



“NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE” FASHION INNOVATORS WITH BUSINESS SAVVY

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ABSTRACT

This research is intended to educate the reader about three of the most influential fashion business innovators of our time; Carolina Herrera, Iris Apfel, and Ann Lowe. They all have different backgrounds on where they came from, their own individualized journeys on how each of them contributed to fashion, and how their trademark has everlasting value in the business. Also, being that they're seasoned in their own respected ways; they have done so much for the next generation. These amazing women not only had their looks to show for it, but they also used their platforms to change how the world sees fashion. The fact that they're older woman and haven't let younger generations discourage them to not keep going is alone a form of inspiration that can be used for people of all ages.

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to a societal structure that woman in fashion must conform to it's dis-empowering. Society categorizing what a woman's occupation should be, to the way they dress and to what beauty standards they should follow must be broken. Woman of all ages should have confidence regardless of their age to wear what they want and not get discouraged because they aren't "hip anymore" or "it's too late" for them to get into the business and/or retire from it. By going against societies norms these three ladies chose to break away from that structure, accentuate freedom in their self-expression and by leading by example made an everlasting difference. Woman who are successful in the business of fashion are not just "pretty faces"; Carolina Herrera, Iris Apfel, and Ann Lowe made their own mark in the industry by embodying their personal sense of style but more importantly contributing to the revolutionizing movement of fashion.

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Carolina Herrera Adding the Final Touches before the model walks on the Runway



Ann Lowe is pictured on the Far Left; who designed Mrs. Kennedy's dress



Iris Apfel partnered with Mattel by licensing a deal with them to create a Barbie doll after her.

Iris Apfel

Iris Apfel was a businesswoman before she became a fashion icon. Her history by owning textile business in manufacturing her fabrics to other designers and being an interior designer. She is currently the oldest living fashion icon; where she found fame was at the age of 86. When she was 94 years old, she launched her very own fashionable wearable tech that could monitor your health and keep track of your physical activities. Furthermore, she became an activist for ageism in the industry because she felt like people who are her age are being discriminated against for their age. In the white house, where she had been hired as the lead interior designer, she worked on redesigns for 9 consecutive presidents.

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[Photograph of Iris Apfel, Alongside her Barbie Dolls] (2018) Retrieved from <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/celebrity/latest/a19624313/iris-apfel-barbie/>

Carolina Herrera

Carolina Herrera is a Venezuelan born Fashion Designer who is known for her elegant Avant Garde style, and had the honor of dressing various first ladies including Laura Bush, Michelle Obama, etc. She first became an innovator back in the 1980s, where she debuted her very first show as an independent designer and It marked to be the end of an era and the beginning of a new wave of New York design. Immediately after her successful unveiling, she was picked up by major department stores likes Saks Fifth Avenue, and Bergdorf Goodman. Herrera broke a lot of barriers in her career; her being 80 years old her luxury brand is still going strong.

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[Photograph of Carolina Herrera, Styling her model] (2017) Retrieved from <https://www.instyle.com/fashion/carolina-herrera-timeless-style-fashion-empire>
[Photograph of Ann Lowe, Exhibiting her Designs] (2019) Retrieved from <https://www.ernstdottir.com/single-post/2019/02/08/Ann-Lowe-She-persisted>

RESULTS

- Iris Apfel, Ann Lowe, and Carolina Herrera all share one form of innovator ship by contributing their work to the White House.
- Ageism is an issue that doesn't just affect the US but it's a global problem. In fact, a survey conducted by the London College of Fashion found that 97% of woman aged 40 – 89 want to see older models used in advertising.
- Iris Apfel made a licensing deal with Mattel/ Barbie and became the oldest woman to have a barbie made after her.

CONCLUSION

Ageism is when the industry still entrenches that trendy clothes look better on a younger body and if a person who's older representing that brand could potentially put off the consumer of wanting to buy that product. I believe that woman who are older should be given more opportunities in the fashion industry because they are just as a beautiful as a younger woman; there is beauty that underlies beneath a woman who has wrinkles and freckles that shouldn't be tampered with just because society favors the other. The three woman who I have chosen all have some relation when it comes to facing Ageism but to me, I believe that they all represent woman of all ages and can be perfect examples to empowering those who haven't found their inner confidence. Luckily, we have these 3-powerhouse woman to refer to in times of doubt.

Ann Lowe

Ann Lowe was the first African American woman to be recognized as a Fashion Designer. Her most known work is designing the ivory taffeta wedding dress worn by Jaqueline Bouvier; when she married John F. Kennedy in 1953. She didn't get credit for a lot of works that she designed and created including this very monumental work that she created. Nevertheless, that didn't stop her from creating more garments. She fulfilled the title Businesswoman when she opened 2 stores in New York City at a time where racism was highly prominent in the 1960s. She was an innovator because she was one of the first woman to push the boundaries of what a woman at the time was supposed to do. She helped pave the way for people of color to have access to fashion like everybody else.

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