



**BALENCIAGA, CRISTÓBAL** Born in 1895 in Guetaria (Getaria), a small fishing village on the tempestuous northern coast of Spain, Cristóbal Balenciaga Eisaguirre (1895–1972) was to become, in his own lifetime, the most famous Spanish fashion designer of his generation. He died in the mellower climate of Jávea, on the eastern coast of Spain, twelve years after receiving the Légion d'honneur for services to the French fashion industry and only four years after closing down his prestigious business in Paris. The contrast between Balenciaga's places of birth and death offers a touching analogy to his journey from rags to riches or, at the very least, from a relatively obscure, fairly modest, and extremely hardworking provincial background to the sunny prominence of an established position in international fashion. While he gained considerable material comfort, he did not lose his work ethic. He owned a flat in central Paris, an estate near Orléans (France), and a substantial house in Igueldo, near Guetaria. He was able to fill his homes with collections of decorative and fine arts and, from time to time, with friends from different walks of life.

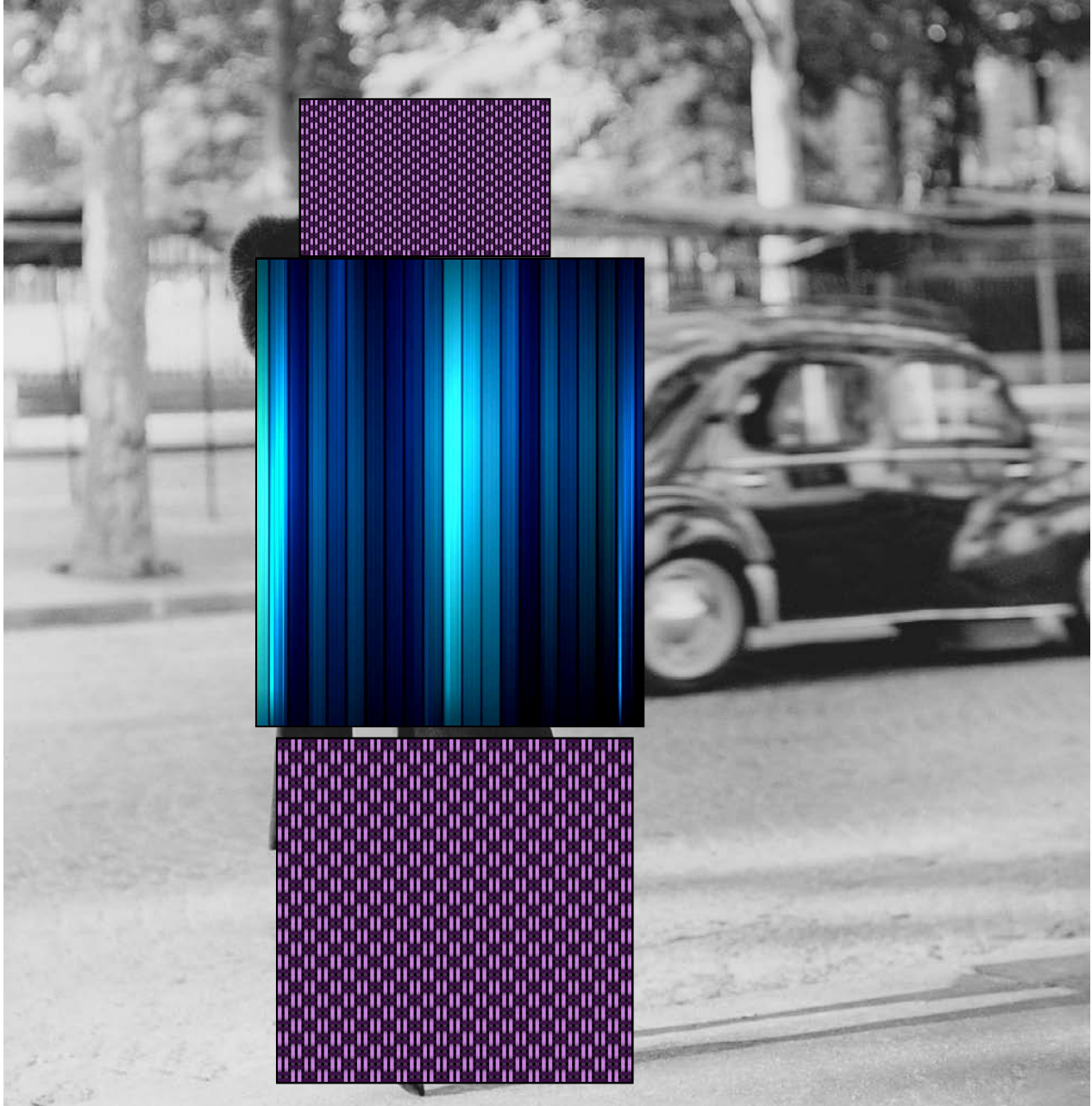
Balenciaga evidently achieved this major change in circumstance, initially, through the patronage of a member of the Spanish aristocracy, the marquesa de Casa Torres, who recognized his talent at sewing—a skill learned from his seamstress mother—and apprenticed him to a tailor in fashionable San Sebastián (Donostia). From this training, he went on to become chief designer in a local dressmaking establishment, before opening his own house in Madrid. Armed with financial backing from a fellow Basque, he subsequently successfully established, directed, and designed for the Parisian couture house that bore his name. At the same time, he maintained three high-class dressmaking establishments in Spain, in San Sebastián, Barcelona, and Madrid. They functioned under the label *Eisa*, an abbreviated form of his mother's patronymic.

Balenciaga's formative experiences in Spain were fundamental to both his design practice and his ultimate move to Paris. His tailoring apprenticeship gave him a mastery of cut and construction and an obsession with perfection of fit. He was one of the few couturiers who was capable of "cutting material, assembling a creation and sewing it by hand," as even his archrival Coco Chanel acknowledged (Miller, p. 14). His fascination with cer-

tain simple forms (the manipulation of circles, semicircles, and tunics) may well have derived from familiarity with the cut of the ecclesiastical vestments and clerical dress so common in Spain. His use of certain colors (black, shades of gray, earth colors, brilliant reds, fuchsia, and purple), certain forms of decoration (heavy embroidery and braid), and certain fabrics (lace used voluptuously in flounces and heavy woolens or new synthetics "sculpted" into extraordinary shapes) owed much to the aesthetic of Spanish regional dress and to the drapery and costume depicted in Spanish painting and sculpture from 1500 to 1900. His early working experience in San Sebastián alerted him to the dominance of Paris in international women's fashion, as one of his responsibilities was to travel to the center of couture to the seasonal collections, to make drawings of models that might subsequently be translated into garments for Spanish clients. In this second, transitional, stage of his career, he was copyist or translator rather than originator of designs.

#### **Historical Context**

While the reasons for Balenciaga's departure from Spain in 1935 at the age of forty, and his subsequent establishment in Paris, are not clear, it is probable that the commercial and political situation in Europe contributed to his move. In the 1930s Paris was the fashion mecca not only for ambitious designers but also for the cosmopolitan women they dressed. The French government fostered couture and its ancillary trades because they were important national export industries. Subsidies encouraged the use of French textiles, and textile manufacturers supplied short runs of rare fabrics for couture collections. The trade organization *Chambre Syndicale de la couture parisienne* guided the regulation of conditions of employment, training for prospective couturiers, and the efficient coordination of the twice-yearly showings of all couturiers' collections. This arrangement made the trade desirable, as private clients and commercial buyers from department stores and wholesale companies from other parts of Europe, the United States, and Japan could plan their visits in advance and make the most of their time in Paris. Before World War II, no other country boasted such a highly organized and prestigious fashion system, a fact of which Balenciaga must have been aware as early as about 1920.



**Woman modeling Balenciaga coat and dress.** This ensemble smartly conveys several Balenciaga trademarks, such as elegance and grandeur, monochromatic colors, and a perfect fit. HENRY CLARKE/VOGUE © 1995 CONDÉ NAST PUBLICATIONS, INC. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

That Balenciaga chose to “defect” some fifteen years later was probably linked to the increasingly difficult political situation in Spain, a state of affairs that did not bode well for those who made their living from fashion. In 1931 the Spanish monarchy fell, and a period of uncertainty preceded the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). Balenciaga lost his main clientele of the 1920s, the Spanish royal family and the aristocracy who summered in San Sebastián and wintered in Madrid. Consequently, he

closed down his branch in the north of Spain just after it opened. The advent of war did not improve his prospects, so his move to Paris (via London) was timely. By 1939, when he reopened his houses in Spain, he had made a reputation in Paris, gaining an international clientele that far outstripped the captive following he had had in Spain.

During World War II, he moved back and forth between the two countries, keeping a connection with his familial and cultural roots and control of his modest fash-

ion empire. At the end of the war he continued this practice. Even when he spent long periods in Paris, he did not lose contact with Spaniards, as both his business and home were in the district frequented by Spanish émigrés, many of his business associates or employees were Spanish, and his friends included his fellow countrymen the artists Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, and Pablo Palazuelo.

### The Businesses

Haute couture businesses are secretive about their internal workings, if not their ambitions, and often it is the design records rather than the accounts that survive. In the absence of financial or administrative archives for the house of Balenciaga, it is possible to reconstruct its organization and strategy only through its public registration, its rich design archive, and limited oral and written testimony from the salon, some of the more illustrious members of its clientele, and a few of the designer's colleagues or pupils. Tradition and continuity were particular characteristics of the house, in terms of its internal structure and workforce, its design output and quality of production, and its maintenance of a faithful and prestigious customer base. Gimmickry was avoided at all costs—even in the postwar period of consumerism, when many of Balenciaga's competitors engaged freely in a variety of new sales tactics, including the development of ranges of ready-to-wear clothing, accessories, and numerous fragrances and the use of advertising.

As was relatively common in Parisian couture, Balenciaga was a limited company, in the form of a partnership between Balenciaga himself, his hat designer and friend Vladzio Zawrorowski (d. 1946), and Nicolas Bizcarrondo, the Basque businessman who provided the initial capital. Balenciaga's previous success in Spain and the existence of three houses there (albeit that they were in limbo in 1937) might well account for Bizcarrondo's faith in Balenciaga and his willingness to support him. Established in 1937 on an initial investment of Fr 100,000, the value of Balenciaga's couture house rose to Fr 2 million in 1946 and to Fr 30 million in 1960. Injections of funding coincided with expansion in its activities. The investment reflected the size—large by couture standards but small relative to industrial enterprises before or after World War II.

The structure of the design house followed to the letter a traditional couture model, conforming without difficulty to the new haute couture regulations implemented in 1947. Throughout Balenciaga's reign, the seat of business was at 10 avenue Georges V—a suitable location in the golden triangle of Parisian luxury production. This six-story building served all functions—esthetic, craft, commercial, and administrative. Discretion was the key to both the exterior and interior, with little overt reference to the house's sales function. On the outside, classical pillars flanked the shop windows, which never contained any hint of clothes for sale but rather pretended to a certain artistry.

On the ground floor the entrance was through the boutique (shop), which stocked accessories, such as gloves, foulards, and the perfumes *Le Dix* (1947), *La Fuite des Heures* (1948), and *Quadrille* (1955). This floor had the appearance of the hallway of a grand house, with a black-and-white tiled floor, rich carpets, and dark wooden and gilded furniture and fittings. On the first floor, reached by an elevator lined in red Cordoban leather and studded with brass pins, were the salon and fitting rooms, decorated in 1937 in the fashionable Parisian taste of the day, with upholstered settees, curvaceous free-standing ashtrays, and mirrored doors. Presided over by Madame Renée, this floor was home to the *vendeuses* (saleswomen), who greeted their own specially designated clients, consulted with them about their vestmental needs and social calendar, introduced them to the models that might suit them (specially paraded by a house mannequin), and then watched over their three fittings once they had placed their orders. Above the salons were the workshops where the clothes were cut and constructed; only occasionally were certain garments farmed out for special treatment, for example, to the embroidery firms of Bataille, Lesage, or Rébé for embellishment. Higher still in the building were the offices occupied by the administration.

**Expansion and continuity.** Workshop space expanded beyond the four workshops set up in 1937 (two for dresses, one for suits, and one for dresses and suits). During the war (1941) Balenciaga added two millinery ateliers; then, after the war (1947–1948), another two workshops for dresses and one for suits; and, finally, in 1955, another for dresses, bringing the total to ten. Just before the opening of the final workshop, Balenciaga's employees numbered 318. In the scheme of things, Balenciaga valued his cutters more highly than his workshop heads, paying the former 20–30 percent more than the latter between 1953 and 1954. Given the reputation of the house for high-quality tailoring, this prioritization is not surprising, nor is the fact that skilled employees in positions of trust remained with the firm over a prolonged period. In the case of the known workshop heads, the majority stayed for twenty to thirty years. Moreover, “new” senior staff members seem to have arrived from the Spanish houses, possibly because Balenciaga could rely on their standards and experience.

### Client Base

Continuity was also an aspect of the client base, satisfying Balenciaga's firm belief that women should find and remain with the dressmaker who best served their needs and understood their personal styles. Many private and professional clients patronized the house for thirty years. At his height, Balenciaga showed his collections to two hundred wholesale buyers and made to measure about 2,325 garments per annum for private clients. Some of the latter bought as many as fifty to eighty items per year.

They made their choices from the four hundred models he created, a number in line with the output of other top couturiers of the time.

Major department stores bought Balenciaga models with particular customers in mind and then reproduced as closely as possible the couture experience in their salons, offering fashion shows, personal advice on customers' social and practical needs, and high standards of fitting and making. At different times these firms included Lydia Moss, Fortnum and Mason, and Harrods in London; Hattie Carnegie, Henri Bendel, Bloomingdale's, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Bergdorf Goodman in New York; I. Magnin in Los Angeles and San Francisco; and Holt Renfrew in Toronto. In contrast, wholesalers bought with batch production in mind, spreading Balenciaga styles through their adaptation of toiles from the house. The wholesalers who attended Balenciaga's shows included many members of the London Model House Group, the elite of ready-to-wear. For them, every model had about eight to ten derivatives, each of which was reproduced four hundred to five hundred times. Some Balenciaga models, however, were considered too complex for reproduction, whether in department stores or factories, and too outré for the tastes of more conservative clients.

Balenciaga's loyal band of private clients belonged to the wealthiest titled and untitled families across the globe and embraced both professional women and socialites. Some customers combined buying from him with purchases from other made-to-measure or ready-made sources or found his garments in special secondhand outlets. His true devotees developed a close relationship, even friendship, with "The Master," who provided for their every need: some daughters followed their mothers into the house, among them the future Queen Fabiola of Belgium, daughter of his patron, the marquesa de Casa Torres; Sonsoles, daughter of his most consistent client, the marquesa de Llanzol; and General Francisco Franco's wife and granddaughter, whose wedding dress was the last designed by Balenciaga. Others grew into Balenciaga through familiarity with his house in Paris, for example, Mona Bismarck, widow of Harrison Williams, one of the wealthiest men in America, who consistently acquired her wardrobe from him every season for twenty years, even the shorts she wore for yachting or gardening. Perhaps, like Barbara "Bobo" Rockefeller, she believed that a Balenciaga dress gave its wearer a sense of security. A cheaper way of buying made-to-measure Balenciaga fashions was open to those who knew his Spanish operations, where labor costs were lower and local fabrics sometimes were substituted for those used in Paris (and a favorable exchange rate prevailed for most foreign visitors). The film star Ava Gardner, a regular visitor to Spain in the 1950s, patronized Eisa, for example, as well as the Parisian house.

Balenciaga's final—and perhaps most intriguing—client was Air France. In 1966 the world's biggest air-

line asked him to design air stewardesses' summer and winter uniforms to a brief that probably appealed to him: "elegance, freedom of movement, adaptability to sudden changes of climate, and maintenance of a smart appearance even after a long journey" (Miller pp. 57–59). His experience of dealing with the *soigné* jet set and his fashion philosophy of practicality prepared him well for this request.

### Fashion Philosophy and Signature Designs

Balenciaga was reticent in talking about himself and his craft, so the nature of his business, the identity of his clients, and actual surviving garments and designs are necessary to supplement his occasional observations about his fashion philosophy. Evolution rather than revolution, elegance and decorum rather than novelty and flash-in-the-pan fashion, practicality, wearability, and "breathability" were guiding principles in his design and, no doubt, suited a discerning, largely mature clientele. At his apogee in the 1950s and 1960s Balenciaga created designs that bear witness to his keen attention to the effects achieved by combining different colors and textures. Often the intrinsic qualities of fabrics, whether traditional woolens and silks or innovative synthetics, led the design process, as Balenciaga pondered their potential in tailored, draped, or sculpted forms. He was prepared to forgo the French government subsidy, granted to couturiers whose collections comprised 90 percent French-made textiles, in order to acquire the best-quality and most groundbreaking textiles from whichever part of Europe they came.

Balenciaga gradually honed his design in daywear, building out from the base of apparently traditional tailored suits with neat, fitted bodies and sleeves that sat perfectly at the shoulder into experimentation that led to the minimalist "no-seam coat" (1961), crafted from a single piece of fabric by the artful use of darts and tucks. This garment hung loose on the body and embodied the culmination of a range of loose or semifitted lines in various garments that probably constituted Balenciaga's most important contribution to fashion. These designs emerged gradually during the 1950s, flattering different female figures (mature and youthful) and allowing the wearer to move easily. The tunic (1955), chemise or sack (1957), and Empire styles (1958) drew attention away from the natural waist through the creation of a tubular line or the emphasis that a bloused back laid on the hip line or that a high waist laid on the bust. Suit jackets were judiciously cut, and their matching skirts were often gathered slightly into the waistband at the front to accommodate middle-age spread. Three-quarter- and seven-eighth-length sleeves and necklines set away from the neck sought to flatter the wrists and the neck, both graceful at any age. They also proved practical for busy lifestyles. In the 1960s a range of different lengths and fits of jackets and coats featured in Balenciaga's collections, from the very fitted to the loose.

Similar paring down is evident in Balenciaga's cocktail and evening wear; so, too, is a taste for the grandeur and elaboration appropriate to the purpose. For these gowns he drew on historical and non-European sources and sought his own version of modernism. Initially, for all their apparent ease, these dresses were often built on a corset base with boning, an understructure that was not obvious under the complex confections of drapery, puffs, and flounces popular in the 1950s. By the 1960s, however, shapes simplified and did not cling to or mold the body. The contrast between the slim black sheaths of the late 1940s and early 1950s and the outstanding models of gazar, zibeline, faille, and matelassé of the 1960s is absolute. The former took their drama from the swathes of contrasting satin in jewel colors that were attached at waist or neckline and could be draped to the wearer's fancy. The latter relied for their éclat on the sculptural simplicity of their lines and the substance of the fabric rather than on artificial flowers, feathers, or polychrome embroidery. While three-dimensional decoration was not obsolete, the shapes to which it adhered became tunic-like. The frills, ballooning skirts, and sack backs had given way to a more austere, almost monastic aesthetic.

### Importance and Legacy

The fashion cognoscenti, from couturiers to journalists, still accord Balenciaga the laurel of the "designers' designer." They use his name to evoke certain standards in fashion—evolution in style, ease of dress, and meticulous attention to detail (visible or otherwise). Balenciaga's former apprentices (André Courrèges and Emanuel Ungaro), colleagues (Hubert de Givenchy), and aficionados (Oscar de la Renta and Paco Rabanne) have inherited and propagated certain elements of his philosophy and style. In the last quarter of the twentieth century approximately eight major exhibitions worldwide perpetuated his fame, many facilitated by the archivist of the house of Balenciaga, owned by Bogart perfumes from 1987 to 2001 and since then by the Gucci Group (91 percent) and the in-house designer, Nicolas Ghesquière (9 percent). Ghesquière's widely acknowledged talent and vitality revived the fortunes of Balenciaga in the late 1990s, and by the early 2000s the designer himself had begun to explore the riches of the archives and appreciate more fully the shadow in which he labored. He was quick to draw parallels between his own work and that of the "The Master," although couture represents a tiny element of his output.

In Spain, Balenciaga's reputation contributed to initiatives to encourage the Spanish fashion industry: in 1987 the Spanish Ministry of Industry and Energy named the first (and only) national prize for fashion design after him and in 2000 injected \$3.2 million into the charitable foundation set up in Guetaria in his name. The overall objective of this trust is "to foster, spread and emphasize the transcendence, importance, and prominence that Don Cristóbal Balenciaga has had in the world of fashion," (www.fundacionbalenciaga.com) an objective

that is meant to be achieved through the construction and development of a museum in Guetaria, the establishment of an international center for design training, the foundation of a research and documentation center, the publication of a fashion periodical, and the development of touring exhibitions about Balenciaga, fashion design, and haute couture.

With such sustained efforts at maintaining Balenciaga's reputation and values, his impact on fashion is bound to survive, disseminated through a range of techniques from which the reserved and publicity-shy Balenciaga himself might well have recoiled. The ramifications of his dedication to fashion for that once small fishing town of Guetaria are likely to be impressive.

*See also* **Chanel, Gabrielle (Coco); Courrèges, André; Ecclesiastical Dress; Haute Couture; Paris Fashion; Spanish Dress.**

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Lesley Ellis Miller

**BALL DRESS** Ball dress is simply defined as a gown worn to a ball or formal dance. Beyond this fundamental description, there are remarkably intricate conventions related to appropriateness of ball dress. The most extravagant within the category of evening dress, a ball gown functions to dazzle the viewer and augment a woman's femininity. Ball gowns typically incorporate a low décolletage, a constricted bodice, bared arms, and long bouffant skirts. Ball gowns are visually distinguishable from other evening gowns by their lavishly designed

surfaces—with layers of swags and puffs and such trim details as artificial flowers, ribbons, rosettes, and lace.

Additionally, ball gowns permit a woman to inhabit more space, as the especially billowing and expansive skirts extend the dimensions of her body. Fabric surfaces vary from reflective to matte, textured to smooth, and soft to rigid. Through the decades, undergarments have played a vital role in reshaping the natural structure of the body into the desired silhouette, from the corsets and petticoats of the nineteenth century to the control-top panty hose and padded bras of the twenty-first century.

#### **Historical Significance**

Balls have existed for centuries among royalty and the social elite, dating back to the Middle Ages. During the mid-1800s, the ball re-emerged as a desirable manner of entertainment among the upper and middle classes. Through the 1800s, the ball served as a means to bring together people of similar social backgrounds, often for purposes of introducing young women and men of marriageable age. Coming-out balls, debutante balls, or cotillion balls became standard events by the mid-1800s, and have continued in some form or another into the twenty-first century, with the high school prom added as a more middle-class and democratized version of a coming-out ball.

As popularity of the ball increased, ball gowns materialized and developed as a category of evening dress. Fashions during the first half of the nineteenth century included expansive skirts and tiny waistlines, and these characteristics were incorporated into the ball dress. Bouffant skirts functioned beautifully in the ballroom, as women skimmed across the floor as if they were floating on air. At all social levels and through the decades competition for the most opulent gown has remained a central ingredient of the event, as the finest ball gown may possibly result in the attentions of the most eligible suitor.

#### **Contemporary Use**

As the most splendid among evening dresses, ball gowns represent the romantic dreams of young women. *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* are recognizable fairy tales that instill in children the magnificence and fantasy of the ball, complete with appropriate full-skirted gown and a handsome prince. These ideas are reinforced and incorporated into our cultural consciousness. The profile of the traditional ball gown is evident in gowns for such modern-day events as weddings (bride and bride's attendants), high school proms, and the most elegant of evening occasions. Not surprisingly, designers of contemporary ball gowns continue to emphasize feminine curves while at the same time drawing from the nostalgic styles of expansive and lavishly decorated skirts, thereby establishing the wearer as a work of art.

*See also Evening Dress.*



**Designer Madame Lucille fitting ball gown.** Lavish works of fashion art, ball gowns are designed to emphasize femininity by drawing attention to the wearer's décolletage, bare arms, and small waist. © HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

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Jane E. Hegland

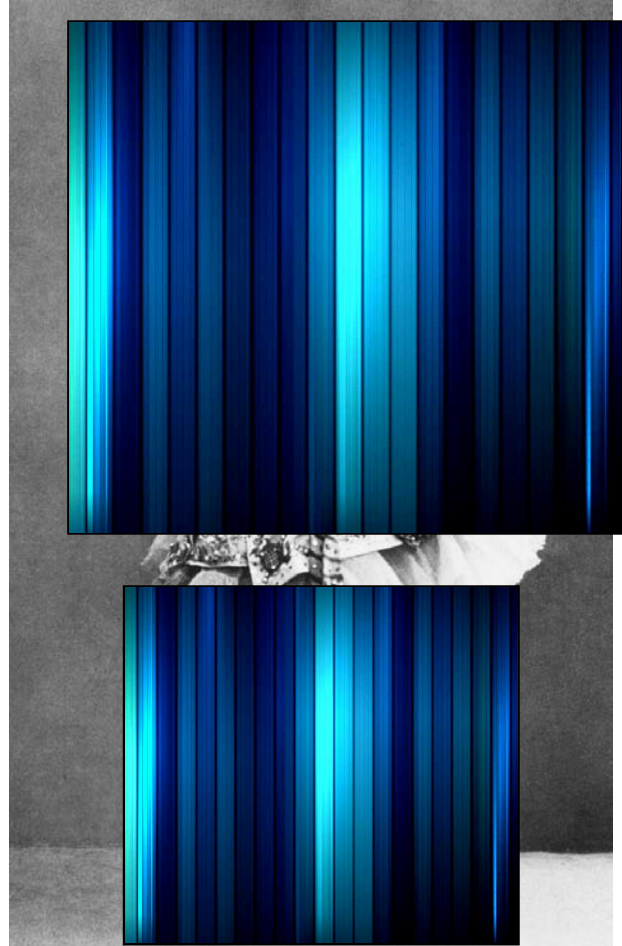
**BALLET COSTUME** Ballet costumes constitute an essential part of stage design and can be considered as a visual record of a performance. They are often the only survival of a production, representing a living imaginary picture of the scene.

### Renaissance and Baroque

The origins of ballet lie in the court spectacles of the Renaissance in France and Italy, and evidence of costumes specifically for ballet can be dated to the early fifteenth century. Illustrations from this period show the importance of masks and clothing for spectacles. Splendor at court was strongly reflected in luxuriously designed ballet costumes. Cotton and silk were mixed with flax woven into semitransparent gauze.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, public theaters were being built in Venice (1637), Rome (1652), Paris (1660), Hamburg (1678), and other important cities. Ballet spectacles were combined in these venues with processional festivities and masquerades, as stage costumes became highly decorated and made from expensive materials. The basic costume for a male dancer was a tight-fitting, often brocaded cuirass, a short draped skirt and feather-decorated helmets. Female dancers wore opulently embroidered silk tunics in several layers with fringes. Important components of the ballet dress were tightly laced, high-heeled and wedged boots for both dancers, which constituted characteristic footwear for this period.

From 1550, classical Roman dress had a strong influence on costume design: silk skirts were voluminous; positioning of necklines and waistlines and the design of hairstyles were based on the components of everyday dress, although on the stage key details were often exaggerated. Male dancers' dresses were influenced by Roman armor. Typical colors of ballet costumes ranged from dark copper to maroon and purple. A more detailed description of the theatrical dress in the Renaissance and Baroque periods may be found in Lincoln Kirstein's *Four Centuries of Ballet* (1984, p. 34).



**Prima ballerina Anna Pavlova.** Early ballerina skirts were heavy, voluminous affairs that severely restricted the dancer's movements. Fortunately, by the early twentieth century, skirts were raised to the knees to showcase pointe work. © ARCHIVO ICONOGRAFICO, S.A./CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

### Seventeenth Century

From the seventeenth century onward, silks, satins, and fabrics embroidered with real gold and precious stones increased the level of spectacular decoration associated with ballet costumes. Court dress remained the standard costume for female performers while male dancers' costumes had developed into a kind of uniform embellished with symbolic decoration to denote character or occupation; for example, scissors represented a tailor.

The first Russian ballet performance was staged in 1675, and the Russians adopted European ballet designs. Although costumes for male performers permitted complete freedom of movement, heavy garments and supporting structures for female dancers did not allow graceful gestures. However, male dancers *en travesti*, often wore knee-long skirts. The luxuriously decorated costumes of this period reflected the glory of the court;



details of dresses and silhouettes were exaggerated to be visible and identifiable to spectators viewing from a distance.

