

Designer Term Project: Vivienne Westwood

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Introduction to the Fashion Industry

Abstract

Vivienne Westwood is one of the most iconic fashion designer of all time. She was one who was ahead of her time and was extremely bold and care free when it came to designing. I believe she's changed the way many see fashion. Westwood is well known for making punk a fashion piece and doing the unthinkable when it came to her clothing. She's an incredibly talented person and is still designing amazing clothing pieces today.

Designer Analysis of Vivienne Westwood

Fashion has been around for many years. New inventions are always coming along and new designers are showing their skills in the fashion world. They change the way fashion is seen today. One of those many designers is Vivienne Westwood. She's made punk which is what we know as music a part of fashion and gave it a look.

Vivienne Westwood is a British fashion designer. Her full name is Vivienne Isabel Swire. She was born in Glossop, Derbyshire, England on April 8th, 1941. She is 77 years old now. She is known for introducing "underwear as outerwear", reviving the corset, provocative clothing and her punk looks (Met Museum, 2018). When she was 17 years old, Westwood went to Glossop Grammar School and graduated in 1958 (Sunsigns, 2018). Her family had moved to London and she attended the Harrow School of Art at Westminster University. She studied fashion and silversmithing and eventually ended up dropping out. After leaving college, she worked in a pea-canning factory and also sold costume jewelry crosses at the Portobello Market and worked for Kodak chopping up prints (Heroes, 2016). Later on, she enrolled in a teacher training school and began her job as a primary school teacher. She got married to Derek Westwood in 1962 and three years later, they got divorced. In 1965, she met and moved in with Malcolm McLaren. (Britannica, 2016). They pursued a career together and had a son in 1967. In 1971, Westwood opened a boutique with McLaren in London's King Road (Scott, 2015). It had many different names. The first name was "Let it Rock", then it became "Too Fast to Live" (1972), then "Too Young to Die" (1973), then "SEX" (1974), next "Secondaries" (1976) and lastly, "Worlds End" in 1980. The reason why they changed the name so much was to enhance the current collections ideas. (Arnold, 2005, p.428)

Vivienne Westwood was not cheap. She constructed her clothing in good care, if it were to break or unravel, that's because it was meant to do that. In 1993, she had a collection divided into two parts. The red label and the gold label (Kellogg, p.317). The red label was the more inexpensive part of the collection and the gold label was the part that consisted of a small selection of high fashion items. She had always designed clothing for men but in 1990, she introduced her first full menswear collection. (Kellogg, p.317). In 1997, she had a line called the *Anglomania* which was a less expensive collection aimed at a younger market. (Arnold, p.429). This collection included pirate shirts from her earlier collections and her perfumes, *Boudoir* which launched in 1998 and *Libertine* which launched in 2000.

When Vivienne Westwood started designing, her products were very different and unusual to the eye, which is why so many people found her interesting. Her designs were very out there which made her seem questionable. They featured many items that would make people uncomfortable like naked breasts, swastikas and genitalia. (Smee, 2004). Although, she had many clothing that looked somewhat revealing, she was more focused on shaping the silhouette. "Her clothes really do clothe the body, rather than revealing it, and they're characterized by fabric that is draped, layered and gathered- but most of all, cut in ways that create a kind of dramatic, asymmetrical torque." Sebastian Smee tells us that her clothing was more about shape than showing skin. She used traditional english fibers like wool. Her first line was made from rubber negligees that she had purchased from a pornographic catalogue (Kellogg, p.317). Her looks consisted of leather bondage garments, t-shirts with situational slogans, pornographic images and safety pinned clothing. (Kellogg, p.315). She is known for having collections feature underwear as outerwear, bustiers, corsets, short hooped skirts, mink g-strings, satin cod pieces

and bustles which were made to go with short skirts and the “mini-crinini” which was her version of the crinoline. (Kellogg, p.317) They would flatten out the bottom and bulge out in the front. (Smee, 2004). In her collections like *Vive La CoCotte* (1995) and *Anglophilia*, she showed her past looks which considered punk slits, a rakish oversized look, heavy english fabrics, diminished abdomens and elongated legs. She included quirky pattern work in her clothing. Westwood found inspiration in many different painters. She was always inspired by art even when she was not a designer. In the 1990s, her looks became more romantic, complex and “tasteful” because when she split with McLaren, she wanted to start designing more high end clothing. (Swee, 2004).

Westwood had many collections that got manufactured in different places. The Gold Label was produced in England and presented in Paris. The Red Label was manufactured in Italy and presented in London (Ediotore, 2018). Her other collection *Anglomania* was distributed by the italian company G.T.R. Her goods became extremely popular so she started opening single-label boutiques in many places like Tokyo to London. In 2003, the brand was going to have openings in Asia and in the French capital. In 2006, the brand expanded to the Soviet market through the openings of cities like Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kiev and Baku. (Ediotore, 2018).

Vivienne Westwood remains one of the most iconic fashion designers out there. Ever since she first started designing in 1971 she's always been extremely bold and was seen as a controversial designer. She was also never afraid of changing up her style. She did her designs based on who she felt inspired by at the moment. If she did not want to focus on punk and edgy styles, she simply stopped and did a completely different look. She would switch from designing

punk t-shirts with nasty or obscene images to 18th century ball gowns (Swee, 2004). Westwoods clothes are all about “emotional life”, meaning that she doesn't care who wears her clothing; she cares about how they wear it and how they feel in it.



Vivienne Westwood Pirate Collection



Vivienne Westwood Witches Collection



Boob Shirt 1996

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