

Food & Fashion Exhibition
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Food and fashion have come hand in hand with self-expression and social cueing. When thinking of today's society, one dresses for the occasion around the food. When going out for drinks or having lunch with friends/family, one decides their outfit and what they will do/eat for the day. Both food and fashion are essential components of human culture and daily existence, expressing individuality and cultural identities (Kher, 2023). Fashion allows individuals to showcase their distinct style and personality, while food choices can reflect cultural heritage, regional preferences, and individual preferences. Combining both is a potent form of self-expression, allowing individuals to convey their identities and establish connections and uniting through shared traditions and experiences while also serving as a way to embrace diversity and uniqueness.

The choice of color in a garment can convey many meanings, evoke emotions, and create a visual impact. Right from first glance, you notice the elegance of the creamed-colored silk dress; the significance of the Jean Desses Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress being in the color cream reflects how the designer Jean Desses wanted the viewer to see a cake at first glance. The dress itself is a representation of a classic cream-tiered cake. The color cream is made by mixing yellow, one of the *primary* colors, and mixing it with white to create this *pastel* color cream (Bell and Ternus, 2017). Like all pastels, the cream color has a *high value* and *low saturation*. The added white to the bright yellow color evokes a *neutral shade* (Bell and Ternus, 2017). The choice of the color cream can stem from the symbolism of cream; purity, elegance, and sophistication are brought to mind when viewing this pastel shade. With the idea of this, the color cream influences a range of emotions, one being femininity and elegance. Additionally, the effects of the color cream as both food and dress can also signify this idea of weddings. The resemblance of the food-like dress in this cream-colored silk fabric shows the aesthetic of a natural and timeless wedding cake.

Line, in terms of visual display and visual merchandise, is viewed as directions. The placement of the model/figure allows the viewer to feel affected. As stated by Bell and Ternus in *Silent Selling: Best Practices and Effective Strategies in Visual Merchandising*, they state "line is a major part of composition, the way they are arranged determine the effectiveness of the presentation" (Bell and Ternus, 2017). Overall, there are four lines to view, Vertical Line, Horizontal Line, Curved Line, and Diagonal Line. When viewing the Jean Desses Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress, you can see the *pride* the dress carries as the mannequin has its arms behind, poking its collarbones and chest out, and its two legs pind down straight to the ground. It is clear the designer, or visual manager, had a vision when displaying the cream dessert-like dress. The lines used are *vertical*, showing dignity, majesty, precision, direction, and height. Vertical Lines help the viewer analyze the construction and design of the dress; this arrangement encourages the observer to examine each element of the dress closely. In this case, the Jean Desses Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress, with its display of vertical lines, allows the eyes to follow the folds and curves of the silky dress and see the vibrance of the cream color directly. Nothing is hidden, allowing for a display of elegance and strength.

Rhythm is another big part of the composition that allows familiar repeating elements to guide the viewers through the piece. The model or dress, in this case, provides for the viewer's eye from the dominant object to the subordinate object, letting self-contained movement from element to element when analyzing (Bell and Ternus, 2017). Essentially, the Jean Desses Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dresses rhythm allows the dress to be viewed as aesthetically pleasing, the

way each layer of fabric drapes and against each other, allows for the pattern movement to be seen as a decorative cake, with each graceful thick fabric scrunched up falling gracefully. Your eyes are able to follow the dress with this type of rhythm. The layering in itself gives a gradual shine to the dress under the light, and the sense of visual movement gives the dress a very chic look.

The form can be described as the physical structure or outline of an object. The shape of a dress is instantly viewed by its form when looking at the Jean Desses Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dresses. The intent of the form is evident with its cake shape, and the arrangement of the dress creates a silhouette that can be seen draping over the body. The dessert-tiered dress is designed by Jean Desses to be viewed as noticeably appealing. The drapes of each silk fabric, the clear hem lining of the bottom of the dress, and the drop of the straight off-the-shoulder lining all create the form of the dress to be viewed as a tiered dessert. Combining the idea of both fashion and the aesthetic of dessert presentation (Bell and Ternus, 2017). The form of the dress mimics the feeling of elegance and gracefulness when viewing its structure.

Balance is a term used very broadly when describing evenness. Balance also being part of the composition in visual merchandise, understanding the two types of balance, Symmetrical; a more mirrored image and Asymmetrical; sides of equal weight but not exact replicas (Bell and Ternus, 2017, Pg. 55). With this mentioned, the viewer when observing the balance of the dress can feel stability and satisfied on the dimension. With the Jean Desses Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dresses, you instantly notice the well-designed dress, displayed straight up, allowing the dress to be viewed as symmetrical. Its symmetrical neckline and off-the-shoulders in the front and the mid v shape back show the uniformity of the silk fabric folds along the arms. The even bell-shaped body and the drape of the fabric circling around creates a mirror-like balance that allows us, the viewers, to see it's well-designed evenly around the dress.

Contrast/Juxtaposition are two different meanings where contrast views the visual elements of the object seeing where striking observation is shown, making it stand out for the audience. Juxtaposition factors two different elements, placing them together and letting the viewer see the contrasting effect (Bell and Ternus, 2017). When viewing the dress, the medium contrast of the color cream allows it to not be seen with the other displays around when scanning it in the room. Viewing the models around the dress, noticing the brown model chosen for the Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress by Jean Desses is no coincidence. The colors themselves contrast one another, allowing for the cream dress to shine against the brown skin tone-like model, enhancing the focus on the delicate and soft cream dress. This connects with the juxtaposition of the dress. The split between the top chest and the waist creates a side-by-side comparison of a contrasting effect, and the top chest allows the viewers to see the clear difference in why this is a dress, almost reminding the audience that this resembles a tiered cake, but should not look like an almost costume of it.

