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The FIT Museum: Food and Fashion



Figure 1 Jeremy Scott for Moschino, Fall 2014

Cuisine and dress serve as important ways to communicate in our everyday lives. They provide society's most fundamental requirements while also providing an invaluable glimpse to the cultures we share. Fashion can be used as a form of expression or a voice for one, a novel idea that is making waves in the world of fashion as well as having a significant effect on the sector is culinary design. Food has been intertwined with the apparel industry being objects that are utilized to produce fibers that may eventually transform into textiles referred to materials as being eco-friendly fibers since they are recyclable and reusable. Fashion designers can be held to the same standard as culinary chefs by having the same creative process using their interpretation skills on constructing a garment or baking a cake from scratch.

Jeremy Scott is a designer known for his brilliant unique designs along with his play on the usage of colors and outrageous shapes. During Fall 2014 Scott produced a Ready-to-Wear collection for Moschino (Figure 1) which featured various garments with connections to fast food chain restaurants such as McDonalds. This particular garment possessed a rich medium *brown hue* (Bell, 2022) as the base, since this garment isn't a *primary color*, one must mix the two *primary hues* red, blue and the *secondary color* green to achieve this perfect brown, in the garment there is a small *tint* of white resulting a tan *hue*. In design there are three (3) categories of color families made from the color theory *warm, cool, neutral* (Bell, 2022), the *hue* brown belongs to the *neutral* color family followed by gray, black which is in between the categories cool and warm. The *color psychology* refers to the way people typically have strong opinions about certain items or circumstances that are associated with a certain hue, which influences a preference for that particular hue. Colors create a mood through contrast or the expansion (Bell, 2022), colors tend to have association to feeling or emotions as well as items such as red being stimulation, powerful or demanding while green is connected to items like vegetables, nature

specifically trees along with grass and growth. The *hue* brown can become slightly disgusting to one, but this color can be characterized as a shade that evokes coziness and compassion, while a brown with a *tint* of white symbolize the soil, whereas dark browns signify the outdoors.

According to Bell *texture* is referred as the surface treatment or feel (Bell, 2022), this sector includes the physical touch as known as how the garment feels when against the skin along with the visual based on how light hits the item. This gown was constructed with two fabrics providing a smooth appearance. On the skin both fabrics are *smooth* creating a *wax* like feeling, *Nylon* is a fabric considered to be artificial composed of purified cellulose from plant sources (Britannica Inc, 2023) developed in the 18th century as a replacement for the combining fabric for this garment silk. *Silk* is made from the cocoons of silkworms. This fiber has a connection to the Han Dynasty becoming an export in China resulting in silk weaving becoming a major industry (Britannica Inn, 2023). Similar to *color psychology* when discussing *texture*, one must bring up associated opinions connected to feel of fabrics, with the garment being constructed out of *Nylon* with *Silk* as stated above the fabric will be absolutely smooth to the skin similar to the *waved* fabric *Satin* which is associated with femininity (Bell, 2022) both fabrics result in being the perfect combination for a garment allowing the individual wearing feel unbothered, optimistic and confident.

Composition is the organization of grouping of parts or elements to achieve a unified whole (Bell, 2022). Composition is important in design being the reason for the arrangements of principles including balance, contrast, repetition, rhythm. Balance is the focus on the appearance of the garment being visually equal on both sides improving the view from one's perspective. Balance is divided into two parts requiring one to pay close attention to the garment to determine if it is *symmetrical/formal* balanced or *asymmetrical/informal* balanced. *Symmetrical* balance

refers to the garment being identical on both sides of the design, for example pockets being placed in the same spot on both sides of the garment. *Asymmetrical* is the sides being equal weight but not exact replicas (Bell, 2022). One will be able to see when viewing the garment that it *asymmetrical*, due to the warping effect of the fabric along with the construction causes the ruffles near the neckline to be slanted leaning upward on one side versus downward on the next side. The usage of *informal* balance allows the garment to be more unique rather than a traditional gown one may wear.

Line is considered being a direction while a major part of composition (Bell, 2022). *Line* can be used when describing the construction of the garment with details referring to the *seams, trim or pleat* allowing one to place themselves in the shoes of a tailor. In this Moschino gown Jeremy Scott used four styles of lines *vertical, horizontal, and diagonal*, beginning with *diagonal* one would be able to see how the designer utilized this style of line to elongate the neckline to the bust area creating the ruffle effect. *Diagonal lines* are deemed forceful strong and dynamic (Bell, 2022). *Vertical lines* are used to promote strength, height (Bell, 2022). In this garment the designer used *vertical* lines within the stitching to elongate the gown creating height to put emphasis on the print. Visual lines are not present on the gown but more so in the construction.