### Eighteenth Century

From the early eighteenth century, European ballet was centered in the Paris Opéra. Stage costumes were still very similar in outline to the ones in ordinary use at Court, but more elaborate. Around 1720, the *panier*, a hooped petticoat, appeared, raising skirts a few inches off the ground. During the reign of Louis XVI, court dress, ballet costumes, and fashionable architectural design incorporated decorative rococo prints and ornamental garlands. Flowers, flounces, ribbons, and lace emphasized this opulent feminine style, as soft pastel tones in citron, peach, pink, azure, and pistachio dominated the color range of stage costumes. Female dancers in male roles became popular, and, after the French Revolution in 1789 in particular, male costumes reflected the more conservative and sober Neoclassical style, which dominated the design of everyday fashionable dress. However, massive wigs and headdresses still restricted the mobility of dancers. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Russian ballet and European ballet developed similarly and were often considered an integral part of the opera.

### Nineteenth Century

From the early nineteenth century, the ideals of Romanticism were reflected in female stage costumes through the introduction of close-fitting bodices, floral crowns, corsages, and pearls on fabrics, as well as necklace and bracelets; Neoclassical style still dominated the design of male costumes. Moreover, the role of the ballerina as star dancer became more important and was emphasized with tight-fitting corsets, bejeweled bodices, and opulent headdresses. In 1832, Marie Taglioni's gauze-layered white tutu in *La Sylphide* set a new trend in ballet costumes, in which silhouettes became tighter, revealing the legs and the permanently toe-shoed feet. From this point on, the silhouette of ballet costumes became more tight fitting. The choreography required that ballerinas to wear pointe shoes all the time. The Russian ballet continued to develop in the nineteenth century and such writers and composers as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Tchaikovsky changed the meaning of ballet through the composition of narrative productions. Choreographers of classical ballet, such as Marius Petipa, created fairy-tale ballets, including *The Sleeping Beauty* (1890), *Swan Lake* (1895), and *Raymonde* (1898), making fantasy costumes very popular.

### Twentieth Century

At the turn of the twentieth century, ballet costumes reformed again under the more liberal influence of the Russian choreographer Michel Fokine. Ballerina skirts changed gradually to become knee-length tutus designed to show off the point work and multiple turns, which



**Program featuring Vaslav Nijinsky and Tamara Karsavina.** By the end of the nineteenth century, tights were a standard part of the male dancer's ensemble due to the great range of motion they offered. © GIANNI DAGLI ORTI/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

formed the focus of dance practice. The dancer Isadora Duncan freed ballerinas from corsets and introduced a revolutionary natural silhouette. The Russian impresario and producer Serge Diaghilev marked this era with his creative innovations, and professional costumers like Alexandre Benois and Léon Bakst demonstrated, in performances such as *Schéhérezade* (1910), that the influence of Orientalism had spread from fashion to the stage and vice versa. Indeed, fashion designers like Jean Poiret had already used the tunic shape taken up by dancers in the prewar era, and, in the 1920s, costume designers updated classical Russian story ballets with exotic tunics and veils wrapped around the body. Ballet dancers were dressed in loose tunics, harem pants, and turbans, rather than in the established tutu and feather headdress. Instead of discreet pastel colors vibrant shades, such as yellow, orange, or red, often in wild patterns, gave an unprecedented visual impression of exciting exoticism to the spectator.

### Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism liberalized the rules of ballet costumes, and, after Diaghilev's death in 1929, costume design was no longer impeded by restrictions imposed by traditional-



### THE MASK IN BALLET SPECTACLES

Mary Clarke's and Clement Crisp's *Design for Ballet* (London 1978, p. 34) serves to illustrate a vivid description of the importance of masks in ballet performances to stylize characters: "For demons, this was properly hideous; for nymphs it would be sweetly naïve, rivers wore venerable bearded masks, while dwarfs and juveniles might be encumbered with massive heads. Masks were also sometimes placed upon knees, elbows, and the chest to indicate something more of the character." Half-masks were still worn until the 1770s and were from then on replaced by facial makeup.

ists. Nowadays ballet dancers perform in various costumes, which can still include traditional Diaghilev designs. In postmodern productions like Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake*, the costume designer Lez Brotherston turned the traditional gracile female cygnets into topless, feather-legged male swans. However, fashion designers of the 1990s have picked up the theme of ballerina shoes. The house of Chanel designed elegant, heelless slippers tied up with ribbons and brought the ballerina shoe from the stage to the street.

See also **Dance and Fashion; Dance Costume; Theatrical Costume.**

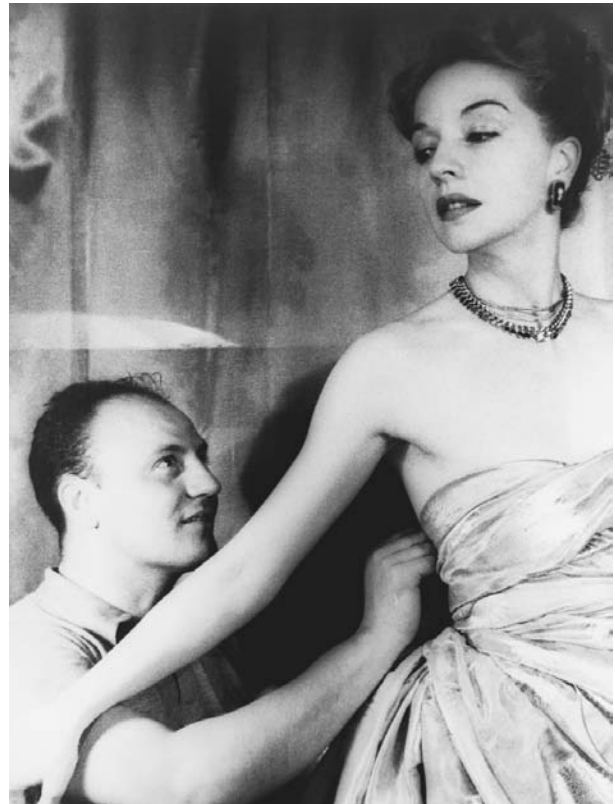
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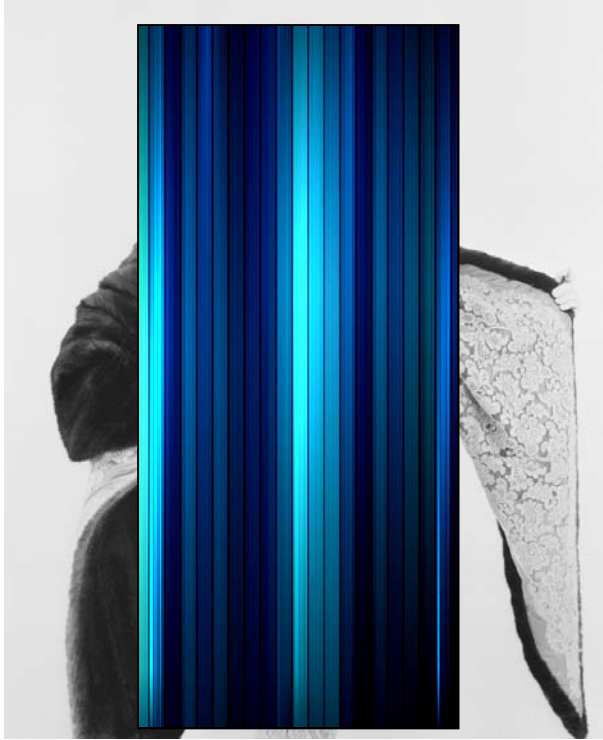
Thomas Hecht

**BALMAIN, PIERRE** Pierre Balmain (1914–1982) was born in the Savoie region of France in 1914. He studied architecture for a year in Paris before taking a position as a sketch artist with the fashion house of Robert Piguet in 1934. He worked at the House of Molyneux as an assistant designer from 1934 to 1938, and as a designer with Lucien Lelong in Paris in 1939 and from 1941 to 1945. During this time he worked alongside another young designer at Lelong, Christian Dior. In 1945 Balmain founded the Maison Balmain as a couture house with a lucrative sideline in fragrances. He expanded into the American market in 1953, showing his collections under the brand name Jolie Madame. The Balmain perfume business was sold to Revlon in 1960, but Pierre Balmain continued as the proprietor and chief designer of the Maison Balmain until his death in 1982.

The fashion historian Farid Chenoune described Pierre Balmain as one of "the supreme practitioners of the New Look generation," along with Christian Dior and Jacques Fath. During the 1950s and 1960s, Balmain's clients included some of the world's most elegant and best-dressed women, such as Katharine Hepburn, Vivien Leigh, Marlene Dietrich, and Queen Sirikit of Thailand.



**Pierre Balmain fitting a dress.** A devotee of the basic principals of fashion, Balmain opened Maison Balmain in 1945, and began producing elegant creations that yielded him several famous clients. © CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.



**Pierre Balmain, 1956.** The woman models an elegant, strapless sheath dress made of embroidered French lace. A greige taffeta sash adds to the sleek line of the look, and the mink stole, lined with the lace, gives a flare of luxury. © BETTMANN/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

Balmain's work was characterized by an emphasis on impeccable construction and simple elegance. He is credited with popularizing the stole as an accessory. He once said, "Keep to the basic principles of fashion and you will always be in harmony with the latest trends without falling prey to them."

The Maison Balmain continued in business after Pierre Balmain's death, with several designers and under shifting ownership throughout the 1980s. A ready-to-wear line was added in 1982. The company reacquired its perfume business from Revlon but unwisely entered into extensive licensing agreements that put the Balmain name on a wide range of products, diluting the company's image. In 1993 Oscar de la Renta took on the position of chief designer for the Maison Balmain—the first American to become head designer for a Paris couture house. De la Renta's first collection for the company, which appeared on the runway in February 1994, was a critical and commercial success. Critics generally agree that de la Renta, who spent nearly a decade at Balmain, succeeded not only in reviving the company's fortunes, but also in restoring the house's old reputation for elegance. Oscar de la Renta presented his final collection for Balmain in July 2002. He was succeeded by Laurent

Mercier, who was artistic director from 2002 to 2003, and Christophe Lebourg, who was appointed in 2003.

*See also* **De la Renta, Oscar; Dior, Christian; Fath, Jacques; New Look; Paris Fashion; Perfume.**

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*John S. Major*

**BALZAC, HONORÉ DE** Honoré Balzac was born to an aspiring bourgeois family in Tours, France in 1799. The family later attributed itself an aristocratic particle, making him Honoré de Balzac. The famous writer died in Paris in 1850, having authored over ninety novels and numerous plays, articles, and short stories.

Balzac avoided the word "dandy" in his writings. In France in the 1830s and 1840s it had negative connotations of foppishness and English eccentricity. In his *Traité de la vie élégante* (*Treatise on the Elegant Life*) of 1830, he wrote: "In making himself a dandy, a man becomes a piece of boudoir furniture, an extremely ingenious mannequin, who can sit upon a horse or a sofa ... but a thinking being ... never." Despite his critiques of the dandy's intellect, he greatly admired masculine elegance and British tailoring. One of his most famous literary dandies, Henry de Marsay, epitomizes the sexual appeal and ambiguity of Balzac's version of the dandy. De Marsay was "[...] famous for the passions he inspired, especially remarkable because of his beauty, like that of a young girl, a soft, effeminate beauty, but counterbalanced by his steady, calm, wild and fixed gaze, like that of a tiger: he was loved and he caused fear" (*Lost Illusions*). Balzac's writings emphasized the contrast between the dandy's leisured cultivation of elegance and the dull soulless drudgery of the workingman's life. His philosophy stands at the cusp between a British model of dandyism as a phenomenon embedded in a specific social context and later nineteenth-century French and British ideas of the decadent dandy. He influenced writers such as Charles Baudelaire and Joris-Karl Huysmans, for whom the dandy was a heroic outsider rebelling against increasing industrialization and social uniformity.

Balzac cultivated his personal style and public image. At the end of 1830, he owed his tailor 904 francs, which was more than his entire yearly budget for food and lodging in Paris. As a young, upwardly mobile writer he described his extraordinary dress as a *réclame* or advertisement and claimed that his cane caused all of Paris



**Honoré de Balzac.** Known for his own somewhat flamboyant fashion style, Balzac paid particular attention to dress and clothing in his writings, even using famous tailors as characters in his books. PUBLIC DOMAIN.

to chatter. Indeed, Balzac's accessories seem to have been particularly remarkable: he carried a monstrous cane studded with turquoise, wore coat buttons of elaborately carved gold, and modeled an astonishing variety of waistcoats and gloves. Despite his efforts at elegance, he did not always cut a fine figure and his flamboyant style was not always favorably received. Physically, he was short and squat, and he sacrificed attempts at personal hygiene when deeply involved in his work. Captain Gronow remarked that he wore sparkling jewels on dirty shirtfronts and diamond rings on unwashed fingers.

He patronized several famous tailors and these men, along with haberdashers, glovemakers, and other tradesmen, feature prominently in his novels. It is rumored that he had his clothing paid for by advertising certain tailors—including their names, addresses, and eulogies of their products—in his writing. For example, in the novel *Lost Illusions* (*Illusions Perdues*, 1837–1843) the young provincial poet Lucien de Rubempré is shamed when he pays cash for an ill-fitting, bright green ready-made suit and wears it to the Paris Opéra. The mature dandy Henry de Marsay insults Lucien, comparing him with a clothed tailor's mannequin. The next day he goes

to Staub, who was one of Balzac's own tailors, and spends most of his yearly income on a new outfit. When he returns to his native Angoulême, he turns his new appearance to his advantage. In his skin-tight black trousers he attracts all of the noblewomen of the city. They flock to see him in his new role as a handsome *lion* or man of fashion. Balzac observes that the styles of the day were best suited to sculptural physiques: "Men still showed off their bodies, to the great despair of the thin or badly-built, and Lucien's form was Apollonian." The Staub suit transforms Lucien's existence in Paris, catapults him to instant notoriety and helps him launch his literary career. This novel celebrates the social power of dress and demeanor.

Honoré de Balzac's early journalistic writing pays particular attention to men's fashion. The most important publication related directly to dandyism is the *Traité de la vie élégante* (*Treatise on the Elegant Life*), which was published in Émile de Girardin's royalist review *La Mode* between 2 October and 6 November 1830. This text fictionalizes the British dandy George Brummell, whom he calls the "patriarch of fashion." Balzac uses him as a mouthpiece to expound his own principles on elegant dress and lifestyle. In the *Treatise*, he pioneered the concept of *vestignomonie* (vestignomony), a pun on the pseudoscience of physiognomy. While physiognomists claimed to be able to read human character from facial types and expressions, Balzac affirmed that clothing could be read and deciphered in the same way. Despite the seemingly increasing uniformity of dress in democratic, post-revolutionary France, Balzac claimed that it was easy for the observer to distinguish between men from various social strata and professions. He claimed that clothes revealed the Parisian doctor, aristocrat, or student from the neighborhoods of the Marais, the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the Latin Quarter or the Chaussée d'Antin.

While much of Balzac's early work was published in fashionable journals like *La Mode*, *Le Voleur* and *La Silhouette*, his later writings demonstrate a sustained interest in vestimentary style. Dress and clothing play a central role in the ninety-odd volumes of *La Comédie Humaine* (*The Human Comedy*) named as a pun on Dante's *Divine Comedy*. These novels constitute a panorama of French social life from the Revolution (1789) to the end of the July Monarchy (1848). The most important dandy figures in his novels include Eugène de Rastignac, Lucien de Rubempré, Maxime de Trailles, Charles Grandet, Georges Marest, Amédée Soulas, Lousteau, Raphael Valentin and Henry de Marsay. Some of his most important novels were *Old Goriot*, *Eugénie Grandet*, *Lost Illusions*, and *Cousin Bette*.

Balzac's detailed observations and extensive descriptions paint a vivid picture of the nuances of dress in his period and herald the importance given to fashion in realist literature. While Balzac's importance to the study of fashion is taken for granted in French literary criticism,

many of his important journalistic texts have not yet been translated into English. Nonetheless, his novels contain some of the most engaging and sophisticated verbal descriptions of fashion in the history of literature.

See also **Fashion, Historical Studies of.**

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Alison Matthews David

**BARBERS** The word “barber” is derived from the Latin *barba* meaning “beard,” and the profession of barber has been in existence since the earliest recorded period. In Ezekiel 5:1, for instance, “the son of man” is urged to “take thee a barber’s razor and cause it to pass upon thy head and upon thy beard.” The professional status of the barber has changed dramatically over the centuries. The medieval barber was a “barber-surgeon” responsible for not only shaving and trimming hair, but also for dental treatment and minor surgery, especially *phlebotomy* or bleeding. Barber-surgeons were organized into guilds as early as the twelfth century in Europe, and one of the most famous, the Worshipful Company of Barbers, was created in London in 1308. Barber-surgeons could be recognized in the seventeenth century by their uniform, a “cheque parti-coloured apron; neither can he be termed a barber, or poler, or shaver till the apron is about him” (Randle Holme, 1688; in Stevens-Cox, p. 220). The apron had a large front pocket that held the tools of the trade. A white or gray coat had supplanted this traditional outfit by the early twentieth century.

The barber’s premises were marked out by a standard sign—a blue, red, and white striped pole. This symbol was derived from the pole gripped during bleeding when the vein in the bend of the elbow was opened. As this operation was performed without anesthetic, it was often painful. When not in use, the pole stood outside the barbershop as sign of service, and the image was incorporated into the characteristic sign that developed. The red and blue on the sign represented the blood of the veins and arteries, and the white symbolized the bandages used after bleeding. The seventeenth-century fashion for a smooth-shaven face led to a boom in trade. The barber would soften the client’s bristles with a mixture of soap and water, oil, or fat using a hog bristle brush and then shave him using a well-stropped razor. Demand for bar-

bers’ services continued with the increasing complexity of men’s hairstyles in the late eighteenth century and the popularity of beards in the nineteenth century.

Barbers had declined in prestige by this time, however, as a result of the trades of barber and surgeon being made independent of one another in 1745. Surgery became a well-respected profession, and barbering began to be viewed as a lowly occupation (as had been true all along in many other cultures). The barbershop of the nineteenth century gained a reputation as a rather insalubrious place, a gathering place of idle and sometimes rowdy men. In Europe, barbers had a reputation as procurers of prostitutes and cigars, and by the mid-twentieth century, contraceptives, leading to the popular English phrase, “A little something for the weekend, Sir?”

The practice of barbering was also regarded as unsanitary. In the nineteenth century, a client could be the recipient of a “foul shave” from infected razors and hot towels passed from customer to customer without being cleaned, which caused infections commonly referred to as “barbers’ itch.” A contemporary description of a barber ran: “The Average Barber is in a state of perspiration and is greasy; his fingers pudgy and his nails in mourning; he snips and snips away, pinching your ears, nipping your eyelashes and your jaw... he draws his fingers in a pot of axle grease, scented with musk and age, and before you can define his fearful intent, smears it all over your head” (*Hairdressers’ Weekly Journal*, p. 73). The British trade publication *Hairdressers’ Weekly Journal* chose this description of 1882 to begin a concerted campaign calling for better education and standards of hygiene among barbers, designed to improve their image and status.

In America, a tradition had developed in the late eighteenth century of black-owned barbershops that catered to a white clientele; prosperous black barbers often became leading members of their communities. After the Civil War, however, the laws of racial segregation in many states prohibited black barbers from tending to white customers, and barbering declined in importance as an African American trade. By 1899–1900 Italian men made up sixty percent of immigrant barbers. In Italy, Spain, and France, haircutting was regarded as a profession of skill and dexterity. The contrast in public image was striking: Spain’s Barber of Seville versus England’s Sweeney Todd, the demon-barber of Fleet Street.

The practice of self-shaving also transformed the role of the barbershop. Jean Jacques Perret invented the first safety razor with a wooden guard along the blade in 1770, but the self-shaving revolution really began with the invention of the Gillette safety razor in 1895. Throughout the twentieth century, barbershops increasingly relied on haircutting rather than shaving as the basis of their trade.

By the 1920s some brave women were prepared to enter the masculine arena of the barbershop to get their



**Nineteenth-century British illustration.** Barbershops of the nineteenth century often had rather unsavory reputations, due partly to the clientele, which was regarded as uncouth, and partly to the perceived unsanitary practices of the barbers themselves. © HISTORICAL PICTURE ARCHIVE/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

hair bobbed. One of these women remembers “walking through the barbershop and being very conscious that we were somehow transgressing male space. The barbershop was filled with groups of men chewing tobacco and engaged in conversations about weather, politics, rodeo, and wrestling” (Willett, p. 1). The vogue for short haircuts was so prevalent that the few hairdressers who could actually cut rather than dress hair were fully booked, and in any case many women preferred to give their hair up to the skill of the barber rather than the hairdresser. Women’s hairdressers quickly fought back with formal education and the introduction of lush salons where female clients could be pampered.

With the more elaborate hairstyles of the 1950s, in particular the variations of the pompadour, men began to spend more time and money at the barbers’, who began to use the term “men’s stylists” to distinguish themselves from the old-fashioned barbershops. By the late 1960s, the longer hair trends for men, which had developed out of counterculture styles, meant fewer and fewer visits to the barber. In the United States, the census figures reported that between 1972 and 1982 the number

of barbershops fell by more than 28 percent. This necessitated a change in tonsorial skills and marketing and by 1970 journalist Rodney Bennett-England, who specialized in male grooming, declared, “The old barber, trained in the use of electric clippers, was a technician. Today’s barbers are stylists, even artists” (p. 104). He described salons for men that “resemble gentlemen’s clubs with deep, comfortable armchairs, wood panelled walls and pictures or prints....you can easily while away a complete half-day having your hair heightened, lightened and brightened, your hands manicured and your tired face cleansed and patted back into new vigour” (p. 105). The old barbershop still existed by the early 2000s with a dwindling clientele, but many men with an interest in fashionable haircuts go to “unisex” hairdressers who no longer bother to specialize in either male or female clients.

See also **Hair Accessories; Hairdressers; Hairstyles.**

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Caroline Cox

**BARBIE** Since the Mattel corporation introduced Barbie in 1959, the doll's relation to fashion, sex, femininity, and cultural values has been a subject of spin control, change, and controversy.

Early official accounts of Barbie's beginnings emphasized the desire of Ruth Handler, Mattel's co-founder, to produce a three-dimensional version of the paper fashion dolls her daughter, Barbara, loved. But Barbie's body actually originated elsewhere: with a German character named Lilli, who appeared in cartoon and doll form primarily as a sexpot plaything for adult men. Mattel bought all the rights and patents required to remove Lilli from that context of meaning and turned her into Barbie, the "shapely teenage Fashion Model!" announced in early catalogs.

Changes followed soon after the doll's launch, as Mattel worked to gear Barbie's persona to sales and supplementary products. In a 1961 television ad, Barbie, although still described as a fashion model, had acquired a school life, a boyfriend, and outfits for activities ranging from school lunches to frat parties: "Think of the fun you'll have taking Barbie and Ken on dates, dressing each one just right." The ad's invitation to "see where the romance will lead" illustrated Barbie's dreamy future by showing her in a wedding dress, a costume that would recur in many subsequent versions. Other outfits to come included the latest in formal wear, casual attire, sports gear, and lingerie. Many fashions were modeled after the work of contemporary designers. Sometimes Mattel enlisted designers directly, especially for the high-end offerings later created to cash in on the ever-increasing traffic in Barbie collectibles. Like designer Bob Mackie's 1991 "Limited Edition Platinum Barbie," these sometimes sold for up to several hundred dollars each.

### Careers and Colors

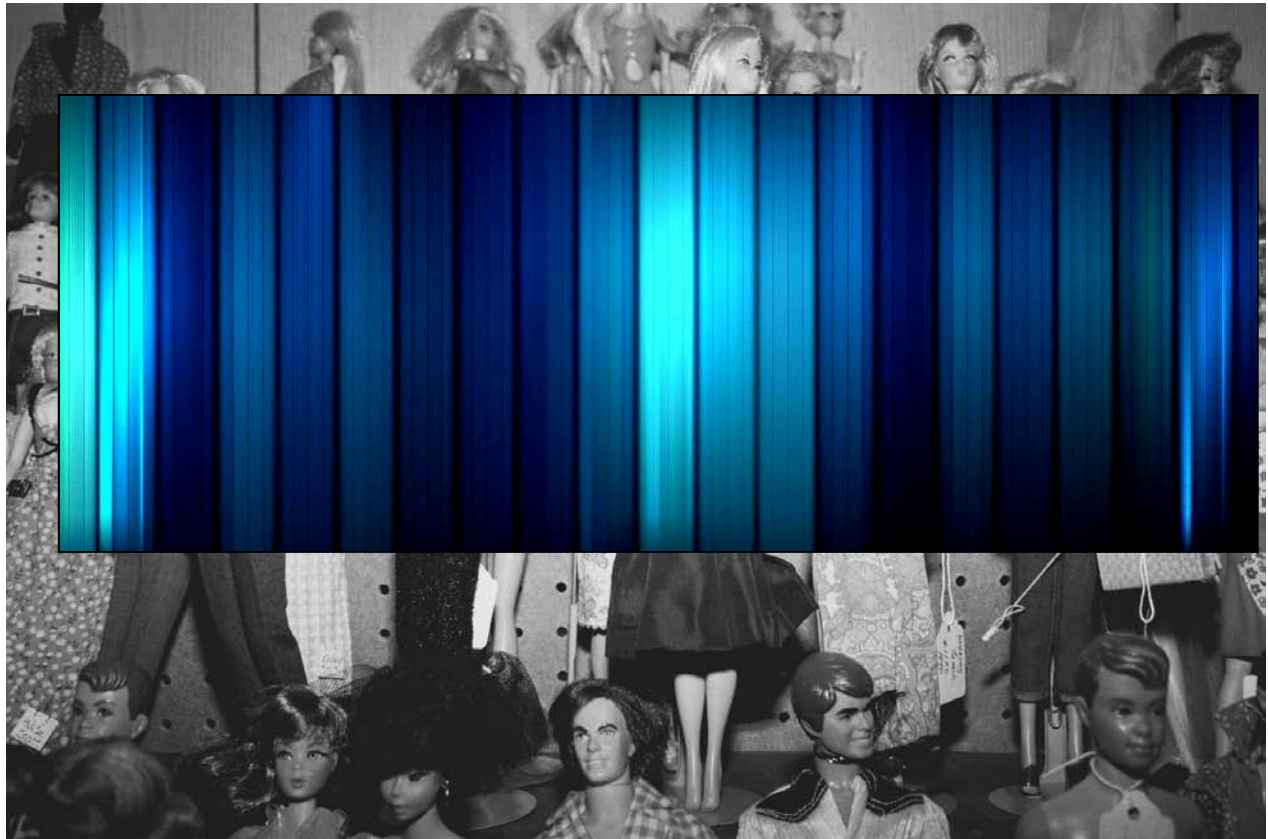
Over the years, too, Barbie saw expanding options in one type of costume that would generate praise, humor, doubt, and derision: the career outfit. In the early 1960s, Barbie's career identities were primarily traditionally female, like nurse; largely unattainable, like astronaut; or both, like ballerina. Barbie had less work, ironically, during the burgeoning of popular feminism in the 1970s.



**Lettie Lane paper doll with clothes.** Mattel co-founder Ruth Handler's desire to produce a three-dimensional version of paper dolls such as these was the genesis for Barbie. © CYNTHIA HART DESIGNER/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

Her career life took off in the mid-1980s, however, with the Day-to-Night Barbie line. Its first incarnation presented Barbie as an executive, whose pink suit could be transformed into evening wear. She came with the slogan "We Girls Can Do Anything," a catchphrase relevant also to the range of careers that Barbie adopted into the 1990s, which included doctor, veterinarian, UNICEF ambassador, rock star, rap musician, teacher, chef, Marine Corps sergeant, and professional basketball player for the WNBA.

