

OPULENCE FASHION THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES

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There is no uncertainty that the fashion industry has reformed society over centuries and has a way of defining individuals. It's a measure of cultural progress influenced by war, politics, and social movements. It enabled people to express themselves while others adapted fashion as a form of rebellion. Today the fashion industry has evolved tremendously and became influential. This paper discusses opulence during the Rococo period to what makes designers luxury today. How this multi-billion-dollar industry enriches lives economically, psychologically, and creatively.

Opulence during Rococo

During the 18th century, Rococo was a prominent era in European art. Rococo was the era when the French aristocracy started to dominate over wealth and finery. It was the reflection of wealth, exquisite fabrics, luxurious embroideries / trimmings, and power of courts. France was divided between the lavishly dressed ruling class and the impoverished peasantry. This makes Rococo the last aristocratic style of France. Paris was considered the trending city, providing Europe with incredible source of luxury goods. The desire for differentiation and expressing dazzling wealth was unstoppable in this era.

According to the 18th century, if having the best garments made from the best materials didn't feel sufficient, then attaining most of them from every new season was very much ideal. Rococo designs were known to be richly ornate with intricate patterns and the finest of materials. The Rococo mentality tremendously influenced the fashion sense of aristocratic women.

Comparing back to the previous style baroque, rococo was prominent for its quality resources. Pastel colors were very popular, designs included whimsical and asymmetrical, which is much less dramatic. The significant elements of rococo attire were the robe, the petticoat, and the stomacher (Muscato). Dresses did apply corsets, bodices, and hoop skirts to emphasize an aristocratic approach and appealing quality to the wearer. Starting from fur trimmings, lined robes and flowery organic details were sewn into everything. Formal court dress was heavily seen in Versailles and the French court which described as the robe à la française (Brean, 2018). Rococo was marked as the period of wealth, places, and opulence which often classify as the final expression of the Baroque movement.

Maximalist fashions of Christian Lacroix

Fashion is a world of extremes and there's no such thing as too much. Maximalism fashion depicts extremes on design continuum, extravagance, artifice, and non-functional style. During the period of Rococo fashion, it projected an ethos of having "more is best" (Page 1). In the 1980s, among the many influential maximalism designers, Christian Lacroix was very prominent. During the time when fashion was shifting towards simplicity, Lacroix chose exuberance. He was known as the brilliant colorists and was not afraid of mixing multiple shades, including those that were known to be clashing in the West. When black was considered the standard color, he went for blood red, fuchsia pink and yellow. The maximalist designer exposed the incredible beauty of brilliant pinks, oranges, turquoise blues, and forest greens all in the same form. Riot patterns such as paisley, florals or abstract were also popular. Maximalism

fashion was influenced by the Indian textile traditions, similarly like Schiaparelli and her inspirations by the Indian pink.

The French designer Christian Lacroix is a true maximalist when it comes to his aesthetic. His work consists of exquisite layers of ruffles, prints, trim, and bursts eye-pleasing color into truly fabulous looks. His couture designs portrayed fashion as fairy tales and folklore. His use of luxury fabrics such as velvets, silks, and leathers, epitomized the 1980s frivolity. The designs incorporated silhouettes with extreme mismatching of materials, ornaments, and color adorning looks with luxurious baroque touches. However, these things were exclusive to produce, and making it impractical to wear which led to the fall out of fashion (Larsen,2017).

By the late 1990s, fantasy fashion was starting to find its growth again, and Lacroix once again gained back his popularity. He began to emphasis on wedding dresses, gowns as well as continued to design for the stage and screen. He slowly incorporated jeans, children's wear, lingerie, menswear couture, ready-to-wear, and yet the house never gained profit. "There was no darkness or sobriety in Lacroix's world, as fizzy and effervescent as champagne. It was an exercise in extreme fantasy and make-believe" (Fury ,2017). Lacroix's style was ludique and innocent. It was fantasy with an approach of feeling the highest emotions without any darkness. Something far beyond reality and it was not something to be sold.

Luxury

In the 1980s, style was heavily influenced by music, and during this time, punk rock, rap, and heavy metal music became prevalent. Women's hair and jewelry were significant as well as

makeup worn with bright colors. People influenced by the punk rock world wore a lot of black clothing with heavy eyeliner (Staff, 2017). Today, fashion has evolved, and people dress based on many different influences. Luxury today is defined by authenticity. Consumers demand authentic brands, communications, and genuine relationships. According to a study conducted by Stackla, eighty percent of consumers have stated, “brand authenticity is important when deciding which brands to support.”

In the current economy, when a luxury brand is available everywhere, its luxury value and authenticity as pure luxury becomes fragile. It is quite common to spot an LV bag lurking everywhere. However, luxury brands like Hermes stand in complete opposition. It's improbable to spot these luxuries in public due to its high-profile economic status. Hermès' does the opposite of every other brand. Its style is distinctive and immediately recognizable in the celebrity-obsessed culture. While celebrities may splurge on these luxury beauties, the question is who else can afford it? They own the brand; however, they're not owned by the brand.

Hermes, as well as Tom Ford, are among inconspicuous consumption. The purpose of conspicuous consumption is displaying social status. The Elites are always seeking quality fashion statements that are not heavily promoted or mainstream. Therefore Hermes and Tom Ford reject celebrity endorsements as a marketing strategy, while many other luxury brands like Louis Vuitton fully embraces it (Danziger, 2018). An authentic luxury brand can't be heavily promoted or designed to appeal to everybody. Part of the magic of luxury occurs being elusive, rare, and hard to get. Hermès strictly limits production and requires a waiting list for consumers to buy a birkin. A classic bag that often involves a wait of two or more years. “To be an authentic

luxury brand, the designation must be earned, not just a title claimed ” (Danziger, 2018). Trendy is the last stage before tacky.

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