Dominance is a term for visual display, like most terms, it is most viewed when first looking at the object you are studying. It is seen as an element that should be dominant, often within mannequins (Bell and Ternus, 2017). Overall, when looking at the Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress by Jean Desses, you instantly view the dominance of the bell-like shape. It is the 1950s style that gives the dramatic look that catches your eye. The dessert-like dress has visually more dominance at the waist to ankle area because that is where most of the weight of the dress is located. The drapes of the cream silk fabric allow the eyes to be attracted to that area first. As you stand closer, the dominance of the full bottom-weight dress also gives the illusion of a

bride's wedding cake topper; the model stands straight, allowing for femininity and elegance to be viewed directly.

Proportion is a term used to describe the interrelationship with parts of a garment, comparing distances with fabrics, size, section, etc. An example could be a baby shoe compared to a big teddy bear, portion is the relationship between size, scale, and weight within the elements (Bell and Ternus, 2017). The distinctive portions on the Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress by Jean Desses, is noticeably shown through the weight of the bottom "skirt" that is divided by the chest, resembling the shape of a tiered cake. The division between the chest and the body shows the proportion of the garment is more balanced and harmonious, adding to the visually pleasing look. The 1950s bell shape, with its proportion more heavily added at the bottom, gives the illusion of an hourglass shape, making the model look delicate and petite as she stands. This resembles a cake top in many ways, emphasizing the look of a wedding cake or dessert.

Repetition is a term used in describing the elements seen as repeating themselves within a design/garment. With this in mind, the elements are essentially repeating or reiterating the idea/motif of the object/clothing (Bell and Ternus, 2017). The cohesive Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress has many repeating designs, with its drapes of fabric wrapping around the whole dress in a union of synchronicity. The repetition of this drape effect resembles almost the tiers of layers within a dessert, and even the frosting-like curves of a cake, this ensures a consistent and continuous design throughout the dress when viewing it. The drape moves around to the back, showing the repeated movement of this design; this helps draw the viewers in; its repetition enhances the balance and symmetry of the garment.

When examining the 1957 Cream Silk Chiffon Tiered Dress by Jean Desses, it was essential to consider the texture of the fabric used. As the viewer, you understand the level of intricacy and skill involved in the creation. At first glance, the layered 1950s swing dress resembles a *smooth* and *sheen* look; the dress, with its *soft silk* and *satın*, creates an alluring and sumptuous look. The cream dress, made from natural fibers of silk mixed with possibly a small percentage of wool or even silk and cotton, adds to the *smooth* appearance. The cascade *layers* down the dress allow for a reflection of light to appear. This visual suggests a *feminine look*; the delicate gathering fabric at specific points on a dress, such as the off-the-shoulder sleeves and overall body, creates the illusion of dessert creases and folds, resembling a baked cake's textured surface. The view of the fabric could feel *soft* against the skin, and running your hands down the layered silk could feel *smooth* and *delicate*. The combination of silk and the slightly more textured and breathable nature of cotton create a balance that enhances comfort and wearability, allowing the *luxurious* feel to be experienced as you run your hands and wear it on the skin.

As one walks through the FIT museum, viewing the Food & Fashion exhibition, the messages and information shown give a great idea of food and fashion's influence on one's everyday life. Regarding sustainability and consumption, fashion is a way to create and promote those ideas, making an audience aware of the environmental and ethical issues that are currently arising in today's society. Much that was seen through the exhibition was current, including the minimum wage crisis for immigrant workers during the pandemic (Rick Owens Collaboration with We Feed You Collection, SS20). These designs create significance and remembrance of ethical issues, showcasing them more innovatively and comprehensively. The choice of what we wear and what we eat holds a symbolic significance; much of it resembles the ethical issues in today's society; it is a commonality between both food and fashion; we see it and use it every day, and combining both allows for it to be talked about.

Food and fashion should be celebrated because it is a fun way to showcase creativity while emphasizing cultural and identity significance. In recent times, fashion has become a massive part of how, as a society, many express themselves in inventiveness. In an *ELLE fashion magazine* titled, *How The Fashion Industry Is Using Food As Art* by Susie Lau, it explains the correlation between food probs and fashion shows, the need to develop both worlds together, it allows for different people to bring their contrasting backgrounds together, allowing everyone to share the enjoyable experience of aesthetic and creative freedom (Susie Lau, 2022). This gives a new meaning to the word expression. Fashion has always allowed for different cultures, communities, and ethical topics to surface. Another article titled *Champagne Cork Heels, Tapas Dresses, and More Ways to Wear Your Favorite Foods* by Merlyn Miller examines the current exhibition Food & Fashion at FIT, expressing the historical relationship between luxury fashion brands like Moschino and Mcdonalds, expressing identity for a brand and the needs to look stylish while doing it (Merlyn Miller, 2023). Overall, the significance of celebrating food and fashion together is enormous, and it reflects us in ways not many knew it could.

References

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Proof of Dress



*Figure 1, 2, 3: Jean Dessès
Cream silk chiffon tiered dress, circa
1957
The Museum at FIT: Food & Fashion 92.213.1*

Proof of Attending