Rhythm is a part of the composition where there is movement from element to element (Bell, 2023). *Rhythm* is the attractive placement of architectural components allows the viewer's gaze to roam freely across the clothing controlling the progression of glances. *Rhythm* involves the arrangement of *shapes, color, texture, and pattern*. Rhythm connects to the use of materials usually suspending off the garment such as chains, on this garment there is not much rhythm however one can discuss the lower half of the gown which can create movement when wearing.

Dominance is the sign which is most conspicuously shown or referred to as something all other signs lead to. Dominance can often be the mannequin, element is encouraged to possess dominance (Bell, 2022). The dominance on this garment would have to be the ruffles along the front displaying the warp effect from the fabric showing the illusion the dress is being twisted or crunch up similar to candy bar wrapper. Dominance can be broken into parts starting with the basic level showing emphasis on a lightweight visual level followed by *sub-dominance* which provides secondary emphasis being a focal point. *Subordinate* is the last category containing the less visual weight more likely reverted in the background.

Proportion refers to the relationship size, scale (Bell, 2022), focusing on the relationship with two elements. *Proportion* details the comparison between size along with color. The gown shows *proportion* with sizing, the bust line being slanted giving off the illusion of wideness but towards the waistline the designer kept the original look of an hourglass gown by sinching in the waist stirring away from the tradition gown where the hip area is usually hidden. In result of snitching in the waistline brings more attention to the smooth flaring creating towards the skirt section beginning at the thighs. There is not many proportions going on with this garment but little detail such as the color choice steal the attention of whoever sees it.

Throughout time food went side by side to fashion from unique designs or patterns displaying food images, colors that resemble beverages such as burgundy connecting to wine (Figure 2). Food has been an essential part of the fashion industry from fruits as well as vegetables being infused into fabrics such as wine leather created from grapes seeds and grape skin. The food industry provides the fashion industry various ways on how to become more sustainable from fibers mentioned above to offering natural spices to replace harmful dyes used

on garments. While the connection between the two can be considered by one as positive there can be negative views stemming from harmful effect the food industry has had on the environment along with animal welfare consumption behavior issues can be connected to the behaviors associated with fashion, In recognizing that the food industry has widened access for consumers concerned with fair transactions between the producer and retailer, environmental degradation and animal welfare through mainstream availability of Fairtrade, organic and free-range food, the research seeks to explore how consumers translate this into their fashion consumption behaviors.(Ritch, 2014)

Fashion and food should be celebrated to display two of the most demanding industries are able to co-exist as well as collaborate. Fashion has always been used as a gateway to share expression or concerning for various topics, both food and fashion are used to represent one's history. Food is one of the most effective ways to share cultural experiences or family history. Franco Moschino constructed a vest to be used as a metaphor for his love of Italy featuring splatter of tomato sauce used for spaghetti which is a typical Italian dish followed by "Sorry I'm Italian" to display an unapologetic message embracing his family's origin (Figure 3). In past years, women were restricted to only performing domestic duties, so during dinner they would utilize that time to put on their best outfit to eat allowing her to feel her best boosting her confidence, which connects to the emerge of social media platforms such as Instagram where users post themselves in their best outfits while attending dinners or casually just going for a bite to eat, as stated in the introduction designers can be considered chefs due to sharing the same creative process. Designers tapping in the food industry creating culinary products can seem like a perfect marketing strategy tap into another realm but designers pay close attention to their idea customer profiles understanding the natural behaviors they customers have especially when it

comes to wanting to look their best when attending dinners parties or a night on the town “While at times, these collaborations can seem like random marketing ploys, they succeed when stakeholders align their brand identities and values — and speak directly to their customers” (CNN, 2023). The Food and Fashion exhibit curated by the Fashion Institute of Technology displayed an excellent thought-out interesting way of displaying the history between the two as well as the significance of how both is need in various cultures. (Figure 4)



Figure 2 Katie Brierley for Isoude Spring 2009



Figure 3 Franco Moschino for Moschino 1992



Figure 4 Malik Lee at the museum at FIT

Reference:

- Arnold, A. (2022, September 28). *Food fashion will always be in style - history of food ... - delish*. Delish2. <https://www.delish.com/food/a40706278/food-and-fashion/>
- Bell, J. A. (2022). *Silent Selling: Best Practices and Effective Strategies in Visual Merchandising*. United States: Fairchild Books.
- Figure 1. (2023, October 26) Jeremy Scott Chocolate Bar Dress 2014. *Museum at FIT: Food And Fashion*.
- Figure 2. (2023, October 26) Katie Brierley Organic Silk “wine stained” Dress 2009. *Museum at FIT: Food and Fashion*
- Figure 3. (2023, October 26) Student Malik Lee. *Museum at FIT: Food and Fashion*
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