

Twiggy (1949-) Encyclopedia Article

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Twiggy (1949—)

Arguably the very first "supermodel," England's Twiggy became an international star in the mid-1960s, bringing the world an idealized image of a youthful "Swinging London" and, for better or worse, heavily influencing popular conceptions of femininity. On the one hand, the ninety-one-pound, saucer-eyed Twiggy (born Lesley Hornby) was a positive celebration of androgyny and a radical break from the 1950s' insistence that female sex symbols possess curvaceous figures. Conversely, some critics have argued that Twiggy's slight physique helped push standards of thinness too far, leading many young women toward personal dissatisfaction with their bodies and, in some cases, anorexia. After saturating the pages of fashion magazines at the end of the 1960s and appearing in a handful of films in the early 1970s, notably Ken Russell's *The Boyfriend*, Twiggy adopted the last name Lawson and largely remained out of the limelight. However, Twiggy's influence upon the fashion industry never truly waned, as svelte boyishness recurred as a theme in female models for decades.

Further Reading:

DeLiberio, Linda Benn. "This Year's Girl: A Personal/Critical History of Twiggy." *On Fashion*, edited by Shari Benstock and Suzanne Ferriss. New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1994, pp. 41-58.

Twiggy

Twiggy. *Twiggy: How I Probably Just Came Along on a White Rabbit at the Right Time, and Met the Smile on the Face of the Tiger*. New York, Hawthorne Books, 1968.