschoice.com/#!/home/all/67...

2016-12-18, 1:07 PM

95 RETWEETS **375** LIKES



NEWS FROM SQUAD 451

003 / 007

NOTES

DETAILS

The Mockingjay, alongside other fearless members of the elite Squad 451, evades yet another one of the Capitol's deadly pods. Equipped with the most sophisticated technology, armor and weaponry (courtesy of District 13), this team can and will overcome any obstacle. Nothing will stop the Revolution.

MOCKINGJAY PART 2
MOCKINGJAY
KATNISS EVERDEEN
THG
UNITS



DISTRIBUTE
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SCROLL



CA REVOLUTIO

SHARE /
REGION\$ FOLLOW
D13 ARCHIVE /

 [Game](#) [Frequently Asked Questions](#) [Social Media](#) [Confused? Get Game Help!](#)**hunger games links**

About Panem October, the Game

Panem October is a new, interactive way to experience the same, great books.

Panem October is an entirely-free, six-month, interactive, collaborative [alternate-reality game](#) based on the first of the Hunger Games trilogy by Suzanne Collins, launched in October 2011 in anticipation for the release of the upcoming Hunger Games film by Lionsgate.

This alternate-reality game blends fiction with reality by using multiple platforms to tell the story: such as using emails, text messages and phone numbers. As the users progress through the story, they will be introduced to new mediums and ways to experience the game.

Users can expect to be incredibly busy from the beginning of October to the end of March. Every fan should be a part of Panem October, and look forward to working together with other district residents – up until the very end.

This website is in no way affiliated with Scholastic, Lionsgate Films, Suzanne Collins or any Hunger Games-related affiliates. No copyright infringement is intended and any corporate onlookers should consider this free advertising for their product.

This game was created by the fans, for the fans.

If you're like to know more in detail, please see our interview with [Movies.com](#) or read our [FAQ section](#).

If you'd like questions answered or are confused how to operate the game, please visit [Panemonium.com](#)



THE CAPITOL

FOR THE CITIZENS,
BY THE CAPITOL

PANEM TODAY,
PANEM TOMORROW,
PANEM FOREVER.

CAPITOL CONCERNS

ONE PANEM

CAPITOL TV

DISTRICT HEROES



Notes



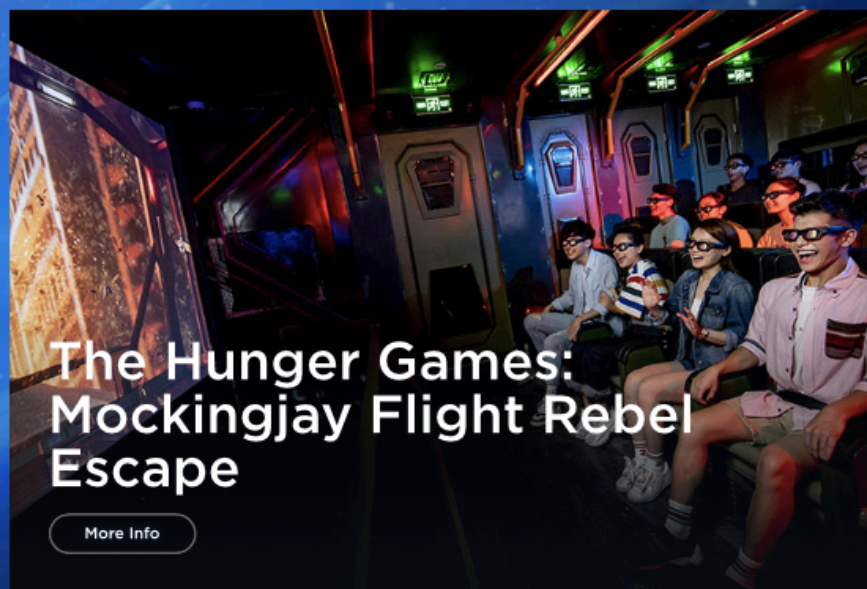
Menu

LIONSGATE



Where Movies Come Alive!

Opening this summer, Lionsgate Entertainment World is Lionsgate's first theme park and the first vertical theme park in the world. Lionsgate Entertainment World is a one-of-a-kind indoor and interactive theme park in Zhuhai Hengqin, China that features thrilling, best-in-class attractions, live entertainment, retail, and dining opportunities that bring some of Lionsgate's most exciting motion-picture properties and Chinese box office successes to life. Located near Hong Kong and Macau, Lionsgate Entertainment World is a must visit destination for fans around the world.



