

Ileana Rivera
BUF 3310
Prof. Appelstein
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Paul Poiret Introduces Pajamas As Leisurewear In 1922

Evening pajamas first made their way in the early 20th century, they were seen as scandalous and people didn't like them at first because it was a unique and different look than the style that was previously popular. The style of the S curve silhouette, corsets, and tight-fitting clothing. This style that showed off women's silhouette was seen as sexy, when the pajamas, also known as "evening wear" was introduced as the new style, it was then seen as scandalous and rebellious (Zarella, 2020). Evening wear was considered casual wear for women and they consist of trousers, wide-legged pants, dresses, and robes that were usually fabricated from silk or satin materials that were soft and comfortable to wear. Eventually, they were classified under the leisurewear category in dress. It wasn't acceptable for a woman to wear casual clothing if it wasn't inside the house, or except for practicing sports but fashion designer Paul Poiret made it fashionable. He didn't follow the trending fashion rules or "normalized fashion" which made him be known as the rebellious designer of the time. In 1922 Paul Poiret showcased leisurewear as the original common attire for women, the reason behind him introducing leisurewear was because he wanted women and the fashion industry to be seen as a multiplicity of possibilities.

The development of a more realistic, convenient, modern female wardrobe started to become a major trend in the 1920s and was expressed by a simplification style of dress. Comfortability and lighter-weight wardrobes were in effect and paved its way to the tubular "*la garçonne*" look that dominated much of the decade, also known as the flapper that most people

are familiar with (Reddy, 2018). This style of dress had creeping hemlines and a dropped waist, which is in fact, no form of shape sculpting around the mid-waist area. Designer Coco Chanel helped popularized this style but Paul Poiret incorporated his own artistry and stayed with his own style. Designer Coco Chanel and Paul Poiret were sort of in competition with each other during the time, an insider mentioned the words they exchanged at an event and Paul asked Chanel who she was mourning, and she replied coolly, “You, Monsieur.”

First, who was Paul Poiret ? and what was his goal as a fashion designer? , well Paul was born in 1876 in Paris and became a french influential fashion designer during the early twentieth century. Paul was known to make free-flowing clothing that added a new standard of artistic value. He processed his designs through draping and introduced clothing that hunged from the shoulders and liberated women from the tight-waisted hoop skirts from the 19th century (Lesso, 2019). The shapeshifter designer introduced leisurewear styles like his evening dresses from 1922- 1923. This design was a loose two-piece gown that was two separate, but identical squares of cloth, one worn like a short poncho and the other wrapped into a cylindrical skirt that created a peplos effect (which is a simple sleeveless outer garment that was a gracefully draped tunic top) made with silk. His other 1922 design was called *Irudree* which reflected his modernism artistic style that showcased a boyish silhouette, this gown is particularly noteworthy for its reductive simplicity. This garment is constructive with two pieces of fabric sewn with selvage, which is a tightly woven edge piece of fabric to keep the garment from unraveling that’s connected to the waist of the bodice (a sleeveless, close-fitting waist-length garment, typically lacing up in the front, worn over a dress or blouse or as underwear) ." Irudrée," is a nod to the hip roll, incorporated in the Renaissance times which stands as an icon of modernist design made with silk and metallic. This type of dress was also dedicated and design for women with his

wife's body type. The ideal body type was described as Cardboard women, with hollow silhouettes, angular shoulders, and flat breasts. Paul's other 1928 evening dress looked more like pajamas, whereas it was a pink silk sleeveless lightweight embroidery-styled nightgown women were wearing in the 1920s. Paul's leisurewear also incorporated jackets, as well that reflected the transition women made from the corseted silhouette of the Victorian age, into the natural and sleek un-corseted form of the modern era. This tubular shape jacket had cotton flower threaded embroidery with woven fabric showcasing a folkloric theme that represents generosity, compassion, and excessive pride (Koda, 2008). Ornate decorations, embroidery, sequences, and beadwork were seen in the evening dresses throughout this time in 1920's-1929 and the dresses barely reached the gown. Paul Poiret incorporated these embroidery techniques into some of his designs as well.

Tennis was the most popular sport and fashion inspiration for women in the early 1920s. Women were only wearing sporty casual styles of dress while playing sports. During this time people believed only sports activities were the appropriate time to wear this style but once designers like Paul introduced it as everyday wear, it was becoming more popular into the late 1920s on the courts. For example, popular tennis star Suzanne Lenglen wore more detailed accessories with pleated loose dresses, like cardigans, flats, and headbands as a fashionable style in 1926.

Even though Paul Poiret's designs were classified as lounging and leisurewear he still made them look expensive and stylish for women to wear them outside, not just in the bedroom. In the 1920s upcoming famous designers like Coco Chanel was starting to outshine Paul in the realms of Haute couture, when Chanel was the highlight of fashion she incorporated the sporty, minimal, and utilitarian. Other upcoming designers were influenced by her aesthetics which

made designers follow that particular style of dress, oppose to Paul, Paul didn't follow the others and refused to change his house style. This all makes sense as to why Paul was designing what he was designing, his inspirations weren't the creation and trending of new styles but more in an artistic approach where he believed his pieces were theatrical, he wanted them to be restored as an important and creative force in fashion. Eventually, Paul Poiret closed his fashion house business down in 1929 and decided to focus on the production of art and painting until his passing in 1944.



Evening dress



Irudree dress



evening dress



1926 Tennis players



1924 Jacket

Reference Page

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