

## On 'Model'

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'Model' seems an appropriate theme for this, the eighth issue of *Philament*. The last few months have seen reflection on the format of the journal and a few new ideas—resulting in a division between peer-reviewed "Features" articles, and creative, reflective and experimental "Excursions" pieces. As postgraduates, we are committed both to promoting academic work by new scholars, and to exploring new forms and directions made possible by this collaborative, online publication.

Trying to conceptualize 'model' seems, almost inevitably, to problematize it—how, for example, to go about comparing Plato's theory of forms with Ben Stiller's *Zoolander*? One part of the problem is set out by Roland Barthes in *The Fashion System* (1967), in which he distinguishes the "image-clothing" represented by a photograph from the "written clothing" of its accompanying text. Both, suggests Barthes, "refer to the same reality" yet are inescapably different, as any attempt to represent a model is structured by the discourse employed. The term 'model' can suggest an ideal form or archetype, but its reference is far from fixed. It is, perhaps, significant that Barthes' discussion of 'fashion' uses the French term '*la Mode*', whereas the 'fashion model' familiar to speakers of English is rendered in French as '*mannequin*'.

The launch of a new edition of Barthes' untranslated writings on fashion (*The Language of Fashion*; University of Sydney: Power Publications, 2006) is timely, indicating an ongoing interest in both analytical structures and cultural praxis. By publishing work in a range of forms and disciplines, *Philament* also hopes to provide a forum to reflect on, and challenge, the variety of discourses in which we work.