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Jennifer Lawrence's New Vogue Cover: a John Currin Painting

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John Currin's portrait of Jennifer Lawrence for the cover of Vogue's September issue.

No airbrushing controversy here. Jennifer Lawrence is fully brushed in a new painting by the artist John Currin. The portrait is one of four different cover images commissioned by Vogue for its September issue, marking the magazine's 125th anniversary.

Despite Mr. Currin's reputation for eroticism, his portrait of Ms. Lawrence is demure. She appears wearing a simple tan chemise and a Miu Miu patterned fur hat, holding a purple and green purse. "To be in a situation of producing a cover for this famous magazine, I'm a little scared," Mr. Currin said in an interview. "I do worry about decorum."

The other three covers will feature photographs of Ms. Lawrence, by Annie Leibovitz, Bruce Weber and the duo Inez and Vinoodh. This is the actress's third appearance on Vogue's cover. (She has also been on the cover of the British edition.)

The painting puts Mr. Currin's many influences on full display. Ms. Lawrence is depicted in a Mannerist pose, unnatural but elegant. Perspective is minimized and a rococo palette competes with a hint of Dutch old master sobriety. The hat provides the element of the absurd that Mr. Currin is known for. And all of this is filtered through a pictorial style that evokes classic magazine illustrations from the 1930s and 1940s.

"One of the reasons I thought John would be good for the cover was that fashion was a huge influence on his work early on," said Dodie Kazanjian, a contributing editor at Vogue who often writes about art.

Mr. Currin deviated from his normal method for the portrait of Ms. Lawrence. He doesn't usually worry about likenesses, he said, unless he is painting his wife or children. But for the portrait of Ms. Lawrence, he had to be faithful to a very well known face. "It has to look like her," he said.

While this is the first painted September cover, Vogue has a long history of commissioning artwork from contemporary artists.

Salvador Dalí contributed four covers showcasing his trademark style from the 1930s to the 1970s. Giorgio de Chirico created a slyly subversive cover for the November 1935 issue that endowed a traditional fashion still life with a hint of Surrealist menace. Andy Warhol, a natural choice for a fashion magazine, created an image of Caroline of Monaco for the December 1983 issue of the French edition.

Mr. Currin said that the idea of "reciprocity" informed his decision to paint for Vogue. Early in his career he painted well known figures, including the actress Bea Arthur, and borrowed from fashion magazines to challenge himself. "It was a way to make conventional oil paintings that didn't quite work in the right way," he said. Painting a somewhat traditional portrait for a major fashion magazine was his way of approaching the same problem from the opposite direction.

"I was interested mostly in seeing my work in a completely different way," Mr. Currin said. "I liked the idea of seeing it with the Vogue logo and other words and things over it."