Besides addressing concerns about whether a girl with few apparent interests other than fashion, fun, and spending a vast amount of cash on clothes, cars (like the Barbie Ferrari), and real estate (like the famed Barbie Dream House) provided a good role model, career Barbies suited an important change in Mattel's marketing strategy. Initially, Mattel wanted consumers to supplement their first Barbie with outfits, accessories, and other characters such as Ken and Midge, Barbie's close yet dis-



**Barbies on display.** Since her introduction in 1959, Barbie has been marketed with many different looks to entice children to buy multiple dolls. This strategy appears to have paid off, as the average number of Barbies owned per child grew to ten in the 1990s. © BETTMANN/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

tinctly unglamorous friend. In fact, the promotion for the 1967 Twist 'N Turn Barbie even offered a trade-in deal. Later, promotions became geared to the purchase of multiple Barbies. In 1992, for example, a Barbie owner interested in the rapper outfit had to buy Rappin' Rockin' Barbie, or four of them to get each of the different boom boxes. Another trend sponsored by Mattel that catered simultaneously to sales and social consciousness was the increase in Barbies of color and Barbies representing countries outside the United States. Changing statistics about how many Barbies the "average child" owns suggest Mattel's success at shifting multiple acquisitions to Barbie herself, with the number climbing from seven to ten over the course of the 1990s.

### Controversies

With Barbie's popularity has come increasing controversy, both about Barbie's (unrecyclable) plastic body and about the flesh to which it does, or does not, refer. To a number of critics, Barbie represents shallow feminism, focused primarily on individual success and fulfillment, and Barbie's world looks like diversity lite, peopled by innumerable white, blond Barbies, unquestionably front

and center, and a much smaller number of Barbies who look like white Barbies with skin and hair dye jobs. Detractors have advanced other arguments as well: that Mattel's restriction of Barbie's dating life to boys adds yet another set of cultural narratives guiding young people to see heterosexuality as the desired, perhaps required, norm; that Barbie's impossible-to-attain proportions contribute to cultural ideals of beauty that invite self-loathing and unhealthy eating practices; and that Barbie promotes an undue focus on looks in general. Why give a girl Soccer Barbie (1999) instead of a soccer ball?

Yet as other commentators have noted, Barbie has generated a lot of play far from Mattel's official sponsorship. Mattel's WNBA Barbie may not emerge from the box with the characteristic butch flair displayed by many of her charming human counterparts, but in the hands and minds of many consumers, Barbie has been butched out, turned out, fixed up with diverse sex mates, and, of course, undressed; for a doll whose wardrobe forms the centerpiece of her reputation, she spends quite a lot of time naked. Then again, for some critics, this is Mattel's fault, too. People who like to imagine children as innocent of sexual desires have accused the company



of turning their children's minds to sex with its big-breasted adult doll. Others, conversely, have mourned what Mattel couldn't do: inspire femininity in their daughters or distaste in insufficiently truck-minded sons.

### Object of Attention

From all these diverse uses and assessments of Barbie, one certainty emerges. Barbie remains an object of attention, fascination, and, of course, purchase. Whatever her influence has been—and surely it has varied among individuals and over time—she has successfully convinced many of her importance as a symbol of femininity, as a catalyst for fantasy, and as a marker and agent of cultural values.

See also **Fashion and Identity**; **Fashion Dolls**.

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*Erica Rand*

**BARBIER, GEORGES** The French illustrator, painter, and theatrical designer Georges Barbier (1882–1932) was born in the seaport city of Nantes. The city's seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architecture, as well as its art museum collections, with works by Antoine Watteau and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, influenced Barbier's aesthetic sensibilities. As a young man he moved to Paris where, between 1908 and 1910, he studied at l'École des beaux-arts in the atelier of the academic history painter, Jean-Paul Laurens. Although Barbier's artistic style differed significantly from that of his teacher, his appreciation of the past as a source of inspiration was undoubtedly reinforced by Laurens's subjects.

In the galleries of the Louvre, Barbier discovered the art of classical antiquity. His enduring admiration for Greek and Etruscan vases, Tanagra figurines, and small Egyptian sculptures is evident in his depiction of the human body and resonates overall in the clarity and restraint of his graphic work. His refined color sense and use of strong colors, influenced by costumes of the Ballets Russes, which was founded in Paris in 1909, also characterize his work.

Barbier first exhibited at the Salon des humoristes in 1911, where his drawings were immediately acclaimed; subsequently, he was a regular contributor to the Salon des artistes décorateurs. Barbier was a prolific and skill-

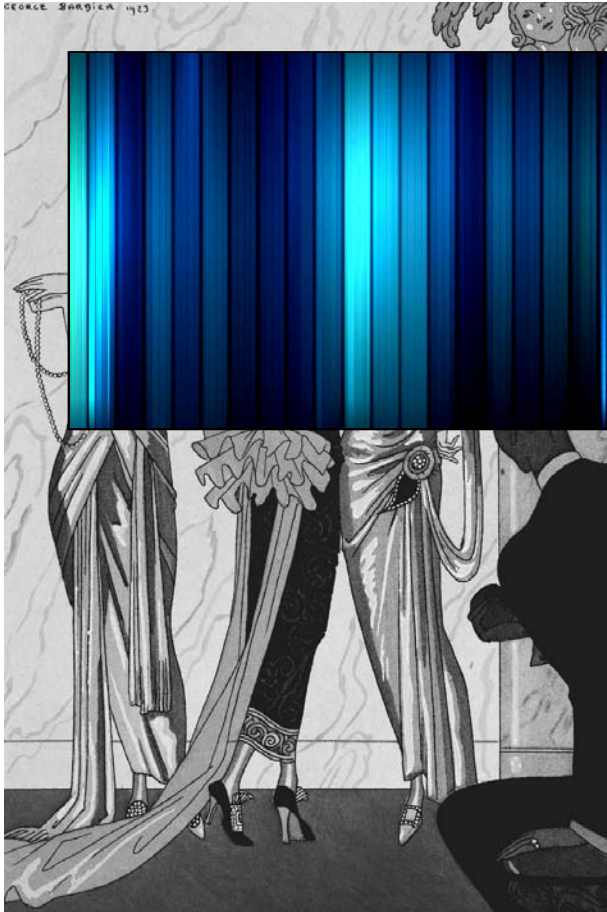


**Rendez-vous by Georges Barbier.** Barbier's illustrations employed strong colors and casual elegance to depict the 1920s fashionable ideal. Barbier's figures, with strong forms and dark-lidded eyes, represented the concept of female beauty and grace. © STAPLETON COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

ful artist whose sophisticated style was in great demand. Over the course of his brief career, he contributed to most of the leading French fashion journals and almanacs; illustrated numerous publications of classic and contemporary French prose and poetry issued in limited, deluxe editions; and designed costumes for stage productions, including ballet, film, and revues, such as the Folies Bergère and the Casino de Paris. In addition, Barbier wrote essays on fashion that appeared in *La Gazette du bon ton* and other journals, and as a member of the Société des artistes décorateurs, he produced designs for jewelry, glass, and wallpaper. One of the most well-known and highly regarded artists working in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, Barbier died in Paris at the peak of his profession in 1932.

### Barbier and Art Deco

In Michael Arlen's best-selling 1924 novel, *The Green Hat*, the heroine Iris March is compared to a figure in a Barbier fashion illustration: "She stood carelessly like the women in Georges Barbier's almanacs, *Falbalas et Fanfreluches*, who know how to stand carelessly. Her hands were thrust into the pockets of a light brown leather jacket—pour le sport" (Steele, p. 247). The casual elegance ascribed to Arlen's character, a quintessential element of the 1920s fashion ideal, epitomizes Barbier's



**The Judgement of Paris, ca. 1915.** Painted by French artist Georges Barbier, three women display haute couture of the art deco period. Influences of classic antiquity show in the design of the head adornments, the jewelry, and the dresses. High-heeled shoes square off the modern look. © STAPLETON COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

figures. With their strong yet lithe forms and dark-lidded, slightly exotic eyes, Barbier's women embody the notions of female beauty and grace of the time.

Beginning with the innovative and influential *Le Journal des dames et des modes* (1912–1914), launched by Lucien Vogel, Barbier's talents were sought after by the publishers and editors of avant-garde fashion magazines. Following the lead of the couturier Paul Poiret, whose collaboration with the artists Paul Iribe and Georges Lepape in 1908 and 1911, respectively, set the standard for a new, modernist presentation of fashion, these publications showcased the emerging art deco aesthetic. Rather than realistic, fussily detailed renderings of dress, Barbier and his fellow illustrators (Lepape, Iribe, Bernard Boutet de Monvel, Pierre Brissaud, and Charles Martin, among others) created bold, stylized images that conveyed mood and atmosphere. The laborious technique of *pochoir* printing used for these illustrations (a hand-stenciled

process whereby layers of color are built up in gouache paint) enhanced their visual impact.

In addition to *Le Journal des dames*, Barbier contributed widely to other luxury fashion periodicals including *La Gazette du bon ton* (1912–1925), *Les Feuilles d'art* (1919–1922), and *Art goût beauté* (1920–1933), as well as *Vogue*, *Femina*, and *La Vie parisienne*. Barbier was also commissioned to illustrate more specialized fashion publications: couturiers' albums and almanacs, such as *Modes et manières d'aujourd'hui* (1912–1923), *La Guirlande des mois* (1917–1920), *Le Bonheur du jour* (1920–1924), and *Falbalas et fanfreluches* (1922–1926). Modeled after the early nineteenth-century publication *Le Bon genre* that chronicles the modes and lifestyle of the First Empire and the Bourbon restoration, Barbier's refined and often witty drawings for particular almanacs not only depict Parisian haute couture but also record the social scene and fashionable activities in charming vignettes.

### Set Designs and Costumes

Although it is primarily through Barbier's fashion illustrations that one is familiar with his work, in his lifetime his book illustrations and theatrical costume designs contributed significantly to his artistic reputation and success. Both authors with whom he collaborated and critics agreed that Barbier was able to distill the essence of a literary text and give it visual form. His interpretations of historic dress and interiors for the stage (including *Casanova* and *La Dernière nuit de Don Juan* by Edmond Rostand, *Marion Delorme* by Victor Hugo, and *Lysistrata* by Maurice Donnay) were admired for their imaginative evocation of a particular time and place, rather than representing merely a scrupulous imitation or pastiche. Barbier's love of the exotic resulted in spectacular beribboned, furred, feathered, and jeweled fantasy costumes for revue performers at popular Paris nightclubs.

### Legacy

In the preface to *Personnages de comédie* (1922), illustrated by Barbier, Albert Flament refers to him as “One of the most precious and significant artists of our era. . . . When our times are lost . . . in the dust . . . some of his watercolours and drawings will be all that is necessary to resurrect the taste and the spirit of the years in which we have lived” (Ginsburg, p. 3). Barbier was undoubtedly one of the preeminent fashion illustrators of the early twentieth century. Among the group of artists including Lepape, Iribe, and Monvel, dubbed “The Knights of the Bracelet” by *Vogue* in 1922 (a reference to their “dandyism . . . and love of luxury” [Barbier, p. 6]), Barbier was in the forefront of the alliance between art and fashion. His superb draftsmanship, color sense, and ability to infuse freshness into historic influences combine to produce distinctive images that define the modernity of the art deco style.

See also **Art Nouveau and Art Deco; Fashion Illustrators; Fashion Magazines.**

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Michele Majer

**BARK CLOTH** The term “bark cloth” has been known by various names in the Pacific Islands, including: tapa or *kapa* (Hawaii), *ngatu* (Tonga), *abu* or *ka’u* (Tahiti), *masi* (Fiji), and *autea* (Cook Islands). “Tapa” is the popular word now used to describe bark cloth throughout the Pacific Islands. Bark cloth, or tapa, describes the fabric whose source material is the bark of a tree or similar plant material grown in tropical areas around the world and is, therefore, cellulosic. Like felting, bark cloth produces a nonwoven fabric. Like felting, bark cloth or tapa is produced in a warm, moist environment. While the bonding of fibers in felt is mechanical, the bonding in bark cloth is chemical.

One of the plants carried by exploring Polynesians was paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), called *wauke* by Hawaiians. In addition to paper mulberry, several other plants found in tropical locales have been used for making bark cloth.

### Production

To start the bark-cloth-making process, the inner bark (bast) of a tree or plant was stripped or removed from its source, the outer bark of a tree or branch, and cleaned. The bast fibers were then placed in water, often seawater, causing the fibers to break down (ferment or ret) into a somewhat sticky substance resembling bread dough. The substance was spread on a specially carved flat wood surface called a *kua kuku* in Hawaiian and then beaten with grooved wooden beaters, called *boboa*, of various thicknesses. As the substance was beaten, it became wider, longer, and thinner and began to dry. It was spread into a thin sheet and laid out to dry with stones holding the edges in place against the winds. The result, depending on thickness, was a fairly supple, somewhat paperlike sheet of fabric. The beating of a *boboa* on a *kua kuku* was also reportedly sometimes used for sending messages. The special houses or sheds used for beating tapa were called *hale kuku*, and when people gathered for beating, it could be compared to a modern quilting group or party.

Bark-cloth-making was refined in many areas of Polynesia, especially Hawaii. Though pieces of tapa were most commonly beaten or pounded together to make larger pieces, tapa pieces were also sewn together with fiber and a wooden needle. Edges were turned under and fused, by beating or sewing, for evenness. Various thicknesses for different purposes could be achieved in the beating process. Fabric could be made so thin as to be gossamer, or thicker strips of the fabric were sometimes plaited.

### Decorative Bark Cloth

Many sources agree that Hawaiians developed the most complex and greatest number of decorative prints for bark cloth. Some tapa was dyed first by soaking, or sometimes by brushing the dye onto the fabric, or even beating an already dyed piece of tapa into a larger piece. The Hawaiians carved designs into pieces of bamboo often shaped like thin paddles. These strips of carved wood were then used to stamp or print on the tapa with dyes from plants and soil and other sources. The Hawaiians were careful and precise printers, making sure that patterns were straight and continuous. Several patterns might be used on one length of tapa, creating unique patterns. Interesting patterns could also be obtained by plaiting or twisting pieces of tapa or other plant materials into a long strip and then pressing the length against the tapa. The most common colors used were brown, black, pink, red, green, pale to medium blue, and yellow.

### Uses

Bark cloth was derived and used as fabric in other tropical areas well into the late twentieth century. South American Indian populations still living in the remote forests of Brazil, Panama, and Colombia used bark cloth, called *damajagua* (Colombia), as sleeping mats. Based on photographs and descriptions of researchers, the bark cloth of the South American Indians is crude compared with the bark cloth produced in the Pacific Islands. It appears that one of the biggest reasons South American bark cloth was coarser than that of Polynesia is that the retting time allowed for the bast fibers was considerably shorter, overnight, compared with the several days of retting by Polynesians.

Throughout the Pacific Islands, bark cloth was used as a household fabric for both bedding and clothing, and in making ceremonial objects. As clothing, the fabric was wrapped and tied onto the body. It could be gathered or pleated in various ways to create decorative effects for ceremonial occasions.

In everyday use, women commonly wrapped the bark-cloth fabric, called a *pa’u*, around their bodies and tied and tucked the ends in to keep it in place. Women commonly covered only the lower part of their bodies between the waist and knees with the *pa’u*.



**Women fold bark cloth.** Produced throughout the Pacific Islands, bark cloth is made from the bark of a tree or similar plant. The cloth was used for bedding and clothing, and in making ceremonial objects, but was rarely used by the early 2000s. © JACK FIELDS/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

The *malo*, worn by men, was also wrapped around the body and between the legs to protect the genitalia. The *malo* might or might not have a flap in the front, which could be tucked away depending on tasks that needed to be performed on a given day. Originally only men performed the hula. When performing, additional pieces of tapa could be tied over the *malo*. Tapa was also tied around the shoulders by both men and women when a little extra warmth was needed. Such capes were called *kibe*.

The largest and most elaborate pieces of Hawaiian tapa were made into bedding. Five to eight sheets of plain white tapa were sewn along one edge and then topped with a dyed and watermarked piece. During cool nights the layers could be draped over the sleeper, or laid back, for desired warmth. Tapa was also scented on occasion. Sap, leaves, or flowers were mixed with oil and heated and then added to a dye.

Bark cloth is rarely used for clothing today. It lacks the pliability of woven fabrics, it tends to break down when wet, and processing is labor intensive. The fabric does, however, give important information about the tropical cultures in which it was developed. Hobbyists,

historians, and others continue to make bark cloth to study and to keep the knowledge and skill of tapa-making alive. In the Pacific Islands, tapa was not found in common usage after the turn of the nineteenth century.

See also **Felt; Nonwoven Textiles.**

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*Carol A. Dickson and Isabella A. Abbott*

**BARTHES, ROLAND** Better than anyone else, the author of *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (1974) as well as of *Le Degré zéro de l'écriture* (1953) pointed out the illusory nature of the work of biography. Here, we will therefore merely recall a few fragments of a life whose intellectual twists and turns accompanied and helped to transform all facets of French, if not European, thought in the second half of the twentieth century. His publications easily demonstrate his role as developer—in the photographic sense of the term—of the founding questions of so-called postmodern thought. They reveal even more the qualities of a refined and elliptical writer haunted by *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973). Well known for works, alternately journalistic and scholarly, on the political use of myths, literary creation, mass culture, photography, semiological methods, and romantic desire, Barthes also wrote many diverse works on fashion. Often referred to but very little read for themselves, these works still call for a radically novel approach to the phenomena of fashion.

### Fragments of Life

Following Jean-Baptiste Farges and Andy Stafford, one can try to distinguish three moments—but they are also three directions, closely connected but not successive—in the activities and the life of Barthes: the polemical journalist immediately after the war, the triumphant yet marginal university professor of the postwar boom, and the elusive “novelist” celebrated by the entire intelligentsia of the left in the 1970s.

More than the details of these moments, it is important to note the intellectual influences that guided Barthes. He himself, in the “Phases” section of his pseudo-autobiography, *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*, played with establishing a correspondence of these stages (he counted two more) with an “intertext” of those who inspired him: Gide gave him the wish to write (“the desire for a work”); the trio Sartre-Marx-Brecht drove him to deconstruct our social mythologies (*Mythologies* was published in 1957); Saussure guided him in his work in semiology; the dialogue with Sollers, Kristeva, Derrida, and Lacan led him to take intertextuality as a subject; as for Nietzsche, his influence corresponded to the pleasure of writing during and about his last years, when he produced books dedicated to the enigma of pleasure: *L'Empire des signes* (1970), *S/Z* (1970), *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (1971), and *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (1977). *La Chambre claire* (1980), written shortly after the death of his mother, offers a restrained emotional reading of the illusions of the resurrection of reality through photography and concludes with an alternative: accept the spectacle of the false, or “confront untreatable reality.”

This represents a program of investigation, both political and aesthetic, that all the works and the very life of Barthes seem to have put into practice, even includ-

ing the part of his work devoted to speaking about clothes and fashion, “stable ephemera.”

### Genealogy of an Interest

It has been little noticed how early Barthes developed a curiosity about clothing (at least the clothing of others), about its communicative functions, and about the problems of approach and reconstruction to which those functions give rise. His contribution was that of a student of sociology, considering a massive and poorly understood phenomenon that had been seldom studied in France. This contribution could be decoded on many levels, but it was also that of an aesthete, enamored with the feel of fabrics and the flaring of a white dress on the beach at Bayonne in the 1930s. This is the image—a blurry photograph of his mother—that opens (and closes on “a moment of pleasure”) the introduction to *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*. Here, it is difficult to avoid noticing the trace of a nostalgic identification with the mother and a personal dandyism maintained with and by discreet and elegant companions. D. A. Miller (1992) may be right to regret that this genealogy, in part based on an unequivocal homosexuality (“L'adjectif,” “La déesse H.,” “Actif/Passif,” and other vignettes in *Roland Barthes*), was never made explicit or “brought out.”

However, attention to the body, to its costumes, and to the functions and imagery of those costumes, obsesses—literally—all aspects of the work of Barthes, and this is true beginning with his earliest theater criticism (“Les maladies du costume de théâtre” of 1955, reprinted in *Essais critiques* [1964]), and his various analyses of Brecht's staging of *Mother Courage* from 1957 to 1960. As late as 1980, some fashion details of the photographs illustrating his last book, *La Chambre claire*, become the focus of his reflective emotion and serve as a *punctum*.

In parallel, as early as 1957, he published in *Annales* the seminal article “Histoire et sociologie du vêtement,” followed in 1960 by “Pour une sociologie du vêtement,” and in 1959, *Critique*, under the title “Langage et vêtement,” he published his review of books by J. C. Flügel, F. Kiener, H. H. Hansen, and N. Truman, writers then unknown to French specialists in the field. Other articles, such as “Le bleu est à la mode cette année” (*Revue française de sociologie*, 1960), “Des bijoux aux bijoux” (*Jardin des Arts*, 1961), and “Le dandysme et la mode” (*United States Lines Paris Review*, July 1962) exhibit the development of a semiological approach to clothing and the concern for a multifaceted way of writing able to adapt with virtuosity to diverse audiences. For example, he published in the women's magazine *Marie-Claire* (1967) “Le match Chanel-Courrèges,” an article similar to one of the last of the *Mythologies*. Finally, although after that date, the language connected to fashion was no longer directly questioned, the last lines of *Roland Barthes* are still concerned with the weight of appearances: “Writing the body. Neither the skin, nor the muscles, nor the

bones, nor the nerves, but the rest, a clumsy, stringy, fluffy, frayed thing, the cloak of a clown.”

### For a Systemic Approach to Fashion

*Le Système de la mode* (1967) is an austere and baroque book that came out of a planned thesis, in which a linguistic theory (“the dress code”) develops, flourishes, and self-destructs. The book’s luxurious jargon and absence of iconography has repelled many and led to various misunderstandings. Its author—famous and praised for other more “literary” publications—plays the role of the proponent of a hard and fast scientism, which he nevertheless declares in the preface is already outdated. He counters and even contradicts this by embellishing the text with precious formulations (“Le bleu est à la mode”), and with a second part (one fourth of the book) unexpected in a work with a methodological purpose: an essay on the rhetoric of fashion journalists along with caustic sociological commentary. “Fashion makes something out of nothing,” and that “something” is first of all words, as Stéphane Mallarmé had shown. Hence, it is only the vocabulary and syntax of the captions for fashion pictures presented in the magazines of the 1960s that form the basis for the analyses—legitimately linguistic—offered by *Le Système*.

One should never forget that this was a practical exercise: the ingenious and inventive application of a new technique of reading (semiology) to a limited object but one requiring the creation of novel concepts. Those limits, explicitly set out by Barthes in his book and in contemporaneous interviews, were not understood by many readers who criticize the book for not speaking directly of the non-verbal communication carried out through clothing. Barthes is interested neither in clothing as artifact (clothing as made) nor in its figurative representations (iconic clothing), although those diverse subjects were part of the research program—too broad but more cautious on questions of linguistic analogy—proposed by the 1957 article. His aim is thus to find out “what happens when a real or imaginary object is converted into language” and thus becomes literature capable of being appropriated.

This lack of understanding—often unrecognized—and various ambiguities of expression making a faithful translation difficult, explain in part the delay of the book’s publication in English (1985), and a limited reception (in quantity and quality), which needs, however, to be analyzed country by country and generation by generation. The book nevertheless remains an essential reference, at least in France, for sociologists and historians of clothing, but even, or perhaps especially, there, *Le Système* has not acquired a following, except among a few French ethnologists, like Yves Delaporte, Jeanne Martinet, and Marie-Thérèse Duflos-Priot, who do not restrict themselves to studying “spoken,” that is, written clothing. It is a fashionable reference in a bibliography, but it has not really been assimilated, even though it has inspired sev-

eral descriptive systems of clothing used by museums and it has provided a number of convenient metaphors for experts in fashion.

As Barthes wished, the book has to be read first of all as a historical monument, a dated polemic, focused on methodological questions. But it is also a book in which one may take pleasure in digressing, while acquiring expertise and understanding about the state of fashion rhetoric in the 1960s, the state of innovative practices linked to structuralism, and also the state of French backwardness in research on clothing and the still novel efforts to introduce into the field the indispensable theory required for any study of a cultural phenomenon. The phraseology of the fashion magazine signifies a “fashionable” representation of reality, the ideology of which is unveiled by breaking it down into subsets and elements and by the concomitant variations (combined or opposed) of signifier and signified: “A cardigan is sporty or formal depending on whether the collar is open or closed.”

Barthes was a pioneer by rejecting the elitist linearity and the facile psychologism of “histories of costume,” by engaging in contemporary, not nostalgic, analysis of consumerist ideologies, and by carrying out high-risk interdisciplinary work taking into account individual choices and collective tendencies, the *longue durée* and differential rhythms of transformation of forms and customs, as well as the ephemeral character of the analyses of those who produced them: all knowledge is by definition “Heraclitean.” Even more, *Le Système de la mode* should be seen as an invitation to dissect (or possibly deconstruct) the discourse on other discourses that we fabricate with respect to all our objects of investigation. It should be done without illusions, but always with seriousness and irony.

See also **Fashion, Historical Studies of; Fashion, Theories of.**

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Nicole Pellegrin

**BATIK** Batik is one form of a process known as resist dyeing, in which the surface design on cloth is applied with a semifluid substance (wax, in the case of batik) that resists dye. When the substance is removed the resulting “negative space” or motif contrasts with the dye. Repeated applications of resist and dye create a complex design. Resist dyeing has a broad geographic distribution, historically found on all continents except for the Pacific Islands and Australia. The resist substances include mud, pastes (rice, peanut, cassava, or bean), starch, hot resin, paraffin, and beeswax. Monochromatic palettes of white (cloth color) and dark brown such as the bogolan mud cloths of Mali, or white and indigo as in the batiks of the Blue Hmong are common, and motifs tend to be geometric such as those found in West Africa, Turkistan, the Middle East, mainland Southeast Asia, and south China. In Indonesia, particularly on Java, batik developed intricate styles not found elsewhere, and its sophistication is mirrored in the use of batik cloths in Indonesian dress.

### Method

The rise of fine batik in Indonesia hinged on the availability of imported high thread count cotton fabric from Europe after the industrial revolution. Women create resist patterns on this cloth by gliding molten hot wax from a copper stylus called a *canting*, which just barely touches the cloth; coarse cloth would cause snags and wax drips. Both the surface and the underside of the cloth are waxed, so that the pattern is complete on both sides of the cloth. After each waxing, the cloth is dyed, and then boiled to remove the wax. Then another element of the design is waxed and the process repeats. The use of a stylus to create a hand-drawn batik pattern is called *tulis* (“writing”); the creation of *tulis* batik takes as much as two weeks for the waxing and a little over a month by the time the final dye bath is completed. Care must be taken to keep from cracking the wax, as this indicates poor craftsmanship.

Toward the middle or end of the nineteenth century, Chinese batik makers on the north coast of Java designed a type of copper stamp called *cap* (pronounced chop), a configuration of needles and sheet metal strips which was pressed into a hot wax stamp pad and used to transfer the wax to the cloth. *Caps* were paired as mirror images to wax the top and undersides of the cloth. *Cap* batik is a much faster process than *tulis*; a skilled worker can wax twenty cloths in a day.

### Design Motifs

Classical batik designs from central Java can be grouped in four categories; three are strongly geometric and the fourth is more organic. The first is the *garis miring* of diagonally running designs such as *parang rusak* (“broken knife”). The second is *nitik*, consisting of small dots or scallops as filler in large designs; this pattern imitates the visual effect of woven cloth. The third is *ceplok* which has grid-formed designs inspired by rosettes and cross-sections of fruit. The fourth is the *semen* category of styled flora and fauna motifs.

In general, batik designs from the north coast tend to be more organic with mammal, sea creature, bird, insect, and floral themes. These batiks are also more colorful. Traditional batiks from central Java tend to have muted colors of indigo, browns, creams, and whites in geometric motifs. A few, such as the *parang rusak*, were restricted for use only in the royal palaces of Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and other central Javanese royal courts, but over time those sumptuary laws have fallen by the wayside.

### Motif Placement and Dress

Batik on apparel involves strategic placement of multiple motifs, as can be seen from an examination of different garments: a head cloth (*iket kepala*), shawl (*slendang*), two kinds of wrapped skirts (*kain panjang* and *sarong*), and drawstring pants (*celana*). The head wrapper, worn by men, is about three feet long; it is a batik item that is produced in Java and worn throughout Indonesia. The inner area is a diamond shape, which may be solid or batiked. The outer part of the cloth is decorated with various motifs, with an ornate border that includes imitation fringe lines. It is possible for a head cloth to have different motifs in each quadrant, allowing for a high degree of decorative variety all in one head cloth.

