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Status, Wealth, Sex Appeal

Since the dawn of the Bauhaus school of design, practical, highly functional, clean, unadorned, minimalistic designs for everything from chairs to clothes have been ever so popular. Some people are absolutely fanatical about this type of design. And others, like myself, love something far more stylized and maximalist.

This train of thought brings me to one of my favorite accessories designers of all time, Christian Louboutin. He is known for his high heel designs, that are all adorned with red paint on the soles. His designs are opulent, fanciful, and meant to make a statement. And those red soles certainly communicate something.

In fact, Christian Louboutin red soled high heels are a prime example of semiotics, and an even better example of semiotics in the beating heart of reality, not just in theory. These heels are a status symbol, and they communicate that their wearer is someone of high class, and influential status. Even further, they communicate that their wearer is not to be messed with. These high heels are so synonymous with status, wealth, and sex appeal, that since the rise of their popularity with the elite, they have been worn by many a heroine in films and television. The semiotics of Christian Louboutin high heels are so powerful and well defined, that for many costume designers and stylists, they are the first shoes thought of to communicate status, wealth, and sex appeal via accessories.

The effect of Christian Louboutin high heels are almost diametrically opposed to the effect of the minimal, highly functional and practical designs of the Bauhaus and its notable figures. One of the most glaring, obvious examples in my mind of this opposite approach is Kenya Hara's advertisement designs for Muji. Kenya said of his ad designs, "Communication becomes effective only when an advertisement is offered as an empty vessel and viewers freely deposit into it their ideas and wishes." This effect, of the viewer perceiving Kenya Hara's ad designs as a sort of blank slate for them to project their own connotations and meanings onto, is so far removed from the effect of Christian Louboutin red soled high heels, which for the viewer represent status, wealth, and sex appeal, and nothing else.

Another notable figure I think of who would probably scoff and sneer at Christian Louboutin's high heel designs is Rodchenko. There is one design by Rodchenko that I think really represents his focus on highly practical, functional, almost sober design, and that is his Production Clothing. It was a sort of jumpsuit designed to be worn during work activities, and it was meant to be used for everyday life in a very humble way. Christian Louboutin high heels are on the other end of the spectrum. They are meant to be worn at special occasions in particular, and their red soles are meant to communicate status and wealth. I have no doubt Rodchenko would think Christian Louboutin's high heel designs to be absolutely frivolous and borderline vulgar. However, some of us live for frivolity and a dash of vulgarity, myself included.

When it comes to the different styles of design, from Bauhaus inspired minimalism to Christian Louboutin type maximalism, everyone has one they lean toward. And to me, this is the magic of art and design - subjectivity. It's not like mathematics, where there is only really ever one answer to any equation. Although when it comes to Christian Louboutin red soled high heels, there tends to be only one reaction from the viewer - wow. Now that's what I call phenomenal design.

WORKS CITED

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