

BUF 4900: Internship Midterm Essay Exam

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Significance of Hip Hop dress from its Roots to the Runway

Hip hop is expressed through countless mediums of self expression, with dress being a driving force. To grasp the significance of hip hop dress seeping into the runway, it is essential to comprehend how hip hop artists perceive dress and why they chose this outlet of self-expression. Director of documentary *Fresh Dressed* (2015) Sacha Jenkins explains dress is important to the people of hip hop because it allows them to control their narrative and truth within society. “Because when you don’t have much ownership over where you can land in society, your financial situation, your educational situation, the one thing you can control is the way you look” (Berlinger, 2018). Hip Hop fashion is able to translate well on the runway because self expression and the control of one's own narrative meshes the two. Wales Bonner, a luxury fashion designer of Jamaican descent explains after her runway show in 2022 that her goal was to share the perspective of Afro-Atlantic cultural perspective (Hine, 2022). Although hip hop is mostly known for the musical aspect, it is the perspective and narrative people of color express through clothing that holds great importance.

Significance of Color of the Style Garment



Figure 1.

“Misa Hylton x Diesel custom Denim ensemble worn by Flo Milli, 2020.” The Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) New York, NY United States. <https://www.fitnyc.edu/museum/exhibitions/hip-hop-style/index.php>

The subtle and calm tones of the blue denim clash with the commanding and fierce silhouette of the ensemble which captures the nature of women (Figure 1.). The color of any garment is important as it translates the mood of the person at the moment. In this case, one can say that the person wearing this ensemble is subtle at heart but has a disruptive presence. The tones add to this as they range from faded soft tones to strong rich blue tones. The value of the blue denim falls into the lighter spectrum as the garment is light and vibrant in color.

Elements of Design

The garment design offers a royal aesthetic and its elements work in synergy to project that. The vertical rectangle panels of denim featured on the skirt gives illusion to the length of the ensemble. This is further explained in the article *Illusions of Steepness and Height*. “It’s a common optical illusion: when you see a horizontal line and a vertical line of equal length, the vertical line always seems longer” (Kleiner, 2008) . These vertical panels alongside each other create a contrast that is easy on the eye and invites the imagery of an ocean wave. Line details compliment the rhythm of the garment as the silhouette showcases a wave-like structure. Being that the top portion of the garment consists solely of denim patches shaped as stars, it gives the rest of the piece an opportunity to dominate. Asymmetrical elements can be seen on the upper portion of the denim dress which dismantles the idea that dresses should have perfect proportions. Form is greatly implemented as the denim star patches expose the person's upper body figure and the denim skirt exaggerates the waist area. Repetition seems to be the core facet of this piece as denim is used for the entire and the patterns remain consistent. The denim appears to have a smooth texture with minimal distressing.

Conclusion

Hip hop style influences life through the seamless avenues of self expression one can use to communicate their identity to others. Hip hop culture has curated music styles, fashion, technology, art,

entertainment, language, education, politics, media, and more (PQ, 2022.). From when hip hop was first introduced up to now, the change can be seen through things people interact with on a daily basis. It is important to note a majority of hip hop artists growing up did not have access to a lot of these things which is why they should be celebrated for their contribution to the advancement of the human condition.

References

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