Like the head cloth, the *slendang* or shoulder cloth can have borders and imitation fringe. There are many sizes; one for carrying children is about eighteen inches by seven and a half feet. Some may have one batik motif all over, or others might have each end specially decorated with *tumpal* (triangle) and other border motifs.

The *kain panjang*, a skirt wrapper about 250 centimeters long, may be covered with an all-over motif, or it may have narrow bands at the top and bottom. Sometimes *kain panjangs* are batiked with two contrasting patterns, called *pagi-sore* (morning-afternoon), an ingenious and efficient use of space because it allows a single length of cloth to serve as, in effect, two outfits. The cloth design is applied in the form of two triangles, so that as the cloth is wrapped about the body, only one design will show.

The sarong is shorter than the *kain panjang* (up to 220 centimeters in length) and sewn into a tube. Whereas the *kain panjang* was linked to central Java and the palaces there, the sarong was the regional dress of the north coast of Java, but eventually came to be used widely in Indonesia as informal dress. At the turn of the twentieth



**A textile worker creates a batik in Malaysia.** Classical batik designs were geometric and organic in nature. Diagonal lines, small dots, florals and fauna motifs were common in central Java. Batik designs from the north coast illustrated sea creatures, insects and floral themes. © CHARLES O'REAR/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

century, Eurasian female entrepreneurs developed colorful Pekalongan-style batiks (named for a town on the northern coast of Java) with a tripartite layout. Floral borders (*pinggir*) lined the top and bottom of the textile, often with the lower border as the wider one. At one end was a wide panel (*kepala*) whose ground and motif contrasted with the body or rest of the textile (*badan*). The lower floral border framed the *kepala* on both sides. In general, the *badan* and *pinggir* were made with a *cap*, but the floral bouquet in the *kepala* would have been drawn by hand (*tulis*). As sewn into a sarong, the *kepala* worn in front would be shown to its fullest advantage.

That Pekalongan sarongs reflected Dutch floral and other themes was no accident. In the early years of Dutch colonization of Java, Dutch men married Javanese and Chinese women, who wore *kain-kebaya* (blouse-jacket with *kain panjang* or sarong). The women and children were Dutch citizens and at social events women wore *kain-kebaya*, showing off their prized Pekalongan batiks. In time the longish *kebaya* shortened to hip length to better display the *kepala* and *badan* of the batik wrappers. In the early twentieth century, more Dutch women joined husbands or married Dutch husbands in Java and also adopted the *kain-kebaya* as a practical alternative to the tailored European dress. Yet in the 1920s, as European racial attitudes hardened in the colonies, European women sought to differentiate themselves from Eurasian women and so tended increasingly to wear tropical-style European dress in public venues.

Batik drawstring pants (*celana*) were similarly tied to the dynamics of ruler and ruled. The origin of batik pants is not clear, but they seem to have been modeled after pants for little Chinese boys. Chinese and Dutch men found batik pants both exotic and comfortable, and the

pants were in use in the 1870s if not earlier. Dutch men favored them as loungewear in the privacy of their home, while their wives relaxed in *kain-kebaya*. Photographic evidence shows that the wearing of batik pants by adult men and children spread at least to Sumatra. The batik pants were made from a batik cloth or were made into pants from plain cloth first, then batiked. Batiks with border bands were incorporated in the batik pants by becoming the “cuff” of the pants. For taller individuals, an extension band of white fabric was sewn to the top of the batik pants; the band would be hidden under a shirt or jacket.

### Batik and World Dress

In the 1970s the competition from cheaper screen-printed imitation batik led to two developments: the batik shirt and *tulis* batik as couture. The governor of Jakarta, Ali Sadikin, proposed that a collared, long-sleeved button shirt in batik would be an acceptable formal alternative to the three-piece suit and hoped this strategy would vitalize the batik industry. The batik shirt became the ubiquitous dress for the urban Indonesian male. In the second development, batik designer Iwan Tirta created couture lines in *tulis* by producing the textiles on silk (instead of cotton) and reworking traditional motifs through size, color, and gold enhancement. If Tirta began with a flat batik cloth with an overall pattern and border, the border might be seen at the hem or sleeve; Tirta made use of the whole cloth. Both Sadikin and Tirta helped to create new dress styles for Indonesians and to give Indonesian batik a place in world fashion.

See also **Dyeing, Resist.**

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Heidi Boehlke

**BATISTE.** See **Cambric, Batiste, and Lawn.**

**BAUDELAIRE, CHARLES** Charles-Pierre Baudelaire (1821–1867) was perhaps the greatest French poet of the nineteenth century. He is most famous for a volume of poetry, *Les fleurs du mal* (Flowers of evil), published in 1857, which was prosecuted for blasphemy as well as obscenity. Baudelaire was also an important art critic and translator. He appears in an encyclopedia of



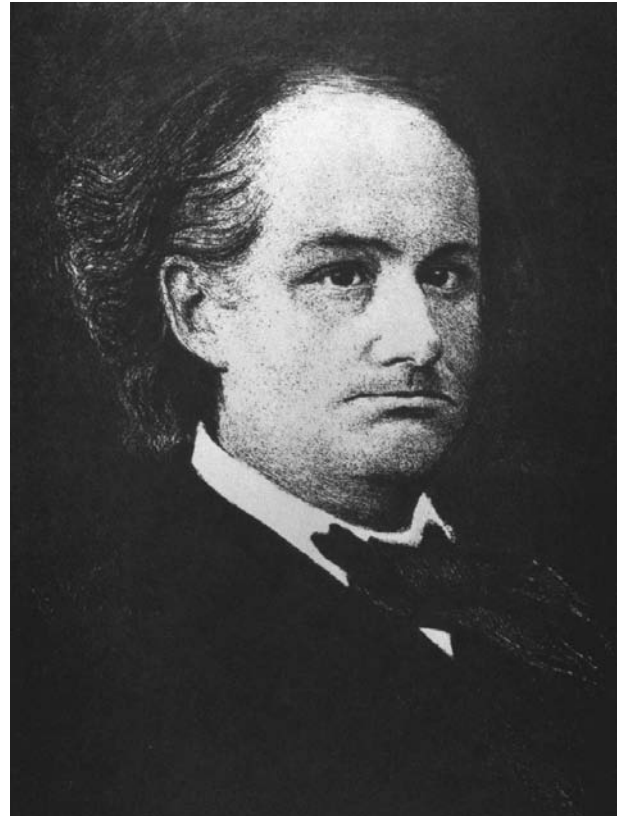
fashion because he proved to be an influential theorist of fashion and dandyism.

In his youth, Baudelaire devoted considerable time and money to his appearance. At a time when the masculine wardrobe was becoming ever more sober, he adopted an austere form of dandyism that was neither foppish nor bohemian. Whereas many of his contemporaries deplored the trend toward dark, severe clothing for men, he embraced and even exaggerated the style by wearing all-black clothing. But dandyism involved more than clothing for Baudelaire; he would certainly not have agreed with Thomas Carlyle's definition of the dandy as "a clothes-wearing man." Although Baudelaire's poetry does not touch on dandyism per se, he explored the topic both in his intimate journals, under such headings as "The eternal superiority of the Dandy. What is the Dandy?," and in two of his most famous essays, "On the Heroism of Modern Life," a section of his *Salon of 1846*, and *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863).

The modernity of dandyism is central to Baudelaire's analysis. Dandyism, he wrote, "is a modern thing, resulting from causes entirely new." It appears "when democracy is not yet all-powerful, and aristocracy is just beginning to fall." Like many artists during the nineteenth century, Baudelaire was ambivalent about the rise of democracy and capitalism. He described contemporary middle-class masculine attire as "a uniform livery of affliction [that] bears witness to equality." It was, he suggested, "a symbol of perpetual mourning." On the other hand, Baudelaire insisted that one should be of one's own time. "But all the same, has not this much-abused garb its own beauty?" The modern man's frock coat had both a "political beauty, which is an expression of universal equality," and also a "poetic beauty."

In place of the equality which modern men's uniform attire seemed to proclaim, Baudelaire suggested that dandyism announced a new type of intellectual elitism. "In the disorder of these times, certain men . . . may conceive the idea of establishing a new kind of aristocracy . . . based . . . on the divine gifts which work and money are unable to bestow. Dandyism is the last spark of heroism amid decadence." Baudelaire's modern dandy eschewed not only the foppish paraphernalia of prerevolutionary aristocratic dress, but also denied the bourgeois capitalist dominance of wealth. The Baudelairean dandy was not just a wealthy man who wore fashionable and expensive dark suits.

"Dandyism does not . . . consist, as many thoughtless people seem to believe, in an immoderate taste for . . . material elegance," declared Baudelaire. "For the perfect dandy these things are no more than symbols of his aristocratic superiority of mind. Furthermore, to his eyes, which are in love with distinction above all things, the perfection of his toilet will consist in absolute simplicity." Part of Baudelaire's minimalist aesthetic involved the elimination of color in favor of black, a noncolor that remains strongly associated with both au-



**French poet Charles Baudelaire.** Baudelaire's essays emphasized the relationship between fashion, modern life, and art. He related the transitory nature, or constant change of fashion, as the hallmark of modernity. THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. PUBLIC DOMAIN.

thority and rebellion, as witnessed by the following lines from Quentin Tarantino's film *Reservoir Dogs*:

MR. PINK: Why can't we pick out our own color?

JOE: I tried that once. It don't work. You get four guys fighting over who's gonna be Mr. Black.

If modern men's clothing—and still more so the clothing of the dandy—was characterized by simplicity, the same could not be said of nineteenth-century women's fashion, which was highly complicated and decorative. It was only in the twentieth century that such women as Coco Chanel created a radically simplified style of female fashion epitomized by the little black dress. Indeed, it could be said that Chanel was one of the first female dandies. Yet Baudelaire's attitudes toward women are problematic for modern feminists. "Woman is the opposite of the dandy," declared Baudelaire, because she is "natural." Only to the extent that she creates an artificial persona through dress and cosmetics is she admirable, and, even then, Baudelaire describes her as "a kind of idol, stupid perhaps, but dazzling."

Putting aside his ambivalence towards women, Baudelaire analyzed fashion in ways that illuminate both modern life and modern art. In particular, his essay *The*

*Painter of Modern Life* was one of the first and most penetrating analyses of the relationship between *la mode* (fashion) and *la modernité* (modernity). For Baudelaire, fashion was the key to modernity, and one simply could not paint modern individuals if one did not understand their dress. Baudelaire argued that it was simply “laziness” that led so many artists to “dress all their subjects in the garments of the past.” “The draperies of Rubens or Veronese will in no way teach you how to depict . . . fabric of modern manufacture,” he wrote. “Furthermore, the cut of skirt and bodice is by no means similar. . . . Finally, the gesture and bearing of the woman of today gives her dress a life and a special character which are not those of the woman of the past.”

According to Baudelaire, there were two aspects to beauty—the eternal and the ephemeral. The fact that fashion was so transitory, constantly changing into something new, made it the hallmark of modernity. The modern artist, whether painter or poet, had to be able “to distill the eternal from the transitory.” As Baudelaire wrote, “What poet would dare, in depicting the pleasure caused by the appearance of a great beauty, separate the woman from her dress?”

As a theorist of fashion, Baudelaire moved far beyond such other dandies and writers of his era as George (“Beau”) Brummell, Jules Barbey d’Aureville, and Théophile Gautier. He inspired such modernist poets as Stéphane Mallarmé and such philosophers as Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin. Indeed, it is virtually impossible to imagine the modern study of fashion without taking account of Baudelaire’s contribution.

See also Benjamin, Walter; Brummell, George (Beau); Dandyism; Fashion, Theories of; Little Black Dress; Mallarmé, Stéphane; Simmel, Georg; Wilde, Oscar.

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Valerie Steele

**BAUDRILLARD, JEAN** The French intellectual Jean Baudrillard (b. 1929) is widely acclaimed as one of the master visionary thinkers of postmodernism and post-structuralism. He was trained as a sociologist, and his early critique was influenced by a certain style of radicalism that appeared in France after 1968, which included critical challenge to the disciplines, methods, theories, styles, and discourses of the academic intellectual establishment. After the late 1960s Baudrillard’s social theory

witnessed major paradigm shifts. The theory of consumption that he began to articulate in the 1970s foresaw the development of consumer society, with its dual focus first on the visual culture (material objects) and, later, on the virtual (electronic and cyberspace) culture.

Baudrillard’s fashion-relevant theorizing dates from his earlier writing: it forms part of his broader analysis of objects in consumer society. This scheme postulated a transition from “dress,” in which sartorial meaning (of differentiation and distinction) resided in natural signs, through “fashion,” in which meaning resided in oppositional (structuralist) signs, to “post-fashion,” in which signs are freed from the link to referents and to meaning (poststructuralist). Baudrillard’s early work is divided into three phases: (a) the reworking of Marxist social theory, as evident in *The System of Objects* (1968), *The Consumer Society* (1970), and *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1972) and with an emphasis on the “sign”; (b) a critique of Marxism, as seen in *The Mirror of Production* (1975) and *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (1976), where Baudrillard substitutes symbolic exchange for utilitarian exchange as an explanation of consumerism; (c) a break with Marxism, as manifest in *Seduction* (1979), *Simulations* (1983), *Fatal Strategies* (1983), and *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena* (1993), which substitutes the carnival-esque principle (celebration, pleasure, excess, and waste) for the utility principle.

#### Signification

Initially, Baudrillard argued that when products move from the realm of function (reflecting use value and exchange value) to the realm of signification (reflecting sign value), they become carriers of social meaning. Specifically, they become “objects.” Baudrillard’s notion of sign value is based on an analogy between a system of objects (commodity) and a system of sign (language). He applied Ferdinand de Saussure’s structural linguistics to the study of fashion, media, ideologies, and images. If consumption is a communication system (messages and images), commodities are no longer defined by their use but by what they signify—not individually but as “set” in a total configuration. The meaning of signs, according to de Saussure, is made up of two elements: *signifiers* (sound images), which index the *signifieds* (referent). Saussurian structural linguistics is based on two principles: a metaphysics of depth and a metaphysics of surface. The metaphysics of depth assumes that meaning links a signifier with an underlying signified. The metaphysics of surface implies that signs do not have inherent meaning but rather gain their meaning through their relation to other signs.

Using a linguistic (semiotic) analogy to analyze commodities, Baudrillard developed a genealogy of sign structures consisting of three orders. The first order, founded on *imitation*, presupposes a dualism where appearances mask reality. In the second order, founded on *production*, appearances create an illusion of reality. In the third order, founded on *simulation*, appearances invent re-

Signification				
Order of Simulacra	Metaphor	Corresponding Stage of European Fashion	Metaphysical Analogy	Signification Order
Imitation	Counterfeit	Premodern stage	Metaphysics of depth	Direct signifier-signified links
Production	Illusion	Modern stage	Metaphysics of depth	Indirect signifier-signified links
Simulation	Fake	Postmodern stage	Metaphysics of surface	Signifier-signifier links

**Social meaning in products.** Products that served as function, reflecting use and exchange value, but came to reflect sign value, Baudrillard believed, carried social meaning. He used Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics to study fashion, media, ideologies, and images.

ality. No longer concerned with the real, images are reproduced from a model, and it is this lack of a reference point that threatens the distinction between true and false. There are parallels between Baudrillard's historical theory of sign structures and historical theorizing of European sartorial signification. The order of imitation corresponds to the premodern stage, the order of production corresponds to the modern stage, and the order of simulation corresponds to the postmodern stage.

**Premodern stage.** Throughout European fashion history the scarcity of resources symbolized rank in dress. Costly materials were owned and displayed by the privileged classes. Technological and social developments from the fourteenth century onward challenged the rigid hierarchy of feudal society. This challenge triggered the legislation of sumptuary laws that attempted to regulate clothing practices along status lines by defining precisely the type and quality of fabrics allowed to each class. Since styles were not sanctioned by law, toward the end of the fourteenth century clothes began to take on new forms. This tendency set in motion a process of differentiation (along the lines of Georg Simmel's "trickle-down theory" of fashion), whereby the aristocracy could distinguish itself by the speed with which it adopted new styles.

**Modern stage.** The technological developments that characterized industrial capitalism (among them, the invention of the sewing machine and wash-proof dyes), popularized fashion by reducing the price of materials. Mass production of clothes increased homogeneity of style and decreased their indexical function. The industrial revolution created the city and the mass society, improved mobility, and multiplied social roles. A new order was created in which work (achieved status) rather than lineage (ascribed status) determined social positioning. Uniforms were introduced to the workplace to denote rank, as dress no longer reflected rank order (but instead defined time of day, activities, occasions, or gender). As a result, a subtle expert system of status differentiation through appearance between the aristocracy and "new money" evolved. This system coded the minutiae of appearance and attributed symbolic meanings that reflected a person's character or social standing. It also anchored certain sartorial practices to moral values (for example, the notion of *noblesse oblige*).

**Postmodern stage.** Postmodernism denotes a radical break with the dominant culture and aesthetics. In architecture it represented plurality of forms, fragmentation of styles, and diffuse boundaries. It has substituted disunity, subjectivity, and ambiguity for the modernist unity, absolutism, and certainty. In the sciences it stands for a "crisis in representation." This challenge to the "correspondence theory of truth" resulted in totalizing theories of universal claims giving way to a plurality of "narrative truths" that reflect, instead, the conventions of discourse (for example, rules of grammar that construct gender, metaphors and expressions encode cultural assumptions and worldview, notions of what makes a "good" story). The postmodern cultural shift has left its mark on the fashion world through its rejection of tradition, relaxation of norms, emphasis on individual diversity, and variability of styles.

Baudrillard characterized postmodern fashion by a shift from the modern *order of production* (functionality and utility) to the aristocratic *order of seduction*. Seduction derives pleasure from excess (sumptuary useless consumption of surplus, such as is displayed by celebrities). Baudrillard posits seduction as a system that marks the end of the structuralist principle of opposition as a basis for meaning. His notion of seduction is that of a libido that is enigmatic and enchanted. It is not a passion for desire but a passion for games and ritual. Seduction takes place on the level of appearance, surface, and signs and negates the seriousness of reality, meaning, morality, and truth.

**Analysis.** Analysis of the three stages of sartorial representation in terms of Baudrillard's signification relations produces Figure 1. In the order of *imitation* that characterized the premodern stage, clothes refer unequivocally to status. They signify the natural order of things without ambiguity. The order of *production* characterized the modern stage, where mass-produced clothes ceased to be indexical of status. It became important to establish whether people were what they claimed to be or rather were just pretending. In the orders of imitation and production, the signifier indexes an underlying meaning, either inherent or constructed. In contrast, the order of *simulation* refers to the principle of the postmodern dress that is indifferent to any traditional social order and is completely self-referential, that is, fashion for its own

sake. For Baudrillard, the effacing of real history as a referent leaves us nothing but empty signs and marks the end of signification itself. In sum, as simulation substitutes for production, it replaces the linear order with a cyclical order and frees the signifier from its link to the signified. Thus, fashion as a form of pleasure takes the place of fashion as a form of communication.

See also Benjamin, Walter; Brummell, George (Beau); Fashion, Theories of; Mallarmé, Stéphane; Simmel, Georg; Wilde, Oscar.

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Efrat Tseïlon

**BEADS** In their simplest form, beads are small, perforated spheres, usually strung to create necklaces. They can be made of metal, pottery, glass, or precious or semi-precious stones, such as ivory, coral, turquoise, amber, or rock crystal, or glass. The human desire for personal ornamentation and decoration is clearly evident from the frequent presence of beads in archaeological sites. The earliest beads, dating from the Paleolithic period, were made mainly with seeds, nuts, grains, animal teeth, bones, and, most especially, sea shells. Indeed, like sea cowries, beads



**Rosary.** Created centuries ago by Christian monks to count prayers, rosaries have become a symbol of a committed spiritual life and are a common element in modern Christianity. © ROYALTY-FREE/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

were used in barter and in ceremonial exchanges; they thus contain precious information on early trade routes.

Beads found in early Egyptian tombs are thought to date from about 4000 B.C.E. Faience (glazed ceramic) beads appeared in Egypt's predynastic period and continued to be made in Roman times. The Phoenicians and Egyptians also made fancy beads with human and animal faces. What were probably the earliest gold beads, going back to 3000 B.C.E., were found in the Sumerian and Indus valleys; gold beads of later date have been found in Ashanteland (Ghana) and other parts of Africa. Mycenaean beads found in Crete, dating from the Late Bronze Age (c. 1100 B.C.E), were fashioned in original floral shapes, such as lilies and lotuses, as well as granulated surfaces. Stone and shell beads, and from the fifteenth century C.E. on, glass beads, were worn in large quantities by American Indians.

Among some populations, beads are worn as much for magical as for decorative purposes. For example, in Middle Eastern and southern European countries, coral beads are thought to encourage fertility and are frequently an essential part of a woman's trousseau. Turquoise and blue-colored beads are attached to the clothes of brides and children, as well as to the collars of domestic animals—to hung to cars' viewing mirrors—to avert bad luck and illness. Amulets thought to have the power to avert impotence, loss of breast milk, or the alienation of a husband's affection, often include "eye beads" strung together with cowries: thanks to a subtle resemblance of openings and curved lines, the latter are understood to symbolically represent the eye as well as the female genitalia.

The word "bead" comes from the Middle English word "bede," which means pray, and beads strung to make rosaries have been used since the Middle Ages to count prayers. But even as strings of beads took on well-defined religious significance in Europe, they rapidly took on new meanings, as they were exported to diverse

cultures that had their own symbolic systems. Rosaries, which were among the earliest strings of crystal and glass beads exported from Venice in significant quantities by crusaders, soon became part of garments and ornaments related to entirely different belief systems and rituals. They were often used as counters in trade. Certain types of beads that acquired rarity value were removed from economic exchange cycles to become ancestral property, only changing hands as bride-wealth or used to validate claims to royal and aristocratic status.

European traders often exchanged beads for African or American Indian goods of very much greater value, such as gold or even slaves. According to traditional lore, the whole island of Manhattan was bought by Dutch settlers for the equivalent in beads of twenty-four dollars. The story—a foundation myth of the United States—is often told to show how the Indians were primitive and naive. But in reality, as research on different societies has shown, beads had been used in trade for centuries before the arrival of Europeans, and their value was determined by social consensus.

For many African populations, beads are important markers of identity. Beaded garments and hats are worn at all times, but most especially on ceremonial occasions. Young women make small bead jewels for their favorite boys. The contrast of different colors and shapes can give these jewels a variety of meanings and whites have described them as “love letters.” For some South African Kwa-Zulu women, who have developed remarkable skill in creating beaded figures or dolls dressed in ethnic costume, to sell to tourists in the vicinity of Durban, beadwork has become a useful source of income.

The use of beads for personal adornment, as well as for decoration of a variety of objects, has continued uninterrupted through history. They can be stitched or woven into textiles, used in embroidery, or applied to hats, belts, handbags, or to household objects, such as boxes or lampshades. American Indians have long applied vividly colored glass beads in original geometrical designs to leather clothing, bags, and leather boots.

While Venetians dominated the manufacture and export of glass beads from the fifteenth to the mid-twentieth century, by the early 2000s beads were made in all parts of the world. Since the 1960s, interest in the cultures and customs of third-world countries has led to a keen search for old beads on the part of museum keepers and antique dealers. This in turn has led to a revival in large-scale production and use of beads by the general public. Fashion items such as handbags, ladies' waistcoats, and belts vividly decorated with beads are made in China and other parts of the Far East.

Venetian beads, while not produced on as large a scale as they were in the past, remain very high quality, and the city's association with glass beads helps it maintain a lively second-hand and antique trade, as well as a strong interest in experimentation and creativity in the search for new versions of the traditional craft of making glass beads and



**Man working prayer beads.** For centuries beads have been an instrument of prayer. In Middle Eastern countries, as well as other parts of the world, strung beads help one keep one's place in structured prayer. © DAVID H. WELLS/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

their use in personal ornaments. Beadwork, in particular the stringing of necklaces and bracelets, has become a widespread pastime, and shops with lively displays of beads, fine metal, or cotton and silk thread are found in almost every city. The low cost of beads in relation to jewelry makes them a very versatile ornamental element, often specially created to enhance a particular outfit or occasion.

See also **Costume Jewelry; Jewelry; Necklaces and Pendants; Spangles.**

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Lidia D. Sciama

**BEARDS AND MUSTACHES** Because facial hair is strongly associated with masculinity, beards and mustaches carry powerful and complex cultural meanings. Growing a beard or mustache, or being clean-shaven, can communicate information about religion, sexual identity, and orientation, and other important aspects of cultural heritage.

In many cultures, the wearing (or not) of facial hair has been a marker of membership in a tribe, ethnic group, or culture, implying acceptance of the group's cultural values and a rejection of the values of other groups. This distinction sometimes admitted a certain ambiguity; in ancient Greece, a neatly trimmed beard was a mark of a philosopher, but the Greeks also distinguished themselves from the *barbaroi* ("barbarians," literally "hairy ones") to their north and east. In early imperial China some powerful men (magistrates and military officers, for example) wore beards, but in general hairiness was associated with the "uncivilized" pastoral peoples of the northern frontier; by later imperial times, most Chinese

men were clean-shaven. As Frank Dikotter puts it, "the hairy man was located beyond the limits of the cultivated field, in the wilderness, the mountains, and the forests: the border of human society, he hovered on the edge of bestiality. Body hair indicated physical regression, generated by the absence of cooked food, decent clothing and proper behaviour" (p. 52).

Conversely, in ancient Egypt beards were associated with high rank, and they were braided and cultivated to curl upward at the ends. False beards were worn by rulers, both male and female, and fashioned of gold. In the ancient Mesopotamian, Assyrian, Sumerian, and Hittite empires, curled and elaborately decorated beards were indicators of high social status while slaves were clean-shaven. In his book *Hair: The First Five Thousand Years*, Richard Corson analyzes the complexities of facial hair across history and points out that in the ancient world, "during shaven periods, beards were allowed to grow as a sign of mourning." Also, in a period of shaven faces such as early in the first century, "slaves were required to wear beards as a sign of their subjugation" but when free men wore beards in the second and third centuries slaves had to distinguish themselves free by shaving (p. 71). Long mustaches were the norm amongst Goths, Saxons, and Gauls and were worn "hanging down upon their breasts like wings" (p. 91) and by the Middle Ages again were a mark of noble birth.

Facial hair has been an issue for many religions. Pope Gregory VII issued a papal edict banning bearded clergymen in 1073. In Hasidic Jewish culture beards are worn as an emblem of obedience to religious law. Muslim men who shave their facial hair are, in some places, subject to intense criticism from more religiously conservative Muslims for whom growing a beard is an indication of cleanliness, obedience to God, and male gender. In some Muslim countries (such as Afghanistan under the Taliban), the wearing of untrimmed beards has been obligatory for men.

In Western culture in recent centuries, however, the wearing or shaving of facial hair has tended to become more a matter of fashion than of cultural identity. For most of history, the shaving of facial hair and the shaping of beards and mustaches has depended on the skills of barbers and personal servants who knew how to whet a razor and to use hot water and emollients to soften a beard. Jean-Jacques Perret created the first safety razor in 1770. It consisted of a blade with a wooden guard, which was sold together with a book of instruction in its use entitled *La Pogotomie* (The Art of Self-Shaving). In 1855 the Gillette razor was invented, the T-shape taking over from the cutthroat razor. Self-shaving became increasingly popular as the century progressed, especially after Gillette's further modification of his original design in 1895 with the introduction of the disposable razor blade.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen a myriad of different styles of beards and mustaches as fa-

cial hair took over as a focal point of male personal fashion, together with complementary hairstyles. Men might choose to wear their whiskers as muttonchops (so-called because of their shape), Piccadilly weepers (very long side-whiskers), Burnsidies (that eventually evolved into sideburns), or the short and pointed Vandyke beard (alluding to a style popular in Renaissance Holland). Full mustaches that grew down over the top lip were dubbed soup strainers.

Many products, such as tonics, waxes, and pomades, were developed to help groom and style facial hair, and small industries grew up to manufacture and distribute them. Stylish mustaches and beards could be a point of personal pride. Charles Dickens wrote of his own facial ornamentation, "the moustaches are glorious, glorious. I have cut them shorter and trimmed them a little at the ends to improve their shape" (Corson 1965, p. 405).

