

Научный журнал «Костюмология» <https://kostumologiya.ru>

2017, №4, Том 2 (октябрь, ноябрь, декабрь) <https://kostumologiya.ru/vol2-no4.html>

URL статьи: <https://kostumologiya.ru/PDF/06AKL417.pdf>

Ссылка для цитирования этой статьи:

Снежинская А.В. Определяющая роль моды в постоянно меняющейся сфере дизайна // Костюмология, 2017 №4, <https://kostumologiya.ru/PDF/06AKL417.pdf> (доступ свободный). Загл. с экрана. Яз. рус., англ.

For citation:

Snezhinskaya A.V. [Determining role of fashion in changing landscape of design] *Kostumologiya*, 2017, Vol. 2, no. 4. Available at: <https://kostumologiya.ru/PDF/06AKL417.pdf> (In Russ.)

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Determining role of fashion in changing landscape of design

Abstract. In the paper fashion was observed in terms of its defining role for design, society and culture. In order to study the importance as well as the influence of fashion, it was considered in terms of paragon design, which transfers the crucial value for the overall history of the design. Several circumstances for a fashion item to become an example of paragon design were mentioned in this research. Among key factors there are identity, transmitted through a garment, deep meaning, which is shared both by the owner of the item and the society, fluidity of shared meanings, which demonstrates that meaning is affected by changes in time and location and close connection with other spheres. The study bases on the exhibition of the Museum of Modern Art in New York “Is Fashion Modern?” By observing a group of exhibits the key factors were determined. The study may be continued and developed by deeper observation of exhibits and their symbols, origination and shared values.

Keywords: fashion as design; fashion influence; history of garments

In this study fashion is observed as an object of design, which in its common meaning is the current trend in clothing. It is important to cover fashion using two crucial conditions. Firstly, fashion should be accepted by the vast majority of society. Secondly, this acceptance has to last for a relatively short period of time [1]. The philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer determines fashion through science and art, investigating the logic of fashion, its trends and innovations [2]. By design we will mean a specification of an object, manifested by some agent, intended to accomplish goals, in a particular environment, using a set of primitive components, satisfying a set of requirements, subject to some constraints [3]. The correlation between fashion and design lies in the basis of this paper, however there are links between fashion and such important aspects of life as functionality, cultural etiquettes, aesthetics, politics, labor, economy, and technology.

The research is based on the first fashion exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art since 1944 called “Items: Is Fashion Modern?”, which was launched at the end of 2017 [4]. The exhibition consists of 111 garments and accessories, having a strong impact on design, society and overall history in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. “Items: Is Fashion Modern?” is organized by Paola Antonelli, senior curator of the Modern’s architecture and design department, and Michelle Millar Fisher, a curatorial assistant, it has involved years of research and travel and is as anthropological as it is aesthetic. The exhibition space unites and integrates items from tattoos, flip flops to the door-knocker earrings and Tiffany diamond. The all are presented through their global and historical meanings. This exhibition continues tradition of the architect and social historian Bernard Rudofsky, who stated

06AKL417

clothing to be “anachronistic, irrational and harmful”. His exhibition “Are Clothes Modern?” was organized in 1944 [5]. For our study the initial aim was to determine through this exhibition how fashion influences design and to cover the general patterns.

Moreover, it is important to mention that items, which are presented on the exhibition, are not just closely connected to design, they are paragons of design. Patterns, which exist in fashion world, could afterwards be applied in other design oriented sectors [6]. Fashion is unquestionably a form of design. It seems that for a fashion item to become a part of design the several circumstances should be kept. Despite the great variety, existing in fashion, from postindustrial seriality (from ready-to-wear to fast fashion) to precious, hand-crafted uniqueness (haute couture) common characteristic, which distinguish paragons from ordinary clothes can be outlined [7].

An example of untypical exhibit is tattoos. Initially tattoos differ from clothes, however in tattoos lie culture message along with determination of identity. From this side tattoos share the functions, which belong to clothes as well. On the one hand, tattoos are the continuation of our image, of uniqueness and personality. On the other hand, tattoos correlate with fashion trends; sometimes they perform as design elements, a tattoo artist share role of designer. This atypical example illustrates the required circumstance for fashion item to become a paragon of design. **The term of identity** should be inseparably connected with clothing. A number of exhibits from “Items: Is Fashion Modern?” brightly transmit identity: among them there are Kente Cloth as a part of West Africa culture and as a symbol of national identity along with national pride.

