

Food & Fashion: Impact on the World of Fashion

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The fusion of food and the fashion industry has emerged as a substantial influence, spanning the course of history and contemporary culture. The exhibition "Food & Fashion" at the Museum at FIT, is a primary example of the impact food has on the fashion industry. The importance of including culinary elements in fashion exhibitions lies in showcasing the historical and cultural significance of the role food plays in shaping society and fashion. Food is a way of connecting culture and fashion, as well as themes such as gender, consumerism, body image, and sustainability (Museum at FIT, 2023). Food has played a huge role in the fashion industry, serving as a reflection of self-expression, and personal style through social media (Museum at FIT, 2023) This essay will discuss the significance of color, texture, line, rhythm, form, balance, contrast/ juxtaposition, dominance, proportion, and repetition used in the context of food's impact on fashion, with a focus on how food and fashion are tools to celebrate who people are and where people come from.

Color holds significance in both food and fashion due to its ability to persuade shoppers, convey emotions, strategically used in displays, and personal preferences. At the "Food & Fashion" exhibition at the Museum at FIT, the garment "Angelic Pretty", utilizes the characteristic of lolita Japanese fashion. Lolita's culture is supposed to expose youthfulness and individuality (Museum at FIT, 2023.) The choice of colors communicates the mood and personality of the dress. For instance, the *vibrant* colors used on the prints of candy, confections, and fruits using *pastels* such as violet/purple, white, light pink, and light blue, exude energy, positivity, and playfulness (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) This strategic use of bright, vivid *hues* in "Angelic Pretty" creates an emotional connection with the wearer, but also captures the attention of others, making it a vibrant and visually appealing style that challenges fashion norms. The *adjacent* color scheme of violet/purple symbolizes happiness, while white conveys purity and innocence. Light pink suggests delicacy and femininity, and light blue creates a feeling of serenity (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) Color is a powerful tool for expressing individuality and conveying cultural messages, making it an important aspect of both food and fashion.

Line is a direction and the way they are arranged determines the effectiveness (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) Lines play a huge role in shaping the overall essence of a Lolita dress because it contributes to the unique child-like aesthetic. The A-line silhouette goes from *horizontal* to a bell-shaped *curve*. The Silhouette is created by its fitted bodice and flared skirt, creating a sense of grace, modesty, *easygoing*, and *calmness* (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) The ridged lines in the dress help in establishing a youthful and doll-like appearance, accentuating the femininity of the dress. These lines influence the way we perceive and interact with both our garments and meals. Just like the straight *horizontal* and *vertical* seams and stitches, just like the dress chefs create artful plating of a dish, where lines are used to ensure that the visual and sensory experiences are not only aesthetically pleasing but also thoughtfully designed. Lines create more than just visual elements, they are the embodiment of Lolita dresses that express a sense of charm and elegance.

The rhythm helps things move smoothly from one part to another and shows the viewer where to look first and then next (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) A Lolita dress is a visual pattern and repetitions that infuse this fashion style with its unique charm. The distinctive use of accessories, such as delicate bows, lace, and ruffles, creates a smooth flowing, and playful pattern that runs

throughout the dress. These elements are carefully placed along the neckline, cuffs, and hems, providing a sense of balance, continuity, and *movement*. The detailing establishes a solid and eye-catching design, enhancing the overall appeal of the dress. In a way similar to culinary arts, where a chef's timing and method must follow a specific rhythm to create a delicious meal, the rhythmic quality of a Lolita dress is further accentuated by the incorporation of candy-inspired designs and lace, contributing to the overall harmony of this captivating fashion style.

The element of design form, plays a huge role in both Lolita dresses and food, playing an important role in shaping aesthetic experiences. In “Angelic Pretty”, form defines the silhouette and structure of the garment. The dress features a fitted bodice and a flared skirt that emits grace and modesty, aligning perfectly with a bell-shaped doll-like dress. This form serves as a canvas in which each dress is painted, capturing the essence of youth, femininity, and timelessness that captivates both those who wear it and their admirers. In the realm of culinary arts, form refers to the arrangement and presentation of ingredients on a plate. It encompasses the shaping, layering, and precise positioning of ingredients to create a visually pleasing plate that reflects the chef's creativity. Food form accentuates the taste and quality of the dish. In both Lolita dresses and culinary arts, form significantly contributes to the overall visual and sensory experience, allowing the expression of unique styles and food. It is a common thread that ties these art forms together, highlighting the importance of form in dress and food.

Balance is the organization of parts or elements that is either *symmetrical* or *asymmetrical* (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) In Lolita dresses, balance is an important element of design, serving as a guide that ensures the overall composition that is visually appealing and harmonious. The meticulous pairing of elements such as the lace, ruffles, and bows with the dress's silhouette creates a sense of equilibrium and harmony. This *balance* not only enhances the visuals of the dress but also embodies the core values of modesty, femininity, and youthfulness, that make Lolita fashion. Similar to the art of plating in the culinary arts, where the balance of ingredients ensures an appealing visual experience. The concept of balance in food is equally significant in both the world of fashion and food because it is a satisfying experience, whether in the presentation of a well-plated dish or the design of a doll-like dress.