The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Flight Rebel Escape

More Info

Get Updates from Lionsgate Entertainment World

Enter Email Address



Reminders




CAPITOL COUTURE™  
— THE FUTURE OF FASHION —

Chroma Nouveau

ISSUE FIVE FOUR THREE TWO ONE

Commence ▶

Heralding a time in the Capitol when color blooms anew, Chroma Nouveau reveals a victorious celebration of Capitol life through fashion and culture.



Get Cinna's Look: Unconditional

Contributor Showcase UNCONDITIONAL Featured



The cool, gritty London-based label is a favorite in the Capitol.

What do Cinna, Haymitch and Peeta all have in common? They rely on London-based label **Unconditional** for structured, modern menswear. Trendsetter Cinna has been spotted leaving Katniss' house, wearing a black wool blend Unconditional pea coat and fingerless black leather gloves. Word has it that mentor Haymitch Abernathy will sport an ombre shirt from the label's collection to an upcoming Capitol party. Even our ever chic Katniss Everdeen, who often favors gently masculine silhouettes, has a few Unconditional pieces in her wardrobe.

Capitol Couture caught up with Unconditional designer, Philip Stephens, who calls his aesthetic "clean, modern, sensual and often slightly androgynous." Stephens favors natural fabrics like cotton, silk, cashmere and leather—but doesn't shy away from man-made materials like plastics or metal either. It's no shock that he is a fan of District 8, which produces textiles.



Posted 2 years ago
by Capitol Couture

via **unconditional...**

Share /

Tweet

Like 38



UNCONDITIONAL

SHOP WOMENSWEAR

SHOP MENSWEAR

SHOP HOMEWARE

ABOUT

● AUTUMN/WINTER 2015

SPRING/SUMMER 2015

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Exclusive: District 12 Beauty Look

Cover Story Capitol Collection District 12 CoverGirl Capitol Couture OhSoCapitol FutureOfFashion Featured
The Hunger Games Beauty



The precious
eyes.

Our districts
society and w
them. To cele
our districts, v
various indust
glimpse of th
take on Distric
powers the m

To capture th
district, COVE
created an ey
iridescent nat
interpretation
mining: the du
black," she sa
that enhance
eyes.

Of the bright,
inner corner o
power in coal
attire and long
very own hero

PROFILE

EFFIE TRINKET

HER TRIBUTES AREN'T THE ONLY THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO THIS SEASON.

With a keen eye towards cutting edge trends and a willingness to break boundaries, Capitol-born style icon and District 12 Escort Effie Trinket has been a fashion pioneer since her very first Hunger Games. She has been known to take the iconic building blocks of contemporary Capitol fashion such as

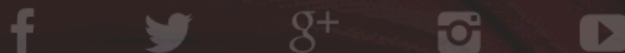
and craft stunning looks that go on to
ward citizens. Whether she is chauffeuring
boulevards of the Capitol, Effie maintains an
her spirit and the pride she takes in her

FINAL ISSUE ARCHIVE ISSUES

Commence ▶

As the warm air turns cold, we take a moment to reflect. Capitol Couture has always promised to break the rules, and this issue is no exception.

Trends come and go, so do regimes. Self-expression is forever.



Fledgling Army

The following account is from Capitol Couture contributor sent into the field to interview actual members of the rebellion to learn more about Katniss and shed light on the conflict outside the Capitol gates.

To them, she is the light in the darkness. They tell me this while we're sitting around (what can only be described as) a cauldron heating up tonight's rabbit stew. On this particular evening, I am dining with the rebels of District 2. How I arrived here is the result of four hovercrafts, seven trains, a 10-month background check and every coin in my account at First Capitol Bank. The day was tiring, spent taking inventory of every weapon, every piece of armor, every single bullet. The group is exhausted and this is my moment to ask about Katniss. For the first time in a week, one of my questions isn't met with eyerolls. They answer seriously and earnestly.



Capitol Couture

Katniss Everdeen:
The Warrior Within



Never miss a post!



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Capitol Couture

Follow



X

STAND WITH US

NOTES
.. 00016

007 / 018



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THE HUNGER GAMES
MOCKINGJAY
UNITE

DETAILS

There is no turning back. Together
we will stand. Together we will fight.