In much of western Europe and America, facial hair was considered dashing and masculine because of its long associations with the military. By the mid-nineteenth century, doctors warned men that the clean-shaven look could be deleterious to their health; for example, it was said that bronchial problems could result if a mustache and beard were not worn to filter the air to the lungs. Thus to be clean-shaven was almost an act of rebellion, taken at the end of the century by bohemians and artists such as Aubrey Beardsley and the playwright Oscar Wilde. By the 1920s, however, the clean-shaven look had taken hold in mainstream fashion. Facial hair then became a mark of rebellion or artistic self-definition. Salvador Dali confirmed his artist status with an elaborate waxed mustache by the late 1920s. Mustaches continued to be worn by military men, and this is reflected in the names of styles such as Guardsman, Major, and Captain.

The beard had become rare by the mid-twentieth century, and was thus taken up by young bohemians in the 1950s as a gesture of nonconformity. Beards continued as a countercultural statement in the late 1960s with the hippie movement, when many young men saw facial hair as a sign of "naturalness," or a gesture of admiration for revolutionaries such as Che Guevara and the Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Hells Angels and bikers added a leather-clad hypermasculinity to the beard. Bearded hypermasculinity also was embraced within some subsets of gay culture. By the 1970s the clone look emanating from the streets of San Francisco included tight jeans, short hair, and mustaches. This look was adopted in mainstream fashion as seen on the actor Tom Selleck in *Magnum P.I.*, a popular television program.

By the mid-1980s, in place of full beards or mustaches designer stubble became de rigueur for actors and male models, as seen on the face of the pop star George Michael and the actor Bruce Willis, an effect achieved by going unshaven for a day or two. The 1990s witnessed a renaissance of beards and stubble as a result of the grunge movement emanating from Seattle and the New Age

Traveler alliance in Europe. Both groups, one associated with rock music and the other with environmental protest, advocated a return to "authenticity" and eschewed regular shaving. Stubble and short beards appeared on the singer Kurt Cobain, front man for the band Nirvana. Swampy, a well-known British environmental protester, sported a head of dreadlocks and a matching "natural" beard in protest against environmental destruction.

The most popular contemporary permutations of facial hair are the goatee or love bud (in which a small patch of beard is allowed to grow below the lower lip). The full beard with side-whiskers, now found mainly on the faces of men who were young in the 1950s and 1960s, has been generally rejected by men of later generations, most of whom are clean-shaven.

See also **Fashion and Identity; Hairstyles.**

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Caroline Cox

**BEATON, CECIL** Cecil Beaton (1904–1980) was one of the most original and prolific creative talents of the twentieth century. Born in London and educated at Harrow and Cambridge University, he worked not only as a fashion photographer but also as a writer, artist, and actor and in his primary field of interest as a stage and costume designer for ballet, opera, and theater. Beaton was a self-taught photographer: he was given a simple Kodak 3A camera for his twelfth birthday and soon was eagerly photographing his young sisters, Nancy and Barbara ("Baba"), in "period" costumes and sets he made from fish-scale tissues and pseudo-Florentine brocades, tinsel nets, and imitation leopard skins. His nanny developed his negatives in the bathtub. In 1927, at the age of twenty-three, he went to work for *Vogue* as a cartoonist, but he soon began freelancing as a photographer for Condé Nast Publications and *Harper's Bazaar*, taking fashion shots and portraits of royalty and personalities in the arts and literature.

#### Influences on Beaton

The most important influence on Beaton's fashion photography was his interest in stage design and theatrical production, in which he was extremely accomplished. He did costume design for the film *Gigi* and set and costume design for the play and the film *My Fair Lady*, receiving



**Cecil Beaton.** Beaton was a writer, artist, actor, and a costume and set designer for ballet and theatre, as well as a renowned self-taught fashion designer. He received two Oscars, one for costume design for the film *Gigi*, and the second for set and costume design for the play and film *My Fair Lady*. © JOHN SPRINGER COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

Oscars for both. He also designed for the Metropolitan Opera, the Comédie Française, the Royal Ballet (London), and the American Ballet Theatre. “Completely stage struck” at an early age, he wrote in his *Photobiography* that he felt “a keen perverse enjoyment in scrutinizing photographs of stage scenery. The more blatantly these showed the tricks and artifices of the stage, which would never be obvious to a theatre audience, the greater my pleasure” (p. 16). This interest explains some of Beaton’s most unusual fashion photographs, which include hanging wires and large sheets of pasted paper as backdrops for high-fashion outfits.

Beaton also had an extensive knowledge of Victorian and Edwardian photography and drew for inspiration on the costume depiction of such nineteenth-century portrait photographers as Camille Silvy and the collaborators D. O. Hill and Robert Adamson. He was also inspired by the soft-focus technique of the photographer E. O. Hoppé, the opalescent lighting of Baron Adolf de Meyer, and conventions of English portraiture and Renaissance painting. Beaton combined these influences with his innate taste for Victorian surface ornamentation and opulent effects, or what the critic Hilton Kramer has termed “extravagant and overripe artifice” (p. 28).

Beaton first traveled to Hollywood in 1931, and the world of tinsel as well as the influence of surrealism he encountered there were well suited to his insatiable taste for the theatrical and exotic. “My first impressions of a film studio were so strange and fantastic that I felt I could never drain their photographic possibilities,” he wrote. “The vast sound stages, with the festoons of ropes, chains, and the haphazard impedimenta, were as lofty and awe-inspiring as cathedrals; the element of paradox and surprise was never-ending, and the juxtaposition of objects and people gave me my first glimpse of Surrealism” (*Photobiography*, p. 61).

Beaton began introducing strong shadows into his work, a motif he may well have borrowed from Hollywood productions. The use of such shadows was popular in movies and advertising photography of the 1930s, so much so that articles such as one entitled “Shadows in Commercial Photography” were devoted to it (Hall-Duncan, p. 61). A famous pair of pendant photographs taken by Beaton in 1935 each shows an elegant model attended by three debonair phantoms created by back-lighting three tuxedoed male models against a white muslin screen (Hall-Duncan, pp. 114–115).

#### **Beaton’s Work at *Vogue***

Returning to New York for his *Vogue* assignments in 1934, Beaton took his always fussy sets to a new level of fantastic overindulgence. He combed the antique shops of Madison and Third Avenues for carved arabesques, gesticulating cupids, silver studio work, and ceilings in imitation of the Italian rococo painter Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. “His baroque is worse than his bite,” was a comment heard around the Condé Nast studios.

At the same time, under the influence of surrealism, which advocated the surprising juxtaposition of objects as a way to release the subconscious, he began incorporating bizarre combinations that created some of the most unusual fashion photographs of the century. The commonest object became grist for Beaton’s creative mill: expensive gowns were posed against backgrounds of eggbeaters and cutlet frills, wire bedsprings, and kitchen utensils. Models appeared wearing hats composed of eggshells or carrying baskets of tree twigs. Beaton was even accused of using toilet paper, though his background was actually made of what is called “cartridge” paper.

The most extreme example was one that would have profound implications for fashion photography decades later, particularly in the work of Guy Bourdin and Deborah Turbeville. In 1937 Beaton discovered an office building under construction on the Champs-Élysées in Paris that revealed a “fantastic décor” (*Photobiography*, p. 73) of cement sacks, mortar, bricks, and half-finished walls. The resulting prints, in which Beaton showed mannequins nonchalantly reading newspapers or idling elegantly in this debris, were published with much hesitation on the part of the magazine’s editors. Yet even much later, as Beaton noted, “fashion photographers are still



searching for corners of desolation and decay, for peeling walls, scabrous bill-boardings and rubble to serve as a background for the latest and most expensive dresses" (*Photobiography*, p. 73).

By the middle of the 1930s Beaton was starting to be disturbed by *Vogue's* restrictions on his creativity. He was called into the *Vogue* offices for posing models in "unladylike" poses with their feet planted well apart. Then it was found that Beaton had incorporated anti-Semitic words into the border of a pen-and-ink sketch done for the February 1938 issue of *Vogue*. The offending line read, "Mr. R. Andrew's ball at the El Morocco brought out all the dirty kikes in town." The result, after 150,000 copies of *Vogue* were on newsstands, was catastrophic. Condé Nast recalled and reprinted 130,000 copies of the questionable issue and quickly issued a legal disclaimer. Walter Winchell wrote a snide review, as did many other columnists. As a result, Beaton "resigned." In time, the incident blew over and Beaton was reinstated at *Vogue*, where he continued to do fashion photography for several more decades. During World War II he was the official photographer to the British Ministry of Information, photographing the fronts in Africa and in the Near and Far East.

### Beaton's Importance

Beaton had a long and extremely productive career in fashion photography, costume, and set design and writing and illustrating many books with his own witty drawings, based on the detailed diaries he kept all his life. Yet his work is of uneven quality. "When Cecil Beaton is good," the photography critic Gene Thornton said, "he is very, very good, but when he's bad, he's horrid. . . . It takes a kind of genius to be that bad" (p. 33). Indeed, the excesses of Beaton's style can be cloying, naive, and even trite, but few have questioned the inventive range of work or the important influence it would have on subsequent fashion photographers, particularly in the 1970s.

See also **Fashion Photography; Film and Fashion; Theatrical Costume; Vogue.**

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Nancy Hall-Duncan

**BEENE, GEOFFREY** Geoffrey Beene was born Samuel Albert Bozeman Jr. in Haynesville, Louisiana, on 30 August 1927, into a family of doctors. He dutifully enrolled in the premed program at Tulane University in New Orleans in 1943. Three years later he dropped out of Tulane and enrolled in the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, to pursue his lifelong interest in fashion design. However, he never attended classes as he decided to accept a job working in the display department of the I. Magnin department store, and then moved to New York to study at the Traphagen School of Fashion. By 1948 Beene had moved to Paris, where he attended the École de la Syndicale d'Haute Couture, the traditional training ground for European fashion designers. He then served a two-year apprenticeship with a tailor from the couture house of Molyneux. Beene returned to New York in 1951 and worked for a series of Seventh Avenue fashion houses before being hired by Teal Traina in 1954. He remained at Teal Traina until 1963, when he decided it was time to strike out on his own, opening Geoffrey Beene, Inc., offering high-quality ready-to-wear women's clothing. Beene's business partner was Leo Orlandi, who had been the production manager for Teal Traina.

### An American Aesthetic

Beene started his career during the era when Parisian designers still dominated the fashion world and Americans were expected to look to them for inspiration. However, though Beene was trained in the traditional manner, educated in New York and Paris, he broke out of the mold after his training and apprenticeship working for other designers. His creativity and skill were soon rewarded with a Coty award in 1964, after just one year in business, thus beginning one of the most award-winning careers in American fashion. His first collection made the cover of *Vogue*, and he has been regarded as a dean of American design ever since. His high-profile clients have included several First Ladies, and he designed the wedding dress of President Lyndon B. Johnson's daughter, Lynda Bird Johnson, in 1967.

Beene's distinctive creative vision manifested itself fully in 1966 when he designed ballgowns using gray flannel and wool jersey. He went on to design a series of dresses inspired by athletic jerseys, most notably a sequined full-length football-jersey gown in 1968. Generally, his clothes did display a respect for traditional dress-making, which manifested itself in details such as delicate collars and cuffs, and minutely tucked blouses, applied to a paired-down silhouette.

By the mid-1970s Beene had a number of licensing agreements for products as diverse as eyeglasses and bed sheets. The Beene Bag line of women's wear, introduced in 1971, used the same silhouettes as his couture line, but he employed inexpensive fabrics such as mattress ticking and muslin. Everyday fabrics continued to make their way into his higher-priced line as they had since the late



**Evening dresses on display at a Geoffrey Beene showing.** Varied fabrics and colors are the hallmark of Geoffrey Beene's contemporary ball gown designs. Since his career began in the mid-1960s, the fashion designer experimented with common textures such as flannel, muslin and jersey to create sensual, comfortable evening wear. © REUTERS NEWMEDIA INC./CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

1960s, as he used sweatshirt fabric and denim for evening dresses in his 1970 collection.

Beene considers the years 1972–1973 as a turning point in his career. It was then that he set aside traditional Parisian tailoring methods and began to explore softer silhouettes. He commented on these years in the catalog to a 1988 retrospective of his work at the National Academy of Design:

At that time there was so much construction in my clothes they could stand alone. I believed inner structure and weight were synonymous with form and shape. My sketches were dictating the design, not the fabric. When I became aware that my clothes lacked

modernity, I began to experiment more with fabric, working with textile mills abroad, commissioning new weights, textures and fiber mixes. (Beene 1988, p. 4)

By 1975 Beene had been awarded a fifth Coty and had launched Grey Flannel, one of the first and perennially most successful designer men's fragrances. He was able to buy out his partner and obtain complete control over his business by the early 1980s.

### Influence Abroad

In 1976 Beene became the first American designer to show in Milan, Italy, set up manufacturing facilities there, and successfully compete in the European fashion market. This success led to his sixth Coty in 1977, which was awarded for giving impetus to American fashion abroad. It is the Coty award that he treasured most, as the challenge of success in Europe was significant to his development as an artist—he proved to himself that his designs and his unique American vision had validity in the international arena. The European success also brought the added benefit of prestige and significantly increased sales of the couture line in the United States. But by this point in his career, Geoffrey Beene Couture, Beene Bag, and two fragrances accounted for only one-third of Beene's sales; the remainder was from licensing royalties for Beene-designed men's clothes, sheets, furs, jewelry, and eyeglasses.

While Beene has always been regarded as a master of form silhouette, it has been his use of color and fabric mixtures that garner the most comment. In a 1977 article for *The New Yorker*, Kennedy Fraser stated: "The distinctive quality of Geoffrey Beene's work which at the same time reflects an immediate sensuous response to the color and texture of beautiful fabrics must be characterized as a variety of intellectualism" (Fraser, p. 181). His ability to push experiments with color and texture was remarked upon again by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* in 1987: "In the hands of a less adept designer, a collection that encompasses everything from bedspread chenille and gold spattered faille or silver leather to monk's cloth would be a nightmare" (Cullerton, p. 181). Beene consistently revealed hidden characteristics of the fabrics that he chooses.

In 1982 Geoffrey Beene received his eighth Coty award—the most awarded to any one designer as of the early 2000s—and professional recognition continued through the 1980s as he was named Designer of the Year in 1986 by the Council of Fashion Designers of America.

The vocabulary of sportswear appeared consistently in Beene's work as he strove for a balance between comfort and style. During the 1980s, when jumpsuits began to appear frequently in his women's collection, he stated that "the jumpsuit is the ballgown of the next century." Neither hard-edged nor futuristic, Beene's jumpsuits emphasize the comfort and versatility of this form of garment. The same is true for his use of men's wear influences in women's wear—bow ties, vests, and suiting fabrics are used with whimsy.



**Geoffrey Beene selecting shoes.** Geoffrey Beene, a fashion designer whose career has spanned more than four decades, introduced an innovative mix of color and new fabrics to haute couture. His creations earned him eight prestigious Coty Awards. © DAVID LEES/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

### Later Career

In 1988 a retrospective at the National Academy of Design opened to coincide with the anniversary of Beene's twenty-five years in business. During this time, an article appeared in the *Village Voice* by Amy Fine Collins, who took on the role of Beene's muse through the 1990s. In analyzing Beene's work as an artist, she focused on his seemingly contradictory combinations of materials and influences, praising his courage to "regularly descend into the depths of taste in order to reemerge with his vision replenished" (Fine Collins, p. 34). In 1988 the Council of Fashion Designers of America gave Beene a newly created award, the Special Award for Fashion as Art.

Beene continued his innovations with fabric, treating humble textiles regally and using luxurious materials with throwaway ease. For example, a 1989 sheared mink coat for the furrier Goldin-Feldman in a bathrobe-like silhouette was created in fur dyed hot pink, edged with electric blue ribbon in a giant rickrack pattern, and lined with an abstract print in coordinating colors.

The year 1989 saw the opening of Geoffrey Beene on the Plaza, Beene's flagship retail shop on Fifth Av-

enue. He envisioned the shop as a design laboratory where he could "put in something new and in a few days have enough feedback to know if it's a success or if it has to go back to the drawing board" (Morris, p. B11).

Beene had shown a special interest in lace, for its combination of sheerness and strength along with its ability to stretch. In the late 1980s he began utilizing strategically placed sheer and cutout panels, especially in his evening clothes, culminating in the matte-wool-jersey-and-sequins lace-insertion gowns of 1991, which exemplify the exacting cut and technical intricacy of his work. His spiraling designs, which consider the body in the round rather than using flat pieces and treating the front and back as separate entities, reveal his admiration for and study of the work of the French couturier Madeleine Vionnet.

In 1994 Beene was honored again with an exhibition at the Fashion Institute of Technology to celebrate thirty years in business and was awarded the first-ever Award of Excellence by the Costume Council of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In 1997 and 1998 exhibitions of his work were featured at the Toledo Museum of Art,

the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum.

Beene's clothes have consistently been praised for their individuality and wearability. In a 1994 interview with Grace Mirabella he explained his philosophy of design:

The biggest change in fashion and the world has probably come in the past and present decade—the collapse of rules and their rigidity. This had to happen. There were too many illogical rules. I have never wished to impose or dictate with design. Its meaning for me is to affect people's lives with a certain joy, and not to impose questions of right and wrong. (Mirabella, p. 7)

Beene's lifetime achievement awards include the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum's American Original award, presented in 2002. In 2003 he became the first recipient of the Gold Medal of Honor for Lifetime Achievement in Fashion from the National Arts Club. He received a career excellence award from the Rhode Island School of Design, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1992.

Beene weathered a famous seventeen-year feud with *Women's Wear Daily*, during which the publication refused to mention his name. By early 2002, Geoffrey Beene pulled his couture line out of retail stores; he continued to produce clothing for a select group of private clients.

See also **Fashion Designer; Paris Fashion; Vionnet, Madeleine; Women's Wear Daily.**

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Melinda Watt

**BELGIAN FASHION** In October 2003, the American newspaper *Women's Wear Daily* asked, "Is Belgian Avant-Garde Out of Fashion?" Twenty years after Belgian fashion design, with Antwerp as its epicenter, had won its place on the world scene, it was time to ask how things now stood with the avant-garde character of the Belgians. The Belgian designers, who had instigated a small revolution in the early 1980s with their unexpected images and conceptual approaches, were by 2003 counted by critics among the classic designers in their field. During the intervening two decades, the perception of Belgian fashion evolved from avant-garde, edgy, and against-the-grain toward a generally accepted classic style. "Antwerp" and "Belgian" became prefixes laden with high symbolic—and in some cases financial—capital and had successfully earned themselves a secure place alongside "French," "Italian," "Japanese," and "American."

Writing about Belgian fashion in terms of nationality is, however, not without its problems. Where the first-generation designers were still quite literally "Belgian," younger generations have taken on an increasingly international character; consequently the word does not refer to nationality in the strict sense, but rather to a certain identity that manifests itself at different levels—varying from visual imagery and graphic design to training and corporate culture—and which is perceived as characteristically "Belgian."

#### Early History

Prior to the 1980s, there was in fact no Belgian fashion. One precursor of the 1980s generation, however, was Ann Salens, an Antwerp designer who for a short time in the 1960s generated international furor and is an important point of reference for Belgian designers. Her extravagant, brilliantly colored dresses and wigs in artificial silk, her flamboyant lifestyle, risqué fashion shows, and happenings at unusual locations earned her the title of "Belgian Fashion's Bird of Paradise."

During the first half of the twentieth century, fashion in Belgium had primarily reflected what was taking place on the Paris runways. Parisian chic also dominated the Belgian image of fashion. Until 1950, creativity was restricted to the realm of interpretation, which frequently amounted to all but literal copying of the creations from the great French houses, which were in fact geared to this form of commercial reproduction. Smaller and less resounding names outside France could select from among various formulas with associated price tags, be-

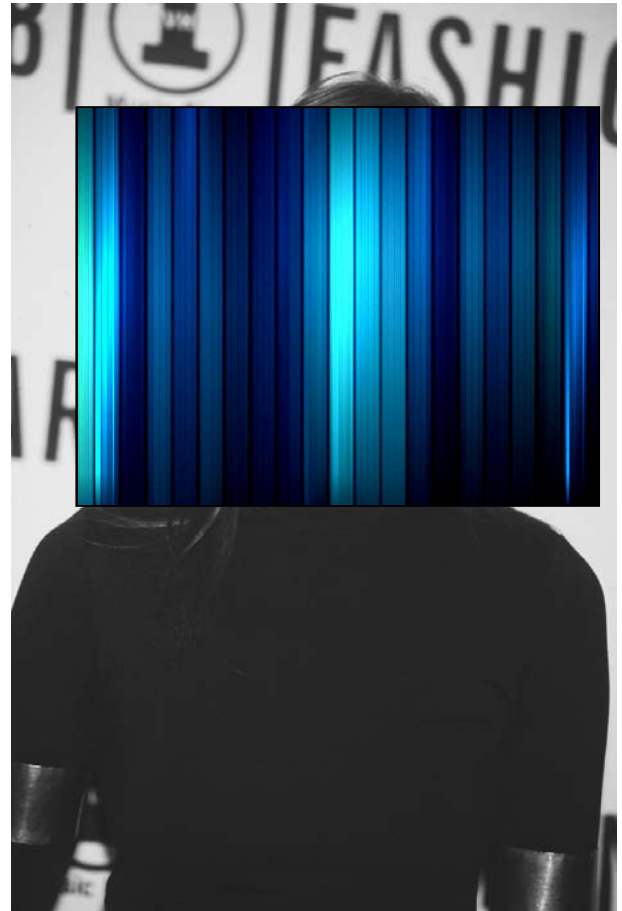
ginning with attending the presentation of the collection—where it was strictly forbidden to take notes—up to the purchase of the patterns and original fabrics. If desired, the purchased design could be further sold under the new name. Even after the 1950s, however, it remained commercially uninteresting to advertise Belgian origins. In the early 1980s, established Belgian brands, such as Olivier Strelli, Cortina, and Scapa of Scotland, were choosing more exotic names that sooner disguised rather than emphasized their Belgian roots.

### The Golden 1980s

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Belgian government launched a plan to give new incentives to the stagnating textiles industry. On 1 January 1981, the Instituut voor Textiel en Confectie van België (ITCB, Institute for Belgian Textiles and Fashion) was established to provide constructive guidance for the various economic, commercial, and creative initiatives of the government's *textiles plan*. On the one hand, the Belgian textiles and apparel industry could call on government support in order to modernize and introduce new technology. On the other hand, a wide-ranging commercial campaign was begun, under the motto, "Fashion: It's Belgian." Its purpose was to provide Belgian fashion with a new and convincing image. At the same time, there was growing awareness that such a campaign had to be supported by a creative substructure, in which young talent was given every possible opportunity. In 1982, this led to the establishment of the annual Golden Spindle competition, the first of which was won by Ann Demeulemeester. Other laureates of that first edition were Martin Margiela, Dries Van Noten, Walter Van Beirendonck, Marina Yee, Dirk Van Saene, and Dirk Bikkembergs. Along with the requisite attention from the press and an article in the *Fashion: It's Belgian* magazine, the laureates were given the opportunity to collaborate with manufacturers to produce their collections, resulting in the first important reciprocal overtures between Belgian manufacturers and the new avant-garde designers.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Paris reached an apex with spectacular shows by Jean-Paul Gaultier and Thierry Mugler, among others, and with creations by Comme des Garçons and Yohji Yamamoto, which were lauded as works of art. Italy also brought innovation, with Gianni Versace and Romeo Gigli. In both ladies' and men's apparel, Italy established itself as a trendsetter, and Italian men's collections presented a new, nonchalant man, designed by Romeo Gigli or Dolce & Gabbana. This passion for pushing fashion to its peak and the exuberance of these collections in turn stimulated academy graduates and young designers in Antwerp.

There was a growing sense that Belgians could also produce fashion, and do so without the show elements so dependent on extravagant budgets. *Les gens du Nord*, or "the folks from the North," presented an avant-garde reversal to fashion, or *l'Anvers de la mode*—as the journalist



**Designer Véronique Branquinho.** Branquinho was named designer of the year in 1998. Her creations presented a simple, unpretentious attitude that signified the young, fascinating, and pure woman. © CORBIS SYGMA. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

Elisabeth Paillée aptly wrote in a wordplay on the French name for Antwerp. This was the backside, the recycled, throwaway fashion, an underground phenomenon, the underdog: not so extroverted as English fashion, not so sexy as Italian fashion, not so cerebral as Japanese fashion.

As the only member of this group to do so, Martin Margiela went to Paris to apprentice with Gaultier (1984–1987) and eventually established his own Maison Martin Margiela in 1988. Maison Margiela developed an impressive oeuvre comprising differing lines, with recurring focus on such themes as tailoring, haute couture, recycling, and deconstruction. Margiela's story is a tale about the system that underlies fashion, a journey to discover alternatives that remain economically alive and which, in the fashion world, give new substance to the supposedly unassailable notion of innovation.

The remaining six designers decided to pool their resources and in 1987, left together for London's *British Designer Show*, where they were quickly noticed by the



**Veronique Branquinho Autumn/Winter 2004–2005 collection.** In the mid-1990s, Branquinho introduced fashions that evoked an air of mystery. Her simple, yet refined collections are carried by her label *James*. VERONIQUE BRANQUINHO, AUTUMN/WINTER 2004–2005, PHOTO: ALEX SALINAS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

press, who referred to them as the “The Antwerp Six”—purportedly because the difficult Flemish names were such tongue-twisters. Success was not long to follow. After London, they stormed Paris. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, most had their own fashion lines and retail outlets, as well as a permanent place on the Parisian fashion week calendar, with growing numbers of international selling points as a result.

Presenting these designers as a group, as the “Antwerp Six” or the “Belgians,” indeed overlooks their individual styles and identities. Where content, form, and image are concerned, it can in fact be difficult to find something they share in common. Dries Van Noten is

known for the ethnic or historic tone of his designs, with an almost naïve and at the same time touching exoticism. His flower motifs and the strong silhouette structure of his fashion shows are a trademark. In Ann Demeulemeester, there is a super-cooled romanticism, with a color palette reduced to the bare essentials: black and white. For her, the study of form is crucial, resulting in a union of such contrasts as masculine toughness and feminine elegance. Walter Van Beirendonck holds to an extreme eccentricity, with sources of inspiration ranging from science fiction to performance, comic books, and politics. From 1992 through 1999, he designed his W&LT line, followed by the introduction of his “Aestheticterrorists.” Dirk Van Saene seems to harbor a love-hate relationship with couture. His image of women is fickle, even cynical, yet his apparel designs demonstrate great love and attention to craftsmanship. Finally, Dirk Bikkembergs initially created a sensation with heavy men’s shoes with laces pulled through the heel. This subsequently evolved into an image that is sporty and sexy, perhaps most akin to Italian fashion.

### What Is Belgian?

If Belgian fashion cannot be understood in terms of a single style and if nationality itself is not the determining factor, what do these different designers have in common that makes their work recognizably Belgian? It is not the intention here to formulate a definition as such, but rather to indicate a number of aspects that contribute to the specific identity of the Belgian designers. One important factor is undoubtedly their training at the Royal Academy in Antwerp, with “individuality” and “creativity” being the principle concepts. Personal growth and creative development of the student are fundamental at school, without this one loses sight of the link between professional life. The personal approach also extends to the various peripheral activities that come along with the presentation of a collection, ranging from exceptional attention to the graphic design for the invitations and catalogs and particular focus on the location and design of the fashion show to a warm welcome in the showroom. One need only think of the now historic presentations of Martin Margiela’s collections in an abandoned Metro station or Salvation Army depots, Dries Van Noten’s delight-to-behold, beautiful shows, or the art performance tone of the presentations by Bernhard Willhelm and Jürgi Persoons for illustrations of this approach.

Nonetheless, the collection and the love and passion for clothing always take first place. With the Belgians, there is no superstar allure, or coquetry, but a healthy mix of humility, sobriety, and daring, and this translates first and foremost in the apparel itself. There is no blinding haute couture for the Belgians, but there is attention to professional craftsmanship, the study of form and concept; no out-of-control profits in the wake of the luxury houses, but a self-sufficiently structured enterprise in which as many factors as possible are kept under the de-

signers' own control; no top models whose star status relegates the clothes to subservient status, but real girls with character.

### The Next Generation

The generation following the “Belgian Six” found themselves faced with a very difficult challenge: how to create a profile and where to position oneself in the presence of such a strong avant-garde. Several responded by choosing not to present collections of their own. Perhaps the first to prove that there really was life after the Six was Raf Simons, who set his aims high with collections that indeed generated long-term changes in men's fashion. With images based on youth culture, the influence his work has had on the fashion field must not be underestimated.