Contrast and juxtaposition are the different forms (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) In Lolita dresses are key design elements that contribute to the unique charm of this fashion subculture. In the “Angelic Pretty” dress the use of contrasting elements, such as pairing light pastel colors with a darker violet/purple or blending lace and bows with lace fabrics, creates an extraordinary visual impact. These contrasting elements within a single garment add depth and complexity to the overall design, making Lolita dresses stand out. The *juxtaposition* of sweet and playful themes against a backdrop of modesty and formality is a hallmark of Lolita fashion. This highlights the juxtaposition of innocence and creativity of Lolita Fashion. The design choices on the “Angelic Pretty” dress reflect the duality of Lolita culture, where innocence, youthfulness, and individuality, can coexist in a captivating harmony. The bows in front of the dress create the illusion of a doll's dress. Overall, contrast and juxtaposition are the artistic tools that make Lolita's dresses visually enchanting and turn them into wearable works of art.

The element of design dominance plays an important role in the creation of both fashion and culinary presentations (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) In the world of fashion, particularly in Lolita fashion, *dominance* is often expressed through distinct features such as oversized bows, headdresses, or lace collars. These dominant elements not only capture the viewer's attention but also serve as themes that define the dress. In this context, the dress's dominance is amplified by the mannequin, which elevates the entire ensemble making it the center of attention. Dominance emphasizes specific elements that contribute to the overall aesthetic of both fashion and food. By highlighting certain aspects, it elevates the youthful and feminine qualities that are central to Lolita fashion and makes the person wearing it or in food the dinner the main focus. In the case of the dress, the candy serves as a dominant element, adding individuality and a unique storyline, creating an enchanting dress in the world of fashion.

Proportion is the size, scale, and weight of all elements (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) Proportion ensures the “Angelic Pretty” dress is the center of attention in the relationship between different factors that will make the overall look balanced and visually pleasing. In this dress, proportion is achieved through careful consideration of the size and placement of elements like the waist bow in the center being slightly bigger than the bow on the chest. The ruffles on the dress are white accentuating the chest bow while the bow on the waist blends in. These elements are strategically scaled to maintain harmony within the dress's design. Proper proportion is essential to maintain the delicate balance between detailing and the dress's structure. The correct proportions in a Lolita dress enhance its overall aesthetic appeal, making it a delightful and captivating fashion statement.

Repetition is repeating an idea or theme (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) *Repetition* is a fundamental element of design in Lolita dresses, ensuring an aesthetically pleasing visual. In Lolita fashion, repetition is often evident through the recurring use of themes. In this case the repetition of things such as bows, lace, and ruffles. These repetitive elements are thoughtfully distributed along the dress's silhouette creating the illusion of a symmetrical, proportionate dress. This repetition of careful detailing serves to maintain a delicate balance between complexity and simplicity, a staple of Lolita dress style. It establishes a strong brand identity and contributes to the timeless appeal of Lolita fashion. With that, it makes this dress unique yet instantly recognizable. In essence, repetition in the food industry is similar to what we see in this dress. The candies all over the dress in similar colors ensure to convey a sense of youthfulness and a doll-like aesthetic.

Texture is what one could feel (Bell & Ternus, 2017.) The texture and appearance of this particular Lolita dress extend beyond its visual appeal to create a touchable experience. Fabrics like *satın*, are known for their smooth and *shiny* texture, providing a luxurious feel against the skin. This makes the wearer feel pampered and elegant. “Angelic Pretty” uses lace, with its intricate patterns making the texture known for its fine and slightly textured surface, which can create a gentle, *scale*-like sensation when touched. Underneath the dress, there are layers of Tulle which is often used in layered petticoats. The tulle creates a gentle fluffiness and airiness that creates a sense of lightness, but at the same time can feel very *rough* and itchy on the skin. The experience of a Lolita dress is like wrapping oneself in a cocoon of softness and itchiness, where

the choice of fabrics not only enhances the visual aesthetic but also ensures that the dress feels as enchanting and comfortable as it looks. This focuses on how the dress would feel against the skin, ensuring that it embodies modesty, femininity, and sensory delight.

Food and fashion consumption, while celebrated for its cultural and aesthetic significance, also has a darker side than what is seen. Overindulgence and unchecked consumption in both the food industry and fashion industry can lead to detrimental consequences. In the food industry, the culture of gluttony and excess eating contributes to many critical health problems. Besides health problems, there is also a surge in food waste and environmental degradation. The ever-changing fashion trends fuel the fast fashion culture, leading to exploitation, overproduction, and excessive waste (Syal, 2022). The constant demand for fast-fashion items contributes to poor labor practices and unsustainable use of resources. These negative aspects of consumption in the food and fashion industries remind us of the need for moderation, ethical choices, and sustainable practices (Syal, 2022). It is important to recognize the downsides of a consumer-driven society and seek a more responsible and balanced approach to both food and fashion consumption.

Food and fashion should be celebrated for their role in shaping human culture and individual expression. Beyond its nutritional value, food is a cultural artifact, a means of storytelling, and a source of shared experiences. Its diverse backgrounds and traditions offer a tangible taste of different cultures and histories. Fashion extends beyond the purpose of clothing. It is a form of art that allows individuals to express their personalities, cultural affiliations, and individuality (Bui, 2018). Celebrating food and fashion acknowledges the capacity to express emotions, create connections, and express belonging in groups. Food and fashion have enriched lives by providing space for creativity, individuality, and experiences between communities, making them essential elements of the human heritage.



*Figure 1: “Angelic Pretty” Food and Fashion at Museum at FIT, 2023*

*Figure 2: “Angelic Pretty” Food and Fashion at Museum at FIT, 2023*

*Figure 3: “Angelic Pretty” Food and Fashion at Museum at FIT, 2023*

*Figure 4: Stephanie Perez at Food and Fashion at Museum at FIT,2023*

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