

### **What is Fashion if not Silhouettes Persevering?**

Fashion in a sense, is also its own language. When our parents see us dress in garments they used to wear, they reminisce on when they used to dress in a similar style. As a result, a conversation is born. We are even inspired by certain “old-age” garments, that we implement them into contemporary designs for newer generations to wear. Thus, I decided to venture into the Louis Vuitton fashion exhibit hosted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to learn more about how fashion has evolved during changing times. Called “About Time: Fashion and Duration”, the exhibit explored the changing fashions from its start, to its current times. The curator was Andrew Bolton, held in two galleries, and hosted from October 29, 2020 up to February 9, 2021.

The exhibit is held in two galleries, designed in a clockwork-style with tick markings on the floors. Named as “Clock One” and “Clock Two”, both galleries were completed differently, with one in a dark brown/black finish, and the other in a futuristic theme filled with mirrors. Upon entering the exhibition, you can automatically assume that the pieces would be showcased in chronological order. However, it is at this level that the set design and designer took it up a notch. The timeline for the exhibit is scattered, mixing up different years/eras. Two garments are displayed into 60 displays or “minutes” from one era, and then two more are displayed from a different time period, highlighting the similarities and differences. This is done purposefully, showcasing that fashion is a cycle, repeating itself to fit the times.

We’ve learned that certain fashion styles/garments are never out of style, never leaving the fashion cycle and becoming obsolete. Thus, the gallery wanted to convey that when browsing, you see similar styles and similar silhouettes from one decade to another. The main theme is that fashion *endures*, that there is this continuum of fashion regardless of the era. Because history repeats itself, thus fashion repeats itself. Therefore, I think that the galleries do an excellent job on

focusing on the artistic, rather than a more commercialized exhibit. It wasn't to showcase garments to make you want to get it. The exhibit was intentionally done to educate the masses on certain cuts, similar styles from totally different brands, and make you curious about the cyclical periods of fashion.

One specific garment that caught my eye was this black jagged-cut garment from Comme Des Garconne (CDG), 2004. It is a two-piece ensemble with puffed and ruffled sleeves whilst exposing skin due to the top's uneven hemline. This garment though is important in understanding how fashion is cyclical. Before you see this garment, a dinner dress is showcased from Mrs. Arnold, 1895. Now when you look at the two, they look incredibly similar, just the CDG has a more contemporary feel. The CDG plays off the leg-of-mutton sleeves that was popular in the late 1800's and shown in the 1895 dinner dress. Ruffles are also embellished in both garments, both being on the sleeves. It just goes to show that fashion will always be inspired from its own history. This example is such an integral part in understanding how the creative minds of fashion houses work, drawing inspiration from previous decades and designers.

Ultimately, I do think that this exhibition was worth going too. Unfortunately, while it did just end, you can still see clips and mini gallery views of the actual exhibit from the website or Google search. If one loves fashion and understanding the art of creating garments and silhouettes, I highly recommend them to see the online videos/clips. This even branches out to other arts! With music, put simply - there is a term called sampling which takes beats/lyrics from one song, and the artist implements that into a whole new song/rhythm. Just like fashion, creative directors/designers are inspired from pieces from older time periods and try to implement that into a more contemporary and modern feel. While looking through different catalogues/magazines or even fashion shows, you might see something that reminds you of a piece that was done in 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup>

century. Overall, knowing its inspiration is definitely interesting, and this exhibit does a great job in helping you understanding the cycle of fashion!