In 1997, Véronique Branquinho presented a new woman: dreamy, young, mysterious, fascinating, and pure. Branquinho appeared on the scene as a young businesswoman with talent, and has been a pleasure to watch as her collections have grown together with their maker. Her collections are unpretentious and refined. Her label, James, refers to class—class without the glamour.

The A. F. Vandevorst designer team of An Vandevorst and Filip Arickx drew considerable press attention with the presentation of their second collection, in which girls slumbered and awoke in hospital beds. When the girls woke, their clothes still had the same pleats they had had when they lay down. It was an endearing and human image.

Bernhard Willhelm did not hesitate to begin by infusing his collection with humor. It was intended to provoke thought and balanced at the edge of cynicism, using new shapes and colors, and not be categorized in any single style. After only a few seasons, Willhelm was designing for the Italian house, Capucci, in addition to producing his own line.

Among the youngest designers, Haider Ackermann, of Colombian-French origins, has attracted particular attention. In 2002, he showed his first women's collection on the Paris catwalk. In 2003, he designed a collection for the Italian leather designers, Ruffo Research. His experiments with leather were astonishing, combining superb knowledge of material and form, along with the necessary dose of elegance and craftsmanship.

Brussels, too, is making itself heard. The super-talented Olivier Theyskens, who was designing for Rochas, prematurely broke off his training at the La Cambre School for Fashion in Brussels and almost immediately became a center of attention when the pop icon Madonna appeared in one of his creations. Theyskens achieved wonders in linking Parisian elegance to a certain Belgian conceptuality and sobriety. His designs are exquisitely beautiful, approaching perfection, yet at the same time possessing a dark underside, a gothic edge.



**Dries Van Noten Spring/Summer 2002 Men's Ready-to-Wear Collection.** Belgian fashion first arrived on the runway in the 1980s after the Belgian government gave incentives to revitalize the textile industry. Belgian designers created their own brand of individual, avant-garde apparel. © REUTERS NEWMEDIA. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

### The Fashion Nation

With the achievements of the 1980s generation in mind, Antwerp became increasingly conscious of the fact that a number of structures had to be brought into play if the unique position that the city enjoyed in the fashion world were to be maintained. The starting bell rang in 2001, during Antwerp's “Year of Fashion,” with the hosting of a broad-ranged series of artistic events curated by Walter Van Beirendonck. At the same time, the “Fashion Nation” opened its doors in the heart of Antwerp. By way of three different organizations, the Fashion Nation unites three influences on fashion: education, culture, and economics. The fashion department of the Royal Academy is located on the top floor and also symbolically stands for “top floor” and creative input. The next story

down is home to the MoMu Museum of Fashion and the Flanders Fashion Institute (FFI). The MoMu unites heritage and tradition with an innovative approach, while the FFI has the task of bridging a link with the financial world, by way of a production fund for starting designers and countless other activities to help Belgian designers achieve the aura they need at both national and international levels.

*See also Italian Fashion; Japanese Fashion; London Fashion; Margiela, Martin; Paris Fashion.*

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*Kaat Debo and Linda Loppa*

**BELTS AND BUCKLES** A belt is any length of material that encircles and is secured around the waist. Popular materials include leather, fabric, and metal. Belts are worn by males and females to define the fashionable waist and for a variety of other functions in many world cultures.

Sometimes referred to as a girdle or sash, the belt was worn in the Bronze Age and in ancient Crete, Greece, and Rome and is mentioned in the Bible.

Belts accent the fashionable position of the waist as it travels from under the breast to its natural position to low on the hips. As shirtwaist and skirt ensembles became a popular option for women in the nineteenth century, they were often accessorized with contrasting belts. In the 1860s, the Swiss belt, a wide, back-laced, and usually black belt, defined a woman's waist. Belts held special importance again when the New Look dictated small waists for post-World War II women.

During the twentieth century, women's belts were often of the same fabric as their matching dress or coat. Belts of metal or plastic links have also been worn as trendy fashion accessories by women. Twentieth-century men almost exclusively wore leather belts to secure their trousers. Belts of webbing borrowed from military uniforms were another, more casual, option for males.

Functionally, belts relieve the wearer's shoulders of part of the weight of the garment. Another function of belts is for attaching items; during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, women hung chatelaines, cosmetics, mirrors, pomanders, and purses from their belts. Police officers in America continue to use belts to hold items such as their guns, clubs, and pepper spray, and carpenters and other tradesmen carry their tools in utility belts. In the twentieth century, garter belts, an undergarment, were used by women and children to hold up stockings before panty hose and tights became common.

Belts denote rank in the martial arts. Actually it is the color of the belt that denotes rank. Originally, there were three belt levels: white belt, brown belt, and black belt, with black belt as the highest rank. A common myth explaining this system states that all students started by wearing white belts and through use the white belts turned brown and then black over time. More likely the colored belt system was borrowed from the one used in Japanese school athletics, particularly in ranking swimmers. In the 1960s the white belt rank was divided into several different colored belt levels: yellow, orange, purple, blue, and green, as a way of showing progress toward the higher ranks. The ranking of the colors varies among each style of martial arts. Adding stripes to belts is another way of showing progress at the lower levels.

Belts can also reveal identity. In the military, opposing armies or regiments were identified by the color sash they wore (in the Thirty Years War), as well as different branches of the service (in the American Civil War for example, general officers: buff; cavalry officers: yellow; and medical officers: emerald). During the Middle Ages in some cities, belts were worn as a sign of respectability and position and women of questionable repute were prohibited from wearing them.

Infamous or mythical, chastity belts have endured in the popular imagination. Purportedly invented to ensure women's fidelity while their husbands were away during the Crusades, a woman locked into a chastity belt was effectively prevented from having sexual intercourse. Modern versions of the chastity belt are included in fetish gear.

Belts are also used to provide protection. Weight-lifting belts provide stability to the spine and lower back thus reducing risk of injury to the lifter. Delivery people and others who do lifting in their occupations wear similar belts. Seat belts are often complained about for being uncomfortable or for crushing the wearer's clothing. Several decades after automobiles became common, a movement started to promote motor vehicle seat belts. In the 1960s seat belts became standard in new vehicles, and in the 1980s, many countries began passing laws that mandated seat belt use for drivers and passengers.

Another twentieth-century device is the sanitary belt. Similar to a garter belt, a sanitary belt secured a woman's menstrual pad. These belts were popular and available into the 1970s.



Some belts act as currency. Natives of the Solomon Islands used belts of shell money. American Indians used wampum, belts of shell beads, as well.

### Buckles

Buckles are a common way to fasten belts. Often a metal-frame buckle may catch in holes punched into the belt. Sometimes the end of a belt is woven through the buckle to fasten it. And other belt buckles hook to fasten the belt.

Buckles can be very decorative—covered with fabric, studded with rhinestones, or elaborately carved or molded. In the early twentieth century, buckles of bone and shell were popular for females. Perhaps the most elaborate in design and size are western belt buckles. Ornate western buckles first appeared in the 1920s due to the popular western heroes in Hollywood films. Since then western buckles are sometimes given as trophies in rodeo competitions.

From the American cowboy's buckle to the Japanese woman's complex obi, belts and buckles are culturally and historically significant elements of fashion.

See also **Girdle; Hats, Women's; Leather and Suede; Veils.**

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Mark Schultz

**BENJAMIN, WALTER** The German writer and cultural critic Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was born in Berlin, one of three children of assimilated Jewish parents. In 1912 he began his studies in philosophy, German literature, and art history at the University of Freiburg and then moved back to Berlin, where he encountered the teachings of the philosopher Georg Simmel. In 1914 he continued his studies at the universities in Munich and Bern, Switzerland. Benjamin married Dora Kellner in 1917; they had one son, Stefan, in 1918, before the marriage ended in divorce in 1930. Benjamin's doctoral dis-

sertation on German Romanticism was accepted by the University of Bern in 1919. In 1923 he met his closest intellectual friends, the philosopher Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno and the cultural historian Siegfried Kracauer. His attempts to submit another professional dissertation to the University of Frankfurt, on the origin of German tragic drama, were not successful. The work was published in 1928 under the title *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (*The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*).

Benjamin eked out a precarious existence as writer, translator, and journalist. In 1925–1927 he journeyed to Moscow, to visit Asja Lascis, whom he had fallen in love with. In 1933, in the wake of the rise of Hitler and Nazism, he left Germany for Paris, where he stayed except for brief visits to the German dramatist Bertolt Brecht in Denmark. Before his exile to France, Benjamin had begun to formulate *Das Passagenwerk* (*The Arcades Project*), his work on Paris in the nineteenth century; he would devote the remainder of his life to this incomplete magnum opus.

In 1936 he wrote the famous essay “Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit” (“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”). The text is the first to postulate the loss of the work's aura, that is the demise of its multi-tiered authenticity in view of the cultural implications of art's reproducibility in modern media. The German occupation of Paris in 1939 drove Benjamin from the French capital, but his manuscripts remained hidden in the vaults of the Bibliothèque Nationale until after the war. Border police halted his attempt to escape to Spain across the Pyrenees in September of 1940. Mentally and physically exhausted, Benjamin committed suicide in Port Bou, Spain. He carried with him a black bag with what is rumored to have been a final version of *The Arcades Project*. It was never recovered.

### Benjamin on Fashion

Benjamin's significance for the interpretation of fashion resides in his unfinished chef-d'œuvre, *Das Passagenwerk*. A vast array of fragments, excerpts, aphorisms, quotations, metaphysical musings, and sociopolitical observations constitute the material for this book on Paris in the nineteenth century, the “pre-history of modernity,” as Adorno called it. Fashion, both as an economic force and a visual signifier, is one of the most important features of *The Arcades Project*. Benjamin collected some hundred entries that deal with couture, dress codes and the art, literature, philosophy, and sociology of clothing (including a wealth of quotations from Simmel). His works on French literature; translations of Charles Baudelaire and Marcel Proust, with whom he shared sensibilities in regard to fashion; and essays on visual art in France were preparatory to the project, and his collections *Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte* (1942; *Theses on the Philosophy of History*) and *Zentralpark* (1955; *Central Park*) are methodological spin-offs. A number of abstracts that he produced

over the course of a decade explain and modify his conceptual approach.

Common to all these writings is the centrality of fashion as a historical fact—not simply as a historicized element of the past but more as a force that through its constant self-reference and quotation breaks the historical continuum and activates, at times even revolutionizes, past occurrences for the present. It is Benjamin's principal achievement to use dialectical materialism—that is, the materialist philosophy that regards the process of development in thought, nature, and history as coined by the necessary contradiction of ideas (albeit rather unorthodoxically) in this context as a structuring device against historicism, which uses styles, ornamentation, and motifs from the past often in eclectic and not reflective combination, and also against the notion of history marked by linear progress toward constantly higher levels of technical proficiency and material satisfaction. The potency of Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel's and Karl Marx's concept of history as turning from quantitative progression to qualitative change is used by Benjamin to create an analogy in fashion's willful quotations from its own source book, where a particular style or stylistic element is taken from costume history and brought into present fashion to create reference and friction simultaneously, along with new commodities. This method is seen as particular to fashion, not just as the result of the seasonal structure of haute couture but because fashion operates differently from the historicism inherent in other decorative or applied arts. Thus, for example, quotations in Empire furniture are different from citations of Greek dress in the Directoire fashion. Through the stylistic quote, the console or chair merely offers a consolidation of historical substance, while the high-waisted dress presents the direct impression of the democratic ideal on the body politic.

In his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* Benjamin finds a poetic definition of fashion in history, a definition that moves from metaphysical to material questions and perceives fashion as a structural device. Through the sartorial quotation, fashion fuses the thesis of the eternal or "classical" ideal with its antithesis, which is the openly contemporary. The apparent opposition between the eternal and the ephemeral is rendered obsolete by the leap that needs the past for any continuation of the present. Correspondingly, the transhistorical describes the position of fashion as detached both from the eternal, that is, an aesthetic ideal, and the continuous progression of history. Benjamin conjures up the image of the "*Tigersprung*" to explain how fashion is able to leap from the contemporary to the ancient and back again without coming to rest exclusively in one temporal or aesthetic configuration. This generates a novel view of historical development. Coupled with the dialectical image, the tiger's leap under the open skies of history marks a convergence that is revolutionary in its essence.

The text that contains the *Tigersprung* thesis indicates what *The Arcades Project* could have constituted in terms of a radical rethinking of fashion in modern culture, if Benjamin had finished it. Its excerpts demonstrate the leap from a sociological, art historical, or material observation of clothes to an understanding of fashion's unique character as a historical constituent, a structuring device, potentially even a revolutionary force. Benjamin tempts us in his unfinished work with glimpses of a new abstract perception of fashion viewed independently of its material basis (textile industry, haute couture, distribution, representation, and so forth), but retaining its materialism, that is, its sociopolitical significance. It is seen as part of intellectual culture, to be debated and interpreted simultaneously as sensuous and poetic, that is, as an expression of contemporary beauty, and on an abstract and metaphysical level, as an independent structure of modern existence and cognition.

See also **Fashion, Historical Studies of; Fashion, Theories of; Historicism and Historical Revival; Simmel, Georg.**

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*Ulrich Lehmann*

**BERET** A beret is a round, flat, visorless cap worn by both sexes over centuries. Berets are made from circular pieces of knitted, woven, or felted cloth, occasionally velvet, and drawn underneath by a string, thread band, or leather thong so as to fit around the head. They may be decorated with objects, such as ribbons, plumes, pins, tassels, jewelry, precious stones, fabrics, and cords.

Options for wearing the beret include set back on the head (halo style), flat on the head (pancake style), pulled down covering the ears (winter version), dipping diagonally to one side (fashion style), or pulling over the eyes for sleeping (oversized practical type).

Archaeological and art historical evidence indicates that variations of the beret have been worn by Bronze Age inhabitants of northern Europe, Ancient Cretans, Etruscans, English aristocrats such as Henry VIII, along with baroque and modern artists (Rembrandt to Picasso).

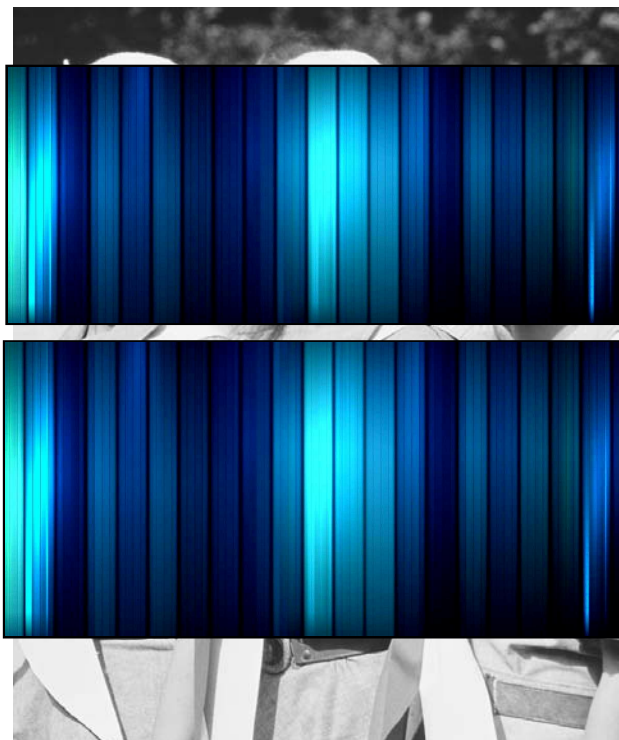
### Basque Beret

The modern “Basque” beret originated with shepherds living on both sides of the Pyrenees in southern France and northern Spain. Little is known of Basque peoples’ origins, and in the Spanish Provincias Vascongadas, different color berets were worn: red in Guipúzcoa, white in Álava, blue in Vizcaya. Eventually, the Basques all adopted blue, while red berets were taken over as part of the provincial folk costume in neighboring Navarre. The wearing of black berets spread to villages throughout Spain, and by the 1920s they were associated with working classes in France.

### Production

Basque beret production dates back to the seventeenth century in the non-Basque area of Oloron-Sainte-Marie, a small town in southern France, where sheep grazed on nearby mountainsides. Locals, like many other peoples, discovered that when wetted and rubbed together, small bits of wool became felted. While still moist, the felt could be hand manipulated by pulling it over the knee, thereby creating a rounded shape appropriate for covering the head.

Originally made by hand for male villagers, beret making became industrialized in the nineteenth century, with the first factory, Beatex-Laulhere, claiming production records dating back to 1810. Other factories followed and, by 1928, over twenty were producing millions of berets for international markets, stimulated by World



**Polish Girl Scouts wear white berets as part of their uniform.**

Variations of the beret have been a popular head dress for centuries in Europe and other parts of the world. © PETER TURNLEY/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

War I military and civilian migrations. French sheep wool was originally used; later merino was imported from Australia and South Africa. By the mid-twentieth century, softer berets made of angora (molted rabbit fur) mixed with thermofibers attracted female wearers.

Basque berets are usually made during winter months and involve ten steps: knitting, sewing, felting, blocking, drying, checking, brushing, shaving, “confection” or finishing, and delivery. In 1996, a beret museum opened in the village of Nay, sponsored by the manufacturer Blancq-Olibet, which provides public educational tours on Basque beret manufacture.

### Beret Usage

Over time, berets have been worn for political, military, religious, and aesthetic reasons. Symbolic meanings developed that were associated with color. The black beret became so popular with French urban workers that beret-wearing resistance movement fighters (Maquis) during World War II were able to blend into crowds without raising suspicion among German occupation forces. The dark beret became the trademark of Che Guevara, leader in the 1959 Cuban Revolution, and many of his later followers. A Che beret is preserved at the Museum of the Revolution in Havana.



**A worker spins a Beighau beret.** Originally, berets were made for male villagers from wet wool that was hand-shaped by pulling it over the knee creating a rounded shape that fit over the head. © PAVLOVSKY JACQUES/CORBIS SYGMA. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

Because of its flexibility, the beret was ideal for low-ranking military uniforms. Originally worn by nineteenth-century French seamen, it was adopted during World War I for alpine troops. British Field Marshal Montgomery popularized the beret during World War II as a badge of honor for elite military units. Since the Korean Conflict, berets have identified Special Forces as the “Green Berets,” paratroopers trained to drop behind enemy lines (maroon beret) and the U.S. Army Rangers (whose beret was changed from black to tan). During the 1960s Vietnam War, “The Ballad of the Green Berets” brought to public attention the exploits and heritage of these courageous units, symbolized through their caps and shoulder badges.

A controversy broke out in 2000 C.E. when black berets became standard issue to all incoming U.S. Army recruits in an effort to attract and boost morale for an all-volunteer army. Some traditionalists felt the beret as an elite symbol had become compromised. Additionally,

to meet the several million beret orders, manufacturers overseas were contracted, which required waiving a U.S. law requiring all clothing and textiles purchased by the military to be produced in the United States.

Over the past half century, United Nations troops have been identified by their baby-blue berets, and peace-keeping forces by orange ones. The beret is worn by modern armies worldwide, including Russia, Iraq, Pakistan, Venezuela, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Africa.

In an effort to combat urban crime during the 1990s, volunteer units known as Guardian Angels or “Red Berets” began patrolling city streets in the United States and Europe, later in urban centers in Africa, South America, and Japan. Their bright red berets serve as warnings to petty criminals and reassurance to community residents.

Jamaican Rastafari, and later followers in Central America and the United States, motivated by Black Religious Nationalism, follow biblical prescription by wearing long-uncut, uncombed, and matted hair (dreadlocks) covered by a knitted or crocheted black beret with red, gold, and green circles. Rastafari consider the beret and dreadlocks as an individual’s crown, symbols of power representing the Biblical Covenant of God with His Chosen People, Black Israelites (Genesis 9:13).

As a Western fashion statement, the beret has been worn as “classic” sportswear by adults of both sexes and children since the 1920s and is especially popular during wartime and the winter olympics. As part of the U.S. Girl Scouts’ required uniform, the beret was adopted in 1936 and only replaced in 1994 by the universally popular visor baseball cap.

Variations of the beret include the Scotch Bonnet, a flat, woven or knitted woolen cap with ribbon cockade and feathers that serve to identify the wearer’s clan and rank. Worn at an angle and usually dark blue, called “Bluebonnet” for Scotland’s national color, it has been a symbol of Scottish patriotism. The entire Highlander costume including the Bluebonnet was outlawed for many years by the British government. After construction of Balmoral Castle at Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in 1855, the Bonnet came to be called the “Balmoral” because of recognition given the Highlanders by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert.

Other Scottish types include the tam-o’-shanter, made of brushed wool with a large pompom in the center and named after a Robert Burns poem, and the striped woolen Kilmarnock Cap, also with pompom, named for a town in Strathclyde.

*See also* **Afrocentric Fashion; Felt; Hats, Men’s; Hats, Women’s; Military Style.**

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Beverly Chico

**BERTIN, ROSE** Rose Bertin was born Marie-Jeanne Bertin (1747–1813) in Abbeville, a textile town in the Picardy region of France. Her family was not wealthy, and so she was apprenticed to a *marchande de modes* (fashion merchant) at a young age. By 1772 she had worked her way up to the exclusive rue Saint-Honoré in Paris, where she opened her own shop under the name of the *Grand Mogol*. She quickly won the patronage of several influential courtiers, including the duchess of Chartres, Louise Marie Adélaïde de Bourbon, who introduced Bertin to the newly crowned queen, Marie Antoinette, in the summer of 1774.

The queen of France quickly became Bertin's most famous customer. Sources of the day (including Bertin's surviving business records) document more than 1,500 clients; undoubtedly, there were many more of whom no credible record survives. In addition to Marie Antoinette, Bertin dressed the queens of Spain, Sweden, and Portugal; Grand-Duchess Maria-Fëdorovna of Russia; and many European aristocrats. The latter group included Marie Jeanne Bécu, the comtesse Du Barry; the duchess of Devonshire; Georgina Cavendish and the cross-dressing Charles Geneviève Louis D'Eon de Beaumont, Chevalier d'Eon. Bertin also dressed celebrities like the Vestris family of dancers and the actress Mademoiselle de Sainval of the Comédie-Française, who were fashion plates both onstage and off. Indeed, Bertin was the first "fashion designer" to become a celebrity in her own right.

In the twenty-first century, it is taken for granted that fashion designers can achieve international fame. But the ancien régime offered few avenues for social mobility, particularly for unmarried women of humble birth. Bertin overcame these obstacles with equal measures of talent and ambition, manipulating the young queen and the emerging fashion press to make her name and her creations known throughout the world.

### Minister of Fashion

Marie Antoinette is remembered as a woman preoccupied with fashion. In fact, before she met Bertin, she was not considered particularly well dressed. Bertin was not Marie Antoinette's only *marchande de modes*; the task of clothing the queen was far too demanding for just one person, and Bertin had hundreds of other clients to accommodate. But no other *marchande de modes* enjoyed such easy access to the queen or to the royal purse. Thus, Rose Bertin and Marie Antoinette were inextricably linked in the public imagination.

When the *marchandes de modes* of Paris were incorporated in 1776, Bertin was elected as the guild's first

mistress. In this post, she earned the right to dress the life-sized fashion doll that toured the mercantile centers of Europe and beyond, advertising French fashions. In 1777 Bertin had a staff of forty employees, not including dozens of subcontractors and suppliers. By 1778 Bertin had grown so powerful at court that the press dubbed her France's *ministre des modes*, or "minister of fashion." The unofficial title underlined Bertin's position as a trusted royal adviser as well as a representative of France to other nations.

Bertin's partnership with the queen ensured her success, but it would also prove to be her undoing. As Marie Antoinette's popularity waxed and waned, so did that of her favorite minister. Courtiers were outraged by Bertin's privileged place in the royal circle, unprecedented for a commoner. Furthermore, her success at court gave her an ego of princely proportions. Soon Bertin was as famous for her arrogance and astronomical prices as she was for her fashions and celebrity clients. Previously, labor had represented only a fraction of the cost of a garment. By demanding star status and a star's salary, Bertin helped elevate fashion from a trade to an art.

### French Revolution

The outbreak of the French Revolution forced hundreds of fashion workers out of business or out of the country. Some left voluntarily, following their aristocratic clients; others feared that they would be persecuted if they remained in France. With her ties to queen and court, Bertin had every reason to fear for her life as well as her livelihood. While the aristocracy saw Bertin as an upstart and an interloper, to the revolutionaries she was no better than an aristocrat herself. Royalists and Republicans alike blamed Bertin for encouraging Marie Antoinette's excesses, which she continued to do right up until the queen's imprisonment.

Bertin fled Paris in 1792 and spent the next three years in such émigré havens as Brussels, Frankfurt, and London, where she continued to dress fashionable foreigners and French exiles. Unlike her royal muse, Bertin managed to survive the French Revolution unscathed. Although she was twice put on the government's émigré list, she managed to prove that she had left France on legitimate business both times. The émigré list was the official record of people who had emigrated, thus forfeiting their property and, in some cases, their lives. Effectively, Bertin was declared a fugitive.

By the time Bertin returned to Paris, she was out of danger but also out of fashion. Bertin could still count a few English, Russian, and Spanish aristocrats among her clients, but hardly any Frenchwomen. Indeed, many of her French clients had perished on the scaffold, leaving their bills unpaid. The Revolution cut Bertin's career short at the height of her power, and she never recovered financially or emotionally. She died at her country retreat in Épinay-sur-Seine just a few months too soon

to see restoration of the monarchy in 1814. Even after her death Bertin remained a potent and provocative symbol of the elegance and excess of the ancien régime.

See also **Court Dress; Fashion Designer.**

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Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell

**BEST-DRESSED LISTS** Since their inception in the first half of the twentieth century, best-dressed lists have become a popular barometer of international style. By publishing best-dressed lists in the mainstream media, fashion editors and style arbiters have established a steady market for information about the wardrobes, grooming, and comportment of smartly dressed men and women.

Perhaps the most eminent best-dressed list was the "International Best-Dressed Poll," the brainchild of Eleanor Lambert (1903–2003), a New York City publicist considered the doyenne of fashion publicity. Lambert first penned the list in 1940 as a press release for the New York Dress Institute, a trade organization she helped establish to stimulate dress sales during World War II. Lambert claimed that her list was patterned after an anonymous poll of the world's ten best-dressed women issued by the Paris couture starting in the 1920s.

Lambert's annual list became a widely heralded tally of the world's most beautifully dressed people, derided as frivolous, yet eagerly anticipated. She coordinated the poll by canvassing a coterie of fashion insiders to nominate the contenders, and then revealed the winners in a press release to the media. Lambert elevated repeat winners to her own fashion Hall of Fame. Finally, at nearly 100 years old, she stopped coordinating her celebrated list in 2002.

Another important best-dressed list has been the domain of Richard Blackwell. In 1958, Blackwell established



#### PERENNIAL BEST-DRESSED

Marella and Gianni Agnelli  
 Fred Astaire  
 Marisa Berenson  
 Tina Chow  
 Cary Grant  
 C. Z. Guest  
 Gloria Guinness  
 Audrey Hepburn  
 Slim Keith  
 Jackie Kennedy  
 Babe Paley  
 Millicent Rogers  
 John Hay "Jock" Whitney  
 The Duke and Duchess of Windsor

a line of evening gowns under the label "Mr. Blackwell," which attracted high-profile buyers like Nancy Reagan and Zsa Zsa Gabor. In 1960, *American Weekly* magazine, a national Sunday newspaper supplement, hired him to compile a list of Hollywood's best- and worst-dressed stars. Mr. Blackwell's list became notorious for his willingness to criticize icons like Brigitte Bardot and Queen Elizabeth II. The lists established Blackwell as a popular arbiter of taste, and he continues to issue his controversial fashion pronouncements as of the early 2000s.

Given the visibility of Lambert's and Blackwell's lists, fashion editors were inspired to publish best-dressed lists of their own. Among the publications that have published, or continue to publish, best-dressed lists are *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Prima*. *People* magazine publishes an annual special issue featuring best- and worst-dressed celebrities, while the annual Academy Awards show has spawned its own best-dressed subcategory. Other best-dressed lists have been printed by non-fashion publications like *Fortune* magazine and the *New York Post*.