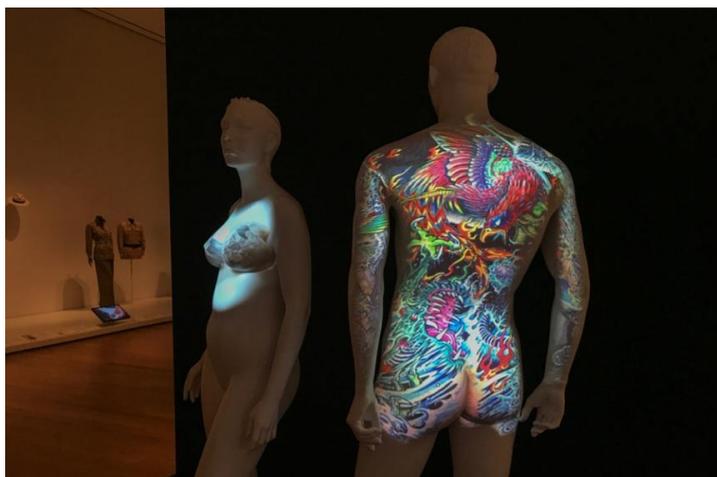


Figure 1. Projections of tattoos on mannequins



Figure 2. Kente by Julie “Chez Julie” Norteye (left) and Nana Keaku Duah (right)

Moving towards the other circumstances of paragon design the other term, which develops from identity, is **the deep meaning**, lying behind the garment. In case of Tiffany diamond it is a kind of storytelling and close association with happy marriage. In case of the Dashiki garment the meaning is the story of New Breed Clothing, of Civil Rights and of the Black Panther movement. Paragon design has to transmit values, specific meanings, which are usually extremely important for the owner of item.



Figure 3. Dashiki styles from New Breed (left) and Lagos Balogun Market (right)

Among other crucial characteristics there is **the fluidity of shared meanings**. We want to outline the gradual process of ballet flat creation. The American designer Claire McCardell, who collaborated with longstanding ballet shoe manufacturer Capezio, noticed that flats, which originally were used solely by ballet dancers, can be applied for everyday life [7]. McCardell believed that modern, sporty women (like her) should dress in natural, freeing “clothes that move”.

Moreover, for fashion item to become an object of paragon design it seems important to establish a **close connection with other spheres**, which form our environment. Fields may vary from culture and design to sport and politics. This tendency is distinctly visible if we consider exhibits like sport jersey. Dashiki garment, which was mentioned early, also transfer political meaning and context. However, sports jersey intersects meaningfully with fashion, design, and politics.



*Figure 4. Four sports jerseys on display as Item #91 in MoMA's
Items: Is Fashion Modern? exhibition, October 1, 2017-January 28, 2018*

All things considered, it seems that for a fashion garment to become a paragon design several circumstances should be kept. Fashion item should express and stress individuality of its owner along

with his group identity. Another circumstance, which may be kept, is the deep meaning, lying behind the garment. The meaning is not limited by the creation, the brand story or by the designer, it exists in deeper layers of perception. Furthermore, shared meanings may be changeable. This circumstance adds an innovational value to fashion clothes. Among other conditions the close and integral relation to significant spheres like culture, politics was mentioned in the paper

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Определяющая роль моды в постоянно меняющейся сфере дизайна

Аннотация. В данном исследовании мода рассматривается с позиции ее определяющего влияния на такие сферы, как дизайн, общество и культура. С целью определения ее значимости и влияния, она рассматривалась применительно к образцам выдающегося дизайна, которые несут в себе ключевые ценности и формируют мировую историю развития дизайна. Был выявлен ряд обстоятельств, при которых предмет моды может перейти в категорию образца дизайна. Среди важных факторов можно выделить принадлежность и идентичность, которые несет в себе вещь, глубинное значение, которое разделяет как владельца вещи, так и его окружение, изменчивость разделяемых значений, в чем проявляется влияние времени и пространство на моду, а также прочная связь с другими сферами. Исследование базируется на экспозиции Музея современного искусства в Нью-Йорке «Является ли мода современной?» Рассматривая часть экспонатов в этой работе, нам удалось выделить общие тенденции и факторы. Исследование может быть продолжено при дальнейшем рассмотрении еще большего числа экспонатов с их символическим значением, с их историей происхождения и разработки и разделяемых ценностей.

Ключевые слова: мода как часть дизайна; влияние моды; история костюма

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