YouTube

SND
ON



CA
REGIONS

REVOLUTION
SHARE / FOLLOW
D13 ARCHIVE / LEGAL



001
▽

STAND
WITH US

DETAILS

There is no turning back.
Together we will stand.
Together we will fight.

DISTRIBUTE
LIKE / REBLOG / SHARE

DASHBOARD

0030.3^M
FOLLOW +

002

PILLARS
OF PANEM



PILLARS

OF PANEM

002
▽

ADD
YOUR
NAME

DISTRIBUTE
LIKE / REBLOG / SHARE

DETAILS

Meet the men and women who form the foundation for the new Panem.



Fran 🦊 @FranPan · Aug 23

You, @philklemmer and @LoTWritersRoom you have SEEN. The hashtags. You've seen the outcry. You, Phil, told fans openly you think their passion for DarhkAtom and Nora was amazing. So why would you make such an awful decision that's going to drive so many of us away?



1



13



51



jessTM @dragon con @plinys · Aug 22

. @LoTWritersRoom @philklemmer @ketomizu whoever's decision it was to write off @BrandonJRouth (the literal heart of this show) and @_CourtneyFord_ (whose story arc has been so important to so many women) just know this is legitimately one of the biggest mistake you've ever made



2



30



91



[Show this thread](#)

A collage of Hunger Games merchandise on a black background. It includes a yellow and black chevron box with a Mockingjay logo, a 'GIRL ON FIRE COLLECTION' makeup palette with shades like 'PRIMROSE', 'BUTTERCUP', 'TIGRIS', and 'CINNA', a white makeup palette with shades like 'MILK & HONEY', 'SUNSET', 'CAESAR', and 'MIDNIGHT', a gold chain with a Mockingjay pendant, a blue and silver necklace, a silver ring, a gold arrow, and various piles of crushed makeup in shades of pink, gold, and blue.

THE HUNGER GAMES: THE EXHIBITION

SHOP THE COLLECTION

SHOP NOW

| Skill | Fan Space | Fan Practices | Participation |
|--|--|--|--|
| Technical (embody an appreciation of how the textual effect is created. For television this includes evaluation of acting, conveyance of feeling, production values, script, camera work) | public spaces, may have ties to corporate entities (production companies, advertisers, special interest groups, academics) | Gathering of information through reading magazines, websites, | Consumptive |
| Analytic (analysis of the text from within the parameters of the text itself.) | Semi-public spaces, but with the expectation that they are fans-only spaces | Fan forum discussions, blogging. | Productive (often predicated on technical) |
| Interpretive (Interpretation of texts from without the text by comparing them to something else.) | Private, fans only spaces | Creation of fan works (fan fiction, videos, art, music), participation in RPG's. | Productive (often predicated on either technical or analytical skills, or a combination of both) |

Zubernis & Larsen. *Fandom at the Crossroads: Celebration, Shame and Fan/Producer Relationships*. Cambridge Scholars, 2012, pp. 18.

Exclusive: District 12 Beauty Look

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[The Hunger Games](#)[Capitol Collection](#)
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The precious mineral coal translates to stormy eyes.

Our districts make countless contributions to society and we in the Capitol are forever grateful to them. To celebrate the spirit and tireless efforts of our districts, we asked COVERGIRL to translate the various industries into captivating looks. Our first glimpse of the coming collection? An avant-garde take on District 12, which mines the coal that powers the many workings of Panem.

To capture the dark, foreboding work of this district, COVERGIRL Capitol Makeup Artist Dotti created an eye palette of shades reminiscent of the iridescent natural resource. "I was inspired by the interpretation of coal mining, by the colors in coal mining: the dust, the grey, the silvers and the black," she says of the collusion of strong colors that enhance our District 12 model's blue-grey eyes.

Of the bright, bold sweep of canary yellow in the inner corner of the eye, Dotti adds: "It signifies the power in coal." The model's monochromatic black attire and long, thick braid is a nod to District 12's very own heroine, Katniss Everdeen.