Best-dressed lists allow readers to imagine that a winning profile is open to all, when in fact the top spots invariably go to wealthy people in the public eye: film stars and fashion industry or society figures. But the lists continue to fascinate as they impart lessons in style, self-presentation, and the ineffable quality of individual chic.

See also **Fashion.**

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*Kathleen Paton*

**BIBA** Biba has become a potent legend quite out of proportion with its relatively brief life in the mid-twentieth century. It was a shop and a label—but it was more than either or both of these: it came to stand for the “swinging chick,” the ideal, running, jumping and never-standing-still girl, the image that dominated fashion from the mid-1960s until about 1974. That one word, “Biba” calls up from memory the long-legged, zany, crop-haired Twiggy morphing into the druggy, Pre-Raphaelite hippie of 1970: from the futuristic to the retro in four short years.

Biba was the creation of Barbara Hulanicki and her husband, Stephen Fitz-Simon. It began as a mail-order firm, selling gamine gingham shifts with matching head scarf in the wake of Brigitte Bardot. In 1964 the couple followed the just emerging trend for the fashion boutique as opposed to the department store where most women bought their clothes in the 1950s. (Small dress shops, known in Britain as “madam shops,” still existed, but were by this time considered very old-fashioned, and small dressmakers were also dying out.) Biba’s first outlet opened in the smart Kensington district of London. The young couple rented what had been a chemist’s shop, retained in the window the big period bottles of ruby- and topaz-colored liquids that traditionally decorated such shops at that time (suggestive of magical potions), and created a dark blue interior with William Morris curtains, more like an Aladdin’s cave than an ordinary shop. This was a totally different shopping experience from the department store or the “madam shop.” There were no assistants pressuring you to buy by peering into the claustrophobic changing room and commenting on the clothes; instead there was a communal changing room free for all, more reminiscent of the school locker room than of adult life—but in an exciting way. The message was always that these fashions were for the young and carefree.

Biba really began to make an impact just as the mood of the 1960s began to change. From 1966 on, a creeping sense of economic discontent and social unrest in Britain was beginning to supersede the optimism of the first half of the decade. One of the ways in which this was expressed stylistically was in the mutation from future to past. By 1967 the Courrèges look—flat white boots and a square-cut tunic, reminiscent of cinematic fashions of the future—was being displaced by much dreamier



**Biba.** From the mid-1960s until about 1974, Barbara Hulanicki and her husband, Stephen Fitz-Simon, capitalized on an emerging “old is new again” fashion trend with their London Biba boutique. The shop was furnished with Old World furniture and lamps while the clothing was reminiscent of the styles of the 1920s and 1930s. LARRY ELLIS/EXPRESS/GETTY IMAGES. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

clothes. The two other most influential British fashion designers of the period, Mary Quant and Ozzie Clark, began to use such “old-fashioned” textiles as crêpe and satin in art deco colors of eau de nil, cream, rust, and even maroon. Biba was at the epicenter of this trend from the beginning. The shops had a distinctly period feel, with bentwood furniture, vases of ostrich feathers, Tiffany-style lamps, Victorian china pedestal jardinières, and even—in Biba’s third shop—the Victorian gothic paneling from a recently relocated boys’ school.

The clothes were subtly period, too. Minidresses looked like something out of Mabel Lucie Atwell, childishly high-waisted, with sleeves tight at the shoulder but ballooning out toward the cuff. Trousers flapped out at the hem, like men’s “Oxford bags” of the 1920s; slithery satin evening dresses looked like gowns Jean Harlow might have worn in a 1930s’ Hollywood melodrama. Then there were T-shirts, exaggeratedly long of hem and sleeve, and knee-high suede boots all in matching offbeat

colors of dirty pink, brick dust, sage green, aubergine, and chocolate; and a makeup range that made the wearer look like the silent film star Theda Bara, with black lips and glistening eyes.

Biba was a way of life as much as a dress shop, and its greatest moment became its ultimate tragedy. From the original shop, it moved—still in Kensington—first to a grocer's shop, retaining all the period wooden shelving, then to a yet larger shop that had been a school outfitters, and finally to what had been Derry and Toms department store, a fabulous art deco building, complete with roof garden and all the original fittings, carpets, and staircases. On these five floors, Biba aimed to sell not just clothes but a whole lifestyle. As well as the dresses, there were to be aubergine refrigerators, Biba dinner services, art deco carpets, a food department complete with coffee, tea, flour, and sugar in Biba packaging, and—on the ground floor—all manner of trinkets, purses, scarves, accessories and, of course, the makeup range.

It was a magnificent vision. Unfortunately the hordes of young women who came to hang out among the satin bolsters on the tiger-print sofas of the ground floor, with its dark walls and druggy ambience, did not necessarily come to buy but simply to be Biba. By this time, Barbara Hulanicki and her husband had lost financial control of the enterprise to the multichain fashion company Dorothy Perkins, and the returns were not high enough to satisfy its board of directors. In 1975 Biba folded—and not only that; in an act of the utmost philistinism, the magnificent original Derry and Toms interiors were destroyed to make way for a utilitarian Marks & Spencer and British Home Stores.

Barbara Hulanicki and her husband moved to the United States, and Hulanicki made a second successful career designing interiors for the art deco mansions of Miami, Florida. In 1993, the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle decided to hold a Biba exhibition. Many Biba aficionados previously donated the outfits they had treasured for thirty years. There were examples of the coffee—and even baked bean—tins, the cosmetics, and the soft furnishings, and the interiors of the shops were re-created. But what was extraordinary about the exhibition was the visitors' book. Visitors were invited to comment in any way they wished. Unlike other visitors' books, its pages were filled with loving reminiscences of how a Biba outfit had defined a major experience, a period, an identity, and although Biba the shop spanned only a decade, the memory gave promise of living on forever.

See also **Boutique; Clark, Ossie; Quant, Mary; Twiggy.**

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*Elizabeth Wilson*

**BICYCLE CLOTHING** The bicycle was invented in Europe, but American ingenuity increased its usability and widespread use. Kirkpatrick Macmillan of Scotland is credited with inventing the first mechanical bicycle, while Pierre Michaux and son Ernest of Paris were the first to manufacture bicycles on a large scale in the mid-1860s. The aptly named “boneshaker” or velocipede was quickly followed by the high-wheeler and then the safety bicycle. In July 1865 Pierre Lallement brought the bicycle to America resulting in a wave of bicycle-related patents. The bicycle craze flourished through the end of the century. Clothing specifically designed for wear while bicycling has changed dramatically over the years.

Early bicycle riding was a man's activity due to the fact that in order to ride the velocipede, essentially two wheels connected by a frame and suspended seat, the rider had to wear bifurcated apparel to straddle the mechanism. With the introduction of the pneumatic tire in 1888, the popularity of the bicycle for transportation and leisure increased dramatically. In the same year the drop-frame bike was introduced in America. This new model made bicycle riding in a skirt much easier and more women participated in the activity. By the 1890s, clothing developed specifically for bicycling was being designed and produced. Racing clubs for men were formed and appropriate attire was required. Typical clothing included the “wheelman” or sleeveless vest with insignia worn over a shirt, long shorts (to the knee), and shoes without socks. In 1874 Charles Bennet, an avid bicyclist, decided to tackle “the delicate problem that men faced as they were jounced on their penny farthings” (Norcliffe, p. 128). He designed the “bike web,” a knit and elastic garment to provide support and cushioning. Because the garment was worn by bicycle “jockeys” it was called the “jockey strap,” soon shortened to “jock strap.” Headgear and footwear were also designed specifically for bicyclists. Headgear varied from a small flat crown hat with visor brim to a pith helmet that might provide protection in a crash. Shoes were designed to prevent slipping on the bike pedals. One shoe model incorporated leather pleats on the sole that served this function.

Mid-Victorian society did not approve of women riding bicycles, but the activity became more accepted after 1881 when Queen Victoria ordered tricycles for her daughters. Besides the immodesty and physicality of women straddling a bicycle, the independence allowed the individual woman was unprecedented. By the late 1800s, women were becoming enthusiastic bicyclists. Soon many adventurous women started wearing shorter skirts to avoid catching them in the pedals. Barbara Schreier (1989, p. 112) declared “bicycling helped to smooth the way for future clothing changes and dramatically advanced the position of women in sports.” Knickerbockers made bicycle riding even easier for women, but the style was ridiculed as being unfeminine and unattractive. More shocking was the association of bifurcated garments and immorality. P. Russell suggests, “the forked body



astride a modern machine could be represented as an essentially sexual image” (p. 66).

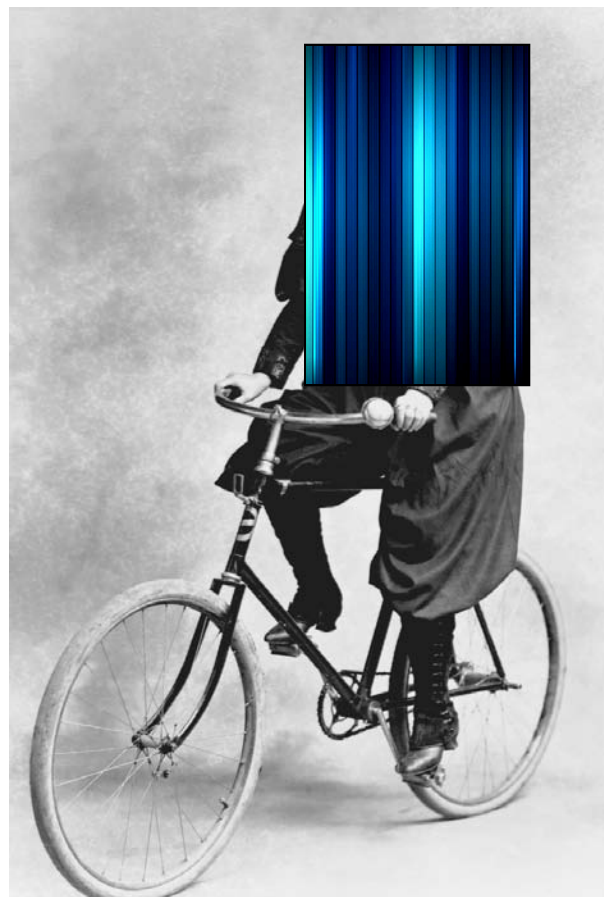
By the 1920s, new trends in sportswear introduced new forms and fabrics that permeated all sports activities. The new casual lifestyle eliminated the need for specific bicycle wear. Practical, comfortable sportswear was now fashionable and accepted. From the 1920s to the 1960s bicyclists wore all varieties of readily available sportswear with the exception of professional bike racers who wore close-fitting knit tops and pants to facilitate speed.

Bicycle clothing in the early 2000s combines elements of function, fashion, and advertising. Function centers on the most aerodynamic ensemble while providing comfort for the rider. Fashion is evident in color choices while professional and leisure riders sport clothing with company names and logos. The avid bicyclist wears form-fitting shorts and jerseys with appropriate accessories. Bicycle shorts rely on properties of nylon and spandex fibers to provide the closest fit possible. A major functional feature of bicycle shorts is the pad sewn into the crotch of the shorts, providing cushioning between body and bike seat. Chamois leather was originally used for the pad, but synthetic chamois or gel inserts are used in the twenty-first century. The bicycle shirt or jersey is also body-conforming for the all-important aerodynamic form. Shirts are typically brightly colored making the rider highly visible. The well-known yellow jersey worn by the leader in the Tour de France bicycle race was introduced in 1919. The Tour de France uses other signifier color jerseys including the green “points” jersey for the race’s most consistent sprinter or points winner, the red polka-dot jersey for the most consistent climber, and the re-introduced white jersey distinguishes the best young rider.

Bicycle helmets, when properly worn, prevent head injuries and are becoming more accepted as the “look” for riders. Indeed, bicycle helmets are required wear for child bicyclists in some states. Helmets vary in cost and design, but most are aerodynamic in shape. Cycling shoes are designed with a rigid sole to efficiently transfer energy from the downward push of the leg to the ball of the foot and so to the pedal. Shoes worn by professional racers can be almost impossible to walk in as the sole of the shoe is contoured to mesh with the pedal of the bicycle. Gloves and eyewear often provide the finishing touch to the cyclist’s look. Gloves facilitate grip on the handlebars and may prevent injury in a fall. Eyewear provides protection from sun, wind, and insects.

Since the introduction of the bicycle to the general public, bicycle clothing has influenced everyday fashion. Bifurcated garments for bicycle wear in the late 1800s assisted in liberating women from cumbersome full-length skirts. The body-conforming look provided by modern materials, especially nylon and spandex knits, is evident in bicycle wear and fashion forms worn in the twenty-first century.

See also **Activewear**; **Elastomers**; **Nylon**.



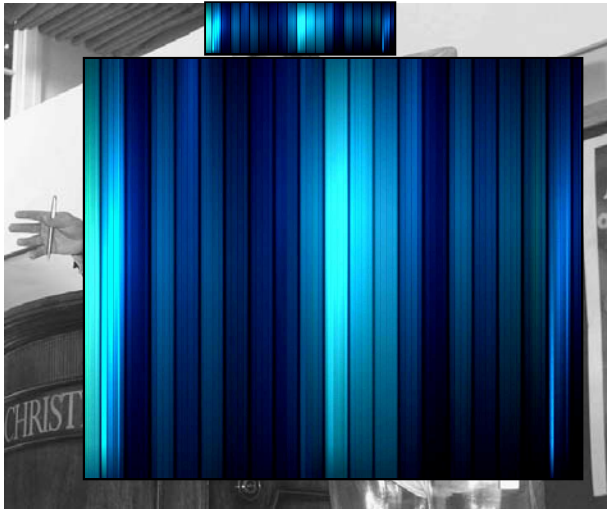
**Bifurcated riding ensemble, 1895.** Women cast off long gowns in favor of more practical knickerbockers when riding bicycles. © CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

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Karen L. LaBat

**BIKINI** The bikini, a two-piece bathing suit of diminutive proportions, first appeared on the fashion scene in the summer of 1946. Its impact was compared to that of the atomic bomb tests conducted that same summer by the United States at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Islands,



**Bikini worn by actress Ursula Andress.** Made famous in the 1962 James Bond film *Dr. No*, this bikini was auctioned at Christie's auction house in London. The first bikini was worn at a Paris fashion show in 1946 but did not gain widespread acceptance until the 1960s. © AFP/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

which was arguably the source of its name. Both the French couturier Jacques Heim and the Swiss engineer Louis Reard are credited with launching the skimpy two-piece, which they dubbed the *atome* and bikini, respectively. The French model Michele Bernardini wore the first bikini at a fashion show in Paris. Her suit consisted of little more than two triangles of fabric for the bra, with strings that tied around the neck and back, and two triangles of fabric for the bottom, connected by strings at the hips.

The legendary fashion editor Diana Vreeland dubbed the bikini the “swoonsuit,” and declared that it was the most important thing since the A-bomb, revealing “everything about a girl except her mother’s maiden name.” Vreeland worked at the time for *Harper’s Bazaar*, which was the first magazine to showcase the bikini in America. The May 1947 issue featured a Toni Frissell photograph of a model wearing a rayon green-and-white-polka-dot bikini by the American sportswear designer Carolyn Schnurer.

Vreeland’s comments about the bikini speak to the controversy that erupted when it first appeared. Unlike its two-piece counterparts, first seen on beaches in the late 1920s and 1930s, which exposed only a small section of midriff, the bikini bared a number of erogenous zones—the back, upper thigh, and for the first time, the navel—all at once. It was almost immediately banned, for religious reasons, in such countries as Spain, Portugal, and Italy and was shunned by American women as lacking in decency. Many public parks and beaches prohibited bikinis, and wearing them in private clubs and resorts was looked upon with disfavor.

The bikini remained a taboo novelty throughout the 1950s. Made even of such unusual fabrics as mink, grass, and porcupine quills, bikinis were worn mostly by screen sirens and pin-up girls like Brigitte Bardot, Jayne Mansfield, and Diana Dors, along with sophisticates on the beaches of resorts along the Riviera. They were also showcased in bathing suit beauty contests in vacation spots like Florida and California. One-piece and more modest two-piece suits, resembling the highly structured undergarments of the period, held favor with the majority of women until the end of the decade, when bikini sales started to rise.

An increased number of private pools in suburban backyards and a growing awareness of health and fitness were cited as possible causes for increased acceptance of bikini-wearing, at least within the privacy of one’s own home. *Harper’s Bazaar* touted the bikini as putting one close to the elements. American retailers, however, who reportedly sold more sleepwear resembling bikinis than actual bikini swimsuits, were ambivalent about the extent to which they should promote the sale of bikinis.

It was not until the 1960s that the bikini gained more widespread acceptance. Youth culture, celebrity endorsements, and innovations in textile technology such as the manufacture of spandex, helped establish the bikini, and its variations, as a mainstay in swimwear fashion. In 1960, the singer Brian Hyland immortalized the bikini with his hit song, “Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini.” A crop of beach movies with bikini-clad teenagers, including the former Mouseketeer Annette Funicello, appeared. Ursula Andress wore one of the most famous bikinis, with a hip holster, in the 1962 James Bond film *Dr. No*—a variation of which was worn by Halle Berry in the 2002 Bond movie *Die Another Day*. *Sports Illustrated* published its first swimsuit issue in 1964, with Babette March wearing a bikini on the cover; appearing on the cover of *Sports Illustrated’s* much-anticipated, annual swimsuit issue is now a coveted rite of passage for fashion models. The prevailing form of the early 1960s bikini was a structured bra top and low-slung, hip-hugging briefs, often embellished with ruffles and fringe.

Relaxing sexual mores and shifting views on modesty brought about more daring variations of the bikini in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1964, the American fashion designer Rudi Gernreich, whose progressive, androgynous clothing pushed fashion’s boundaries, debuted his “monokini” or topless bathing suit. The black wool knit suit consisted of briefs with suspenders that extended between bared breasts and around the neck, reminiscent of a bathing suit illustrated in 1940 by the Italian designer Umberto Brunescelli. Gernreich sold 3,000 of the monokinis by the end of the season. He again shocked the public when he unveiled his unisex thong bathing suits in 1974, and the “pubikini” in the mid 1980s. The thong bikini, which revealed the buttocks, has since become the unofficial uniform of professional bodybuilders,

boxing ring girls who announce the rounds, and female dancers in music videos.

In 1974, the string bikini, or “tanga,” consisting of little more than tiny triangles of cloth held together with ties at the hip and around the neck and back, emerged from Rio de Janeiro. Topless bathing, which had been accepted for some time in exotic beach locales such as Rio and Saint Tropez, started to gain popularity on public beaches in the 1970s, particularly in the United States.

By the late 1970s, the bikini, which had been pushed to extremely minimal proportions, had lost some of its shock value and allure, and in response the one-piece suit came into favor again. However, new one-piece styles were strongly influenced by the bikini phenomenon. A year after Gernreich’s monokini was unveiled, “scandal suits” by Cole of California, also known as net bikinis, were popular, at once playfully revealing and concealing the body with solid patches of fabric connected with patches of net. The thong was also a clear antecedent of figure revealing one-pieces of the late 1970s and 1980s, which were cut high on the thigh, low at the neck and down the back, and open at the sides.

The trend toward less-structured, more figure-revealing suits such as the bikini corresponded with the sports and fitness craze that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Sport bikinis with racer-back tops and high-cut briefs appeared in the 1980s and were popular into the 1990s, worn, for example, as the official uniform for women’s volleyball teams in the 1996 Olympics. In the twenty-first century, the bikini has regained popularity through new incarnations, many of which are, paradoxically, made with more fabric.

The “tankini,” a two-piece that can provide as much coverage as a one-piece, has appeared, along with the “boy short” bottoms and surfer styles reminiscent of 1960s bikinis. High-end fashion houses such as Chanel, which debuted its minimal “eye-patch” bikini in 1995, contributed to the surfer craze with logo-emblazoned bikinis and surfboards in their Spring/Summer 2002 collection.

Despite the initial controversy, the bikini has become a perennial in swimwear fashion, particularly among the young. Youth-oriented culture, sexual emancipation, innovation in textile technology, an emphasis on sports and fitness, and the overarching societal shift to a more relaxed style of dress have all contributed to the bikini’s success.

See also **Swimwear; Teenage Fashions; Vreeland, Diana.**

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*Tiffany Webber-Hanchett*

**BLAHNIK, MANOLO** Manolo Blahnik (b. 1942) was a designer and manufacturer of what were called “the sexiest shoes in the world”—beautiful, expensive, and highly coveted by many of the world’s most fashionable women. Heir to a tradition of luxury shoemaking epitomized by André Perugia, Salvatore Ferragamo, and Roger Vivier, Blahnik produced shoes—“Manolos,” to the cognoscenti—that became icons of the fashion culture at the turn of the



**Manolo Blahnik with actress Sarah Jessica Parker.** Manolo Blahnik’s shoe designs are popular with celebrities. © GREGORY PACE/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.



**CEO of Neiman Marcus Direct, Karen Katz.** Katz sits near a display of Manolo Blahnik shoes that are now available for purchase online. Manolo Blahnik's shoes are universally recognized. © AP/WORLD WIDE PHOTOS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

twenty-first century. In the words of retailer Jeffrey Kalinsky, "There's never been a shoe designer whose reign as No. 1 shoe designer has lasted so long. His hold on the throne has no sign of doing anything but growing" (Larson, p. 6).

Manolo Blahnik was born on 27 November 1942 in the small village of Santa Cruz de la Palma in the Canary Islands, where his family—his Spanish mother, Manuela, his Czechoslovakian father, Enan, and his younger sister, Evangelina—had a banana plantation. Manuela, a voracious consumer of fashion magazines, bought clothes on shopping trips to Paris and Madrid and had the island's dressmaker copy styles from fashion magazines. She designed her own shoes with the help of the local cobbler.

Manolo Blahnik moved to Geneva at the age of fifteen to live with his father's cousin. Here he had his first experiences of the theater, opera, and fine restaurants. He studied law for a short period but soon switched to literature and art history. Blahnik left Geneva for Paris in 1965 to study art and theater design. He worked at the trendy Left Bank shop GO, where he met the actress Anouk Aimée and the jewelry designer Paloma Picasso.

With Picasso's encouragement, Blahnik soon moved to London. While working at Feathers, a trendy boutique, he continued to cultivate his connections to the worlds of fashion and culture and was known for his unique style. But Blahnik was still searching for a specific vocation; the search then took him to New York City.

Blahnik arrived in New York City in 1969. Hired by the store Zapata, he began designing men's saddle shoes. In 1972 Blahnik was introduced to Ossie Clark, then one of London's most fashionable designers, who asked him to design the shoes for his women's collection. While the shoes were not commercially successful, the press noticed their originality of design. Blahnik had no formal training as a shoe maker and initially his designs were structurally weak. He consulted with a London shoe manufacturer in order to correct his lack of technical skills. Also during this time Blahnik met Diana Vreeland, who declared, "Young man, do things, do accessories. Do shoes" (McDowell, p. 84). This endorsement was seconded by China Machado, the fashion editor of *Harper's Bazaar*. *Women's Wear Daily* proclaimed Blahnik "one of the most exotic spirits in London" in 1973, and *Footwear News* described the Manolo Blahnik shoe on its front



### EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

Manolo Blahnik won three awards from the Council of Fashion Designers of America in the 1980s and 1990s. The first special award was given in 1987; the second, for outstanding excellence in accessory design, in 1990. The third award came with the following tribute in 1997: "Blahnik has done for footwear what Worth did for the couture, making slippers into objects of desire, collectibles for women for whom Barbies are too girlish and Ferraris not girlish enough .... an incredible piston in the engine of fashion, there is almost no designer he has not collaborated with, no designer who has not turned to him to transform a collection into a concert."

page as "the most talked about shoe in London." Blahnik purchased Zapata from its owner in 1973. In 1978 he introduced a line exclusive to Bloomingdale's, a well-known American retailer. Blahnik opened a second free-standing store a year later on New York's Madison Avenue.

Blahnik's creations received considerable publicity in the early 1980s, but his business was not running smoothly. Searching for alternatives, he was introduced by Dawn Mello, the vice president of Bergdorf Goodman, to an advertising copywriter named George Malkemus. Malkemus and his partner, Anthony Yurgaitis, went into business with Blahnik in 1982. They closed the Madison Avenue shop, opened a store on West Fifty-Fourth Street, and limited the distribution of Blahnik's shoes to such prestigious retailers as Barneys, Bergdorf Goodman, and Neiman Marcus. By 1984 the newspaper *USA Today* projected earnings of a million dollars for the New York shop alone. Manolo Blahnik shoes began to appear on the runways of designers from Yves Saint Laurent, Bill Blass, and Geoffrey Beene to Perry Ellis, Calvin Klein, Isaac Mizrahi, and John Galliano.

Manolo Blahnik's shoes became more popular than ever in the early twenty-first century. They appealed to an increasingly broad audience, in part because of their star billing on the television show *Sex and the City*. With production of "Manolos" limited to 10,000 to 15,000 pairs per month by four factories outside of Milan, the demand for these shoes exceeded the supply.

The December 2003 issue of *Footwear News* quoted Alice Rawsthorn, the director of London's Design Museum, which had been the site of a recent Blahnik retrospective: "Technically, aesthetically and conceptually, he is one of the most accomplished designers of our time in

any field, and is undeniably the world's most influential footwear designer" (Annis, p. 16).

*See also* Clark, Ossie; Ferragamo, Salvatore; London Fashion; Shoes, Women's; Vreeland, Diana.

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Liz Gessner

**BLASS, BILL** William Ralph (Bill) Blass (1922–2002) was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1922. At the age of nineteen he left the Midwest and moved to New York City, where he studied briefly at Parsons School of Design. He worked as a sketch artist for a sportswear firm in 1940–1941, but his budding career was interrupted for military service in a counterintelligence unit in World



**Bill Blass.** Blass's classic use of pinstripes and houndstooth checks, along with his tailored designs, drew attention from fashionable celebrities like Nancy Reagan and Barbara Walters. In the 1980s, Bill Blass Ltd. expanded to include sales of eyeglasses, fragrances and other fashion-related merchandise. © BETTMANN/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

War II. After the war Blass began working as a fashion designer, mainly for the firm of Maurice Rentner, Ltd. In 1970 he purchased the Rentner firm, renamed it Bill Blass Ltd., and saw the company take off as one of the most successful American fashion houses of the late twentieth century.

Blass created a glamorous but restrained look that won him a faithful following among women of style, including Nancy Reagan, Barbara Bush, Candice Bergen, and Barbara Walters. His day outfits drew heavily on tailoring and fabrics usually associated with menswear, including pinstriped gabardines, worsteds, and houndstooth checks. His eveningwear referenced Hollywood glamour. One of his most famous evening gowns consisted of a cashmere sweater top and a bouffant satin skirt.

Blass showed great business acumen in making Bill Blass Ltd. one of the leaders of the licensing boom that took off in the fashion industry in the 1980s. In rapid succession the firm concluded lucrative licensing deals for eyeglasses, executive gifts, fragrances, and a wide range of other fashion-related products. Blass retired from his business after suffering a stroke in 1998, and the company was sold to its backers in 1999. Blass died in 2002, but Bill Blass Ltd. continued to thrive, with Lars Nilsson as the founder's first successor. Michael Vollbracht replaced Nilsson as the firm's chief designer in 2003.

*See also* **Celebrities; Fashion Marketing and Merchandising; First Ladies' Gowns; Perfume; Twentieth-Century Fashion.**

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*John S. Major*

**BLAZER** Possibly a development of the nautical reefer jacket, a blazer is a loose-fitting and lightweight flannel sports jacket. Coming in both double- or single-breasted styles, although most are double-breasted, a blazer is generally tailored in either plain navy or black, has brass buttons, two side vents, is thigh length and in many cases has a breast-pocket badge. A well-constructed blazer can make even a pair of jeans appear smart. The blazer is generally considered to be a vital component of the "preppy" or "British look."

#### History

The familiar navy blazer traces its origins back to the captain of the frigate HMS *Blazer*, who had short double-breasted jackets cut in navy blue serge for his scruffy-looking crew when Queen Victoria visited his ship in 1837. The crew's "blazers" with their shining brass Royal Navy buttons impressed the Queen and soon became part of their dress uniform.