Posted 2 years ago
by Capitol Couture

via **covergirl**

Share /

Tweet

Like 37

Pin it 198

475

Short URL

DISTRICT 9 GRAINS

EYES

Clump Crusher Mascara
Very Black

Flamed Out Shadow Pots
Melted Gold & Melted Caramel

Flamed Out Shadow Pencil
Gold Flame

FACE

Clean Whipped
Creme Foundation
Ivory

Clean Glow Blush
Roses

Smoochies Sizzle Gloss
Date Night

Flamed Out Shadow Pencil
Crystal Flame

LIPS

LipPerfection
Sultry

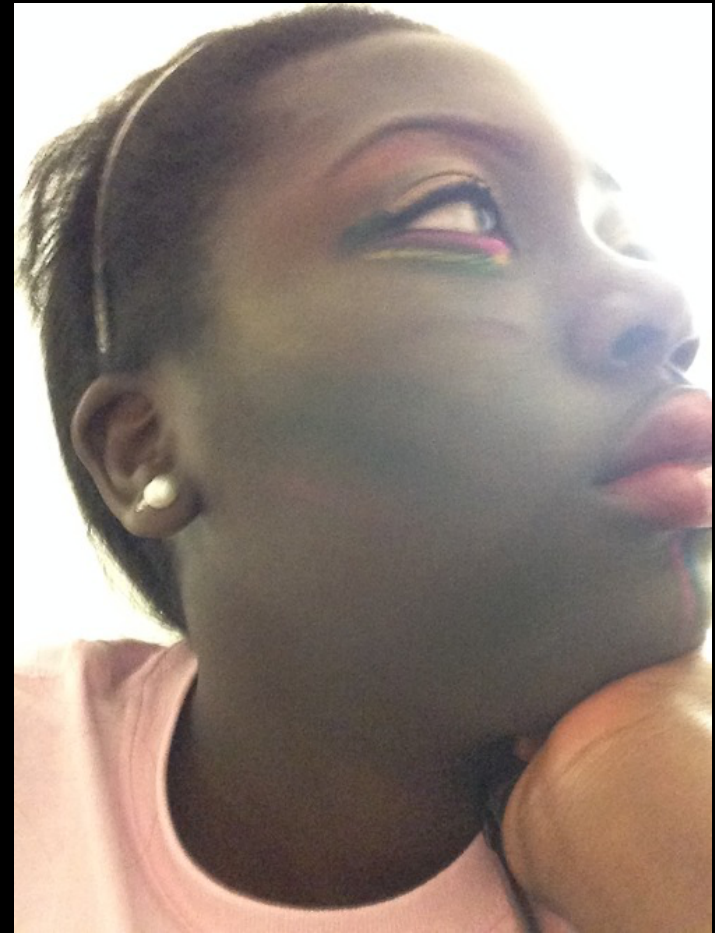
Smoochies Sizzle Gloss
Date Night & Ticked Pink

NAILS

Outlast Stay Brilliant
Nail Gloss
Always Naked



COVERGIRL



***Capitol Couture* partners with SOCA to find Panem's next best artist.**

Here at *Capitol Couture*, we value our citizens' creative pursuits above all. Expression should never be stifled. To honor those who capture the spirit of our Victors and Panem through art, we invite you to send us your best work. A panel of four esteemed judges—including our Editor in Chief—will ultimately choose six finalists and one grand winner. Every finalist will be spotlighted on *Capitol Couture*, but the masterpiece will be showcased as a permanent exhibit in the prestigious Salon of Capitol Art (SOCA) in City Center.

Please read the guidelines:

- Any and all mediums—from abstract acrylics to edible collage—are welcome, but please only send high-resolution photos for jury.
- Anything you send must be your own creation; be prepared to prove it, if need be.
- Submit, sit back and relax. We will post the first three finalists on October 30th, 2014 and the next three finalists on November 6th, 2014. Our winner will be announced and introduced in a feature that will run on November 20th 2014.
- Be ingenious, but not indecent. Sexually explicit or violent material will not be considered.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Begins 10/16/13 at 12:01 pm PT and ends on 11/02/13 at 11:59 pm PT. Open to legal residents of 50 US (& DC) & Canada (excl. Quebec), 13+. **See Official Rules** for additional eligibility restrictions, prize description/restrictions/ARV, and complete details. Void where prohibited.



THE MOCKINGJAY LIVES

We are the seekers of truth. We are believers in the Mockingjay.
Our Districts burn, but we withstand the flames.
And we will fight even after our hearts stop beating.
The Capitol will feel our fury. And so will it feel your.

TAKE DOWN THE CAPITOL

Hacking Progress

Share

100% 100%

The Power of the Fangirl: Marketing Practices & *The Hunger Games*

Jessica Bay
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@screensensebay