It is believed that the heavier double-breasted reefer jacket was the inspiration for the captain's original blazer design. What is less clear is how and why the naval blazer came to be worn by civilians. One likely explanation, and probably why so many owners of yachts and other sailing vessels wear blazers, is that many people who had no obvious association with the sea or indeed the navy could still have blazer jackets made originally for maritime experiences. With traditional outfitters such as Gieves and Hawkes, on London's Savile Row, cutting blazers for Royal Naval officers it is likely that many civilians would get their own tailors to copy a version for them. If buttons with emblems were not used then simple flat brass buttons were, although it would then become difficult to distinguish the blazer from the other sports jackets.

Divorced from any military background, the single-breasted blazer was the favored style of club jacket worn by rowing clubs in the nineteenth century. These would be made up in college, school, or club colors to be worn at special outdoor sporting events, such as the Henley Royal Regatta. Crests and other insignia were often embroidered in heavy gold thread on the left breast pocket, and the buttons were similar to those used by the navy. Men who were not in a sporting club might still wear a blazer but, as with the naval-inspired version, more likely using enamel buttons instead of brass.

Worn by many Europeans for both work and leisure and popularized by Brooks Brothers for the American market in the early twentieth century (and later in bright colors, such as bottle green or yellow, for golf attire), the authentic British blazer (and its imitations) have held a minor but consistent place in the male wardrobe for decades. The blazer's most recent revival was as essential executive dress in the 1980s, often worn with open shirt and cravat. Its popularity is limited somewhat by its reputation as being too formal for the young, and too stuffy for the "casual dress" office.

*See also* **Jacket; Sports Jacket.**

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Tom Greatrex

**BLOOMER COSTUME** In the spring of 1851, three leading women's rights activists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902), Cady's cousin, Elizabeth Smith Miller (1822–1911), and Amelia Jenks Bloomer (1818–1894), editor of the *Lily, a Ladies' Journal Devoted to Temperance and Literature*, wore similar outfits on the streets of Seneca Falls, New York—ensembles consisting of knee-length dresses over full trousers. In nineteenth-century America, trousers were an exclusively male garment and women wearing trousers in public caused a sensation. The national press quickly linked this dress reform style to Amelia Bloomer, who had been writing articles about it. Soon both the costume and its wearers were popularly identified as “Bloomers.”

Amelia Bloomer's strong association with the freedom dress, as it was known by women's rights advocates, began with an article in the *Lily* in February 1851. Bloomer wrote more pieces about the outfit over the next several months, particularly emphasizing its advantages as a healthful, convenient alternative to the many petticoats, long skirts, and tight corsets of current fashionable dress. In response to readers' inquiries, Bloomer described the costume in detail in the *Lily's* May issue, and when it sold out, repeated the description the following month, stating:

Our skirts have been robbed of about a foot of their former length, and a pair of loose trousers of the same material as the dress, substituted. These latter extend from the waist to the ankle, and may be gathered into a band . . . We make our *dress* the same as usual, except that we wear no bodice, or a very slight one, the waist is loose and easy, and without whalebones . . . Our skirt is full, and falls a little below the knee.

But however closely she was connected with the Bloomer costume by the press and the public, Amelia Bloomer did not invent the style. Bloomer's full trousers gathered in at the ankle were called “Turkish trousers” and patterned after those worn by women in the Middle East. Since the eighteenth century, European and American women had also worn such trousers for fancy dress. French fashion plates of the 1810s show similar full trousers, called pantalets or pantaloons, peeking out un-

der calf-length fashionable dresses. Although this style was far too daring for American women, by the 1820s children of both sexes were wearing short dresses over narrow, straight-legged trousers, also called pantalets. Boys exchanged pantalets for regular trousers when they grew too old for dresses (typically at five or six), while girls wore them throughout childhood. In their late teens, girls graduated to long dresses and continued to wear pantalets as underwear beneath their skirts.

Amelia Bloomer credited Elizabeth Smith Miller with introducing the freedom dress. There are differing accounts of how Miller came to design her outfit, but it is likely that Miller was aware of similar attire worn by women in utopian communities or sanatoriums. Beginning in 1827 with Community of Equality in New Harmony, Indiana, women in several American religious and utopian groups wore straight-legged trousers like children's pantalets under knee-length loose-fitting dresses. Various styled similar outfits were also promoted for women performing calisthenic exercises and patients at water cure sanatoriums. These early instances of women wearing short dresses over trousers did cause occasional comment in the press, but because the garments were worn in closed societies or in women-only situations, they did not challenge the basic social order, unlike the public displays of the Bloomer costume in the 1850s.

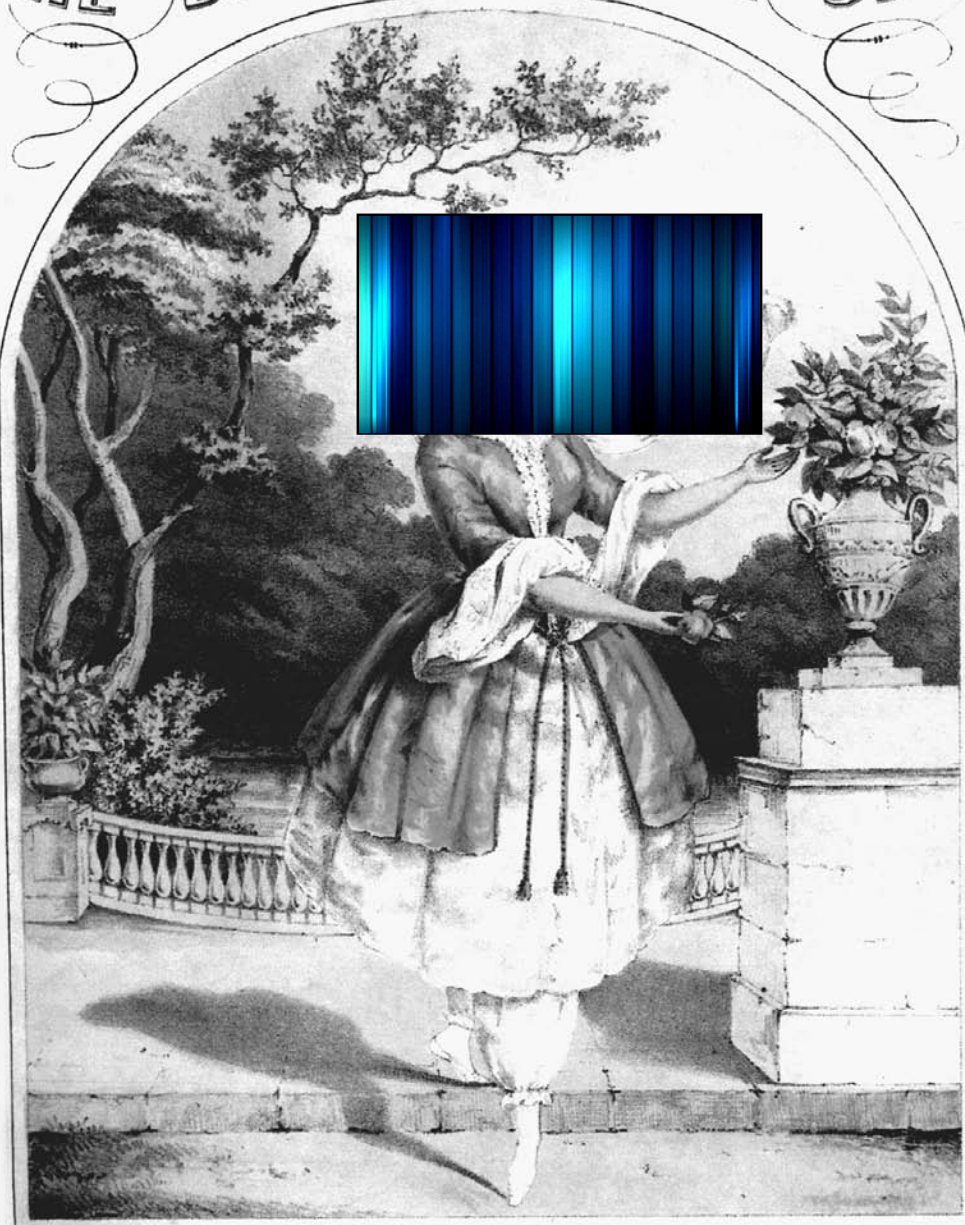
The initial press coverage of Bloomer wearers during the summer of 1851 was not completely negative but before long the reality of women publicly wearing trousers brought out underlying fears of gender role reversals. In a society based on male dominance and female submission, men saw the Bloomer costume as a threat to the status quo and male leaders from newspaper editors to ministers decried the fashion. Satirical cartoons depicted Bloomer-clad women as crude louts indulging in the worst male vices or bossy wives holding sway over their husbands.

Although women's rights activists generally favored dress reform, they came to view the Bloomer costume as a counterproductive force. When activists lectured wearing the Bloomer costume, audiences focused on the controversial trousers instead of radical change in women's education, employment, and suffrage. Consequently, by the mid-1850s, most women's rights advocates had stopped wearing the Bloomer costume in public. Amelia Bloomer herself continued to wear it until 1858, when she cited a move to a new community and the newly introduced cage crinoline, which eliminated the need for heavy petticoats, as the reasons she abandoned the freedom dress and returned to long skirts.

The Bloomer costume and a similar outfit called the American costume, which featured mannish, straight-legged trousers, were viable alternatives to constrictive fashionable dress during the second half of the nineteenth century. Although the number of women who wore such attire in public was very small, there are accounts of

*à Mademoiselle Rosalie W. Taylor.*

# THE BLOOMER QUICK STEP



*Lith. by A. Hoen & Co. Balt.*

Composed by  
**CHARLES GROBE.**

*Colours 38 cts. net.* Baltimore pub. by F. D. Benteen. *Plain 25 cts. net.*  
W<sup>m</sup> T. Mayo, New Orleans.

**The Bloomer Quick Step.** The "Bloomer" described in the *Daily Richmond Times* account wore an outfit similar to the one seen on the girl illustrating the "Bloomer Quick Step." A publisher of dance scores apparently mistook the Bloomer costume as a fashion fad and released a series of illustrated "Bloomer" dances late in 1851. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.





Yesterday afternoon, Main street was thrown into intense commotion by the sudden appearance . . . of a pretty young woman, rigged out in the Bloomer costume—her dress being composed of a pink silk cap, pink skirt reaching to the knees and large white silk trousers, fitting compactly around the ankle, and pink coloured gaiters. . . . Old and young, grave and gay, descended into the street to catch a glimpse of the Bloomer as she passed leisurely and gracefully down the street, smiling at the sensation which her appearance had created. The boys shouted, the men laughed and the ladies smiled at the singular spectacle. . . . Few inquired the name of the Bloomer, because all who visited the Theatre during the last season, recognized in her a third or fourth rate actress, whose real or assumed name appeared in the bills as “Miss O’Neil.” During the Season, however, we learn she severed her connexion with Mr. Potter’s corps of Super numeraries and entered a less respectable establishment in this city.

*Richmond Dispatch*, Tuesday, 8 July 1851, p.2, c.6.

women wearing it in private when doing housework, farming, or traveling, especially in the west. In 1858 *Godey’s Lady’s Book* promoted a Bloomer-style costume for calisthenics and similar clothing was worn as bathing costume. Physical training educators used the Bloomer costume as a prototype in developing garments for increasingly active women’s sports programs. The full trousers themselves became known as bloomers and, by the 1880s, were an essential element of the gymnasium or gym suit; short bloomers continued to be worn as part of gym suits into the 1970s. Bloomers reappeared in public during the bicycling craze of the 1890s, now worn as part of a suit with a jacket instead of a short dress. Women wearing bicycling bloomers in the 1890s were less controversial than when Amelia Bloomer and her friends donned their famous outfits in the 1850s, but not until the mid-twentieth century did women routinely wear trousers in public without criticism.

See also **Dress Reform; Gender, Dress, and Fashion; Trousers.**

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Colleen R. Callahan

**BLOUSE** Although the term “blouse” now refers to a woman’s separate bodice of a different material than the skirt, the word derives from the French name for a workman’s loose smock and was first used in English for men’s and boy’s shirts. The feminine blouse has its antecedents in the undergarment known as a smock, shift, or chemise, which served the same purposes as the male shirt: worn next to the skin, it absorbed bodily soil and protected outer garments.

In the early 1860s full-sleeved loose bodices came into vogue, called Garibaldi shirts since they were modeled on the famous red shirt of the Italian nationalist and freedom fighter. *Peterson’s Magazine* in May 1862 (p. 421) thought these blouses, often made in red or black wool or white or striped cotton, were warm, comfortable, inexpensive, and practical, extending the life of a silk skirt which outlived its matching bodice. Puffed “in bag fashion” at the waist, Garibaldi shirts sometimes created an ungainly silhouette with a hooped skirt, but a boned waistband called a Swiss belt could be worn to gracefully ease the transition between top and bottom. The idea of fashionable separates for women had emerged. In January 1862 *Godey’s Lady’s Magazine* (p. 21) predicted that the advent of the feminine shirt was “destined to produce a change amounting to a revolution in ladies’ costume.”

By the 1890s, these bodices, now called shirtwaists or waists, had indeed dramatically increased the average woman’s clothing options. Shirtwaists could be severely tailored with masculine-style detachable starched collars and cuffs, or very feminine in lightweight fabrics trimmed with lace, insertion, and other lavish decoration. Shirtwaists were suitable with tailored suits, with a skirt for housework and sportswear, and with bloomers for cycling or as gym costumes, while dressier versions were worn for afternoon receptions, the theater, and evening wear. In 1895, Montgomery Ward’s spring and summer catalog (p. 37) told customers, “Your old dress skirt worn with a neat laundered waist provides you with a cool, comfortable and up-to-date costume that will quite astonish you.” They commended the shirtwaist as “by far

the most becoming and sensible article of woman's attire to receive fashion's universal approval."

Although they could be made at home and commercial patterns were widely available, shirtwaists, with their loose fit, were the first women's garment to be successfully mass-produced. Ready-made waists could be purchased at incredibly low prices—as little as twenty-five cents from Sears, Roebuck and Company in 1897. The burgeoning apparel industry utilized economies of scale and power machinery, but cheap garments were also the result of sweatshop production by unskilled and often exploited labor. Workers could toil seventy hours a week for as little as thirty cents a day, frequently in egregious conditions.

One of the many sweatshops in Manhattan churning out these popular garments was the Triangle Shirtwaist Company, which occupied the top three floors of a ten-story building and ensured maximum production by locking the exit doors. When fire broke out on 25 March 1911, many of the 500 workers, mainly Jewish immigrants aged thirteen to twenty-three, were trapped; 146 women died in less than fifteen minutes. While this tragedy helped crystallize calls for reform, led by organizations such as the International Ladies Garment Workers Union founded in 1900, mass production continued to create victims as well as affordable clothing.

Many sweatshop workers no doubt wore shirtwaists, for these practical, inexpensive, and unobtrusive garments were a boon to women in factories, offices, and those who would later be dubbed "pink collar" workers. Yet at the turn of the century, the well-to-do, imperiously handsome women immortalized by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson were often depicted wearing immaculate starched shirtwaists during vigorous walks or rounds of golf. The "Gibson girl" soon became such an American icon that she gave her name to styles of waists and the preferred high stand collars. As fashion evolved, shirtwaists gradually became more relaxed; by the 1910s the "middy blouse," modeled on the loose sailor-collared shirts of seamen, was especially popular with girls and for general sport and utility wear.

The shirtwaist, now also called a blouse, proved remarkably accommodating in style and price. By 1915 Gimbel's catalog (p. 44) could state, "The shirtwaist has become an American institution. The women of other lands occasionally wear a shirtwaist—the American woman occasionally wears something else." Mass-produced or custom-made, serviceable or dainty, the versatile blouse played an essential role in the democratization of fashion. *Suiting Everyone* (Kidwell and Christman, p. 145) states, "For the first time in America, women dressed with a uniformity of look which blurred economic and social distinctions."

While not as universally worn, the feminine blouse adapted itself to almost every occasion through the mid-twentieth century. The haute couture ensembles of ele-

gant matrons often featured blouses to match suit jacket linings, while college girls coordinated Peter-Pan collared permanent-press blouses with casual skirts or slacks. As more women joined the labor force—nearly a third of the American labor force was female by 1960—the blouse continued to be the workhorse of clerical workers, teachers, and those in service industries. In 1977 John T. Molloy in *The Woman's Dress for Success Book* (pp. 54, 55) famously advocated a "uniform" for the executive woman consisting of a skirted suit and blouse—but warned that removing the jacket would make her look like a secretary. He argued that since the blouse made a measurable difference in the psychological impact of the suit, it should not be selected for emotional or aesthetic reasons, but for its message. Molloy claimed his research showed a white blouse gave high authority and status, and his recommended styles included man-tailored shirts with one button open and the "acceptable nonfrilly style" with a built-in bow tie at the neck—the so-called floppy bow that soon became a "dress for success" cliché.

While blouses were important in reflecting the wearer's personal style, this message was sometimes oversimplified. Toby Fischer-Mirkin's 1995 book *Dress Code* (p. 94), for example, definitively states that an unbuttoned shirt collar indicates an open-minded, flexible woman, a loose collar reflects a casual woman who may be slack in her work, while an angular or oddly shaped collar proclaims a highly creative and unconventional individual.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the blouse—like the earlier Garibaldi shirt and shirtwaist—has been overshadowed by trendier permutations of feminine tops, from T-shirts and turtlenecks to sweaters and man-tailored shirts. Introduced less than one hundred and fifty years ago, the concept of women's separates has become a democratic sartorial style.

See also **Shirtwaist; T-Shirt.**

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H. Kristina Haugland

**BODYBUILDING AND SCULPTING** The twenty-first century body, like those of preceding centuries, is still engaged in the eternal quest for an ideal shape. The modernist body of fashion has made it possible for both women and men to reconstruct themselves by a variety of means, resisting the body's unruly nature in order to achieve a firm, toned physique that conforms to sexual stereotypes and concepts of beauty. While women in earlier centuries relied mainly on dieting and corsetry to achieve the perfect shape, today's alternatives include muscular development through weight-lifting, strenuous exercise, and perpetual dieting. Cosmetic surgery has become an accepted method of transforming the body's natural shape. Many contemporary men rely on strenuous weight training, other forms of exercise, dieting, and cosmetic surgery to achieve bodies that conform to social ideals of masculine appearance.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, women in the developed world came to rely on medical science for regular health screening and routine medical procedures. The medicalization of the female body continued, and by the beginning of the 1990s plastic surgery was widespread and surgery became a "normal" means of fashioning the body. Whereas body-shaping fashions had merely manipulated the body into an ideal shape temporarily, the surgeon's scalpel could achieve enduring transformations intended to boost both the patient's self-esteem and her social desirability. Whereas during the early years of cosmetic surgery many women would be at pains to conceal the fact that they had undergone a face-lift or other procedure, toward the end of the twentieth century such surgery was socially acceptable and even regarded as glamorous.

That such radical procedures have nevertheless become commonplace is explained by a combination of the ever-increasing technical ability to perform them and the continually evolving notion of the ideal female body. Prior to the 1960s, changes in the ideal female form were more likely to have been achieved by clothing than by physical transformations of various sorts. The emergence of the "New Woman" in the late nineteenth century introduced an element of athleticism into the feminine ideal, even as corsets continued to be worn on the sports field. The ideal of the 1920s was youthful and trim, but women of the 1930s through the 1950s were shaped by elastic undergarments.

By the 1960s, perceptions of femininity were aligned to ideals of youth, and a fixation with the adolescent figure resulted in a very thin, androgynous physique often achieved by extremes of dieting. Dieting prevailed throughout the 1970s as the principal means of body modification, augmented by exercise regimes of jogging, tennis, and roller-skating, which gave way to aerobics, dancercise, and fitness classes in the 1980s. The lithe but shapely physiques of Jane Fonda and Cindy Crawford represented the sought-after ideal, which fashion augmented with shoulder pads and bulky "box" jackets that

produced the appearance of a voluptuous, powerful physique. In the 1990s, the use of exercise and diet to achieve an ideal shape was increasingly supplemented by medical and surgical procedures. One group of women, however, took exercise itself to extreme levels.

The phenomenon of female bodybuilding, which had existed since the mid-twentieth century but only emerged from its subcultural milieu in the 1980s, introduced a rippling range of hyper-muscular bodies to the wider context of visual culture. Women with bulging thighs, enormous calves, rock-hard biceps, Herculean shoulders, and washboard abs introduced a new form of physicality that previously had only been associated with male bodybuilders or with the female superheroes of comic strips. Female mesomorphs, as women bodybuilders became known, inspired some women to strive for bodies with exceptional strength and definition.

Such physiques moved beyond the traditional stereotypes of the female body and in feminist circles were received as avatars of a future body image. While the female mesomorph was rarely seen on fashion runways, she gained ground in film and television. Programs such as *Xena: Warrior Princess* popularized the erotic appeal of muscular women and provided a role model for those striving for a similar body ideal.

Although fashion magazines typically promote weight loss and body conditioning to reinforce the image of women as being lean and toned, mesomorph bodies blur gender boundaries. This female body type reads as an emulation of masculinity, male power, and privilege. The feminist scholars Susan Bordo and Christine Battersby cite the female mesomorph as an example of the cultural difficulties over issues surrounding the body, gender, sexuality, and power. Robert Mapplethorpe photographed the bodybuilder Lisa Lyons as the AIDS epidemic grew, confronting the anxieties of a society riddled with fears of sickness and death with a representation of power and vitality.

But body modification is practiced by men as well as by women. In the Western tradition, elite male clothing has typically been body concealing, emphasizing attributes of wealth and status rather than physical form. Only in a few instances, such as the uniforms of cavalry officers, did men wear body-enhancing clothing; tellingly, the shoulder pads and corsets worn to shape their figures mirrored the dress of the early nineteenth-century dandy. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, an athletic physique, implying proficiency at such upper-class pursuits as tennis and college team sports, had begun to be considered a desirable attribute of young men. Sheer muscularity, however, remained the province of circus strongmen and manual laborers. Weight lifting, though a part of the modern Olympics since its inception, was in its infancy as a sport.

Following World War I, the gradual acceptance of men going bare-chested or nearly so while swimming in

mixed company, helped to focus attention on the muscular torso as an attribute of masculinity. Bodybuilding as a defined set of techniques soon followed. For example, Charles Atlas, who billed himself as “the world’s most perfectly developed man,” began in 1929 to market his system for turning “97-pound weaklings” into muscular giants. The first “Mr. America” contest was held a decade later, won by the bodybuilding legend Bert Goodrich.

The invention of weight-training machines, such as the Nautilus in the late 1960s and early 1970s, transformed the nature of physical exercise and made strength training readily available to men of all ages and ability levels. By the mid-1970s, men and women alike were putting in more and more time at the gym in pursuit of the ideal body. Meanwhile, bodybuilding as a sport was popularized by specialized magazines, by famous gathering spots like southern California’s “Muscle Beach,” and by a network of professional and amateur contests.

Bodybuilding is a special subculture, in which extremely massive musculature, the hypertrophic development of all of the body’s muscles (often relying in part on steroids and other metabolic enhancements), and the taking of sculptural poses tend to go far beyond mainstream society’s criteria for the masculine ideal. In some gay subcultures, bodybuilding to a lesser extreme is the norm, and having a “cut” body (one with sharply defined musculature) is highly sought after. Within those communities, implants, liposuction, and other surgical enhancements have become commonplace. Most broadly, a toned, muscular body has become a widely accepted ideal for young men in Western cultures, to the extent that not to possess such a body is as much cause for self-conscious concern as it has become for a woman not to be toned, shapely, and firm.

As these body ideals are considered, new functions and new perspectives of the fashioned body unfold. The body’s role as a site of resistance, empowerment, and emancipation reveals that the body ideals of fashion are not necessarily satisfied by the pursuit of beauty alone.

See also **Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery**.

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Bradley Quinn

**BODY PIERCING** Body piercing is the practice of inserting jewelry (usually metal, though wood, glass, bone, or ivory, and certain plastics are used as well) completely through a hole in the body. Piercing is often combined with other forms of body art, such as tattooing or branding, and many studios offer more than one of these services. While virtually any part of the body can be, and has been, pierced and bejeweled (for evidence, see the well-known Web site <http://www.bmezine.com>) widely pierced sites include ear, eyebrow, nose, lip, tongue, nipple, navel, and genitals.

Much of what popularly passes for the history of body piercing is in fact fictitious. In the 1970s, the Los Angeles resident Doug Malloy, an eccentric and wealthy proponent of piercing, set forth with charismatic authority a set of historical references connecting contemporary Western body piercing to numerous ancient practices. He declared, for example, that ancient Egyptian royalty pierced their navels (consequently valuing deep navels), Roman soldiers hung their capes from rings through their nipples, the *hafada* (a piercing through the skin of the scrotum) was a puberty rite brought back from the Middle East by French legionnaires, and that the *guiche* (a male piercing of the perineum) was a Tahitian puberty rite performed by respected transvestite priests. No anthropological accounts bear out these claims.

What facts can be sorted from the fiction nonetheless attest to the remarkable antiquity of piercing. The oldest fully preserved human being found, the 5,300-year-old “ice-man” of the Alps, shows evidence of ear-lobe piercing. Like many with a serious interest in piercing in the twenty-first century, the ice-man has stretched his lobes, in his case to a diameter of about seven millimeters. Artifacts as well as bodies offer evidence of ancient single and multiple ear piercings from as early as the ninth century B.C.E.

While Malloy’s claims are largely imaginative, there are geographically diverse cultures in which piercing has been continually practiced for quite some time. Ear and nose piercing seem to be, and seem to have been, the most popular; indeed, there are far too many examples to list here, and the following instances should be taken as representative rather than anything close to exhaustive. Many Native American peoples practiced ear or nose—generally septum—piercing (the latter most fa-

mously among the Nez Percé of the American Northwest). Multiple ear piercing was practiced by both men and women in the ancient Middle East, and a mummy believed to be that of Queen Nefertiti of Egypt, sports two piercings in each ear. The Maoris of New Zealand, though better known for their intricate and elegant tattoo designs, have also long practiced ear piercing, which along with nose piercing is widespread among native peoples of both New Zealand and Australia. Ear piercing for girls forms part of traditional rites in Thai and Polynesian cultures. Ear piercing among the Alaskan Tlingits could be an indication of social status, as could nose piercing.

Stretched ear piercings—in which the hole is gradually enlarged by the use of weights or by the insertion of successively larger pieces of jewelry—appear in diverse cultures as well. In Africa, the Masai and Fulani are known for ear-cartilage piercings, which may be stretched (a much slower and more difficult process than stretching earlobe piercings). Images and artifacts from native Central American cultures show stretched lobes with jewelry much like that used by contemporary enthusiasts. East Asian images and sculptures, some many centuries old, show long stretched lobes as well; these are emblematic especially of Buddhist saints. The Dayaks of Borneo traditionally pierce and dramatically stretch the earlobe; other piercings—including the *ampallang*, a horizontal piercing through the penis—have also been attributed to them.

Nostril piercing may have originated in the Middle East, and has been practiced in India for thousands of years, particularly among women. It may be through their interest in Eastern cultures that the hippies of North America took to nostril piercing around the 1970s.

While not as prevalent as the piercing of the ears or nose, lip piercing is also geographically widespread. Women in many regions of East Africa have traditionally worn lip piercings with plugs, while Dogon women may pierce their lips with rings. The men among some native Alaskan peoples also pierced the lower lip, either doubly or singly.

Other piercings are much less attested to in older or more traditional contexts. There is some indication of Central American tongue piercing, for example among the Mayas, but this may have been temporary, intended to draw blood for ceremonial purposes rather than for the lasting insertion of jewelry. More reliable is the evidence of the Indian Kama Sutra (written by the sixth century C.E.) where penis piercings resembling the contemporary *apadravya*—a vertical piercing through the penis—are described as enhancing the pleasure of both the penis-bearer and his partner.

There may also have been temporary upsurges of interest prior to contemporary versions—some sources, for example, report a fad for nipple piercings among women in the late nineteenth century in both London and Paris. (See both Kern and Harwood.) Here, as in its contem-



**Ear with multiple piercings.** Ear piercing is an ancient tradition dating back to prehistoric times that continues to be practiced by many traditional, as well as contemporary, cultures in the early twenty-first century. Multiple ear-piercing became popular in Western culture during the late-twentieth century among members of the punk, goth, and rave youth subcultures. COURTESY OF KARMEN MACKENDRICK. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

porary form, piercing is removed from its more traditional social functions, such as marking one as a member of a community or as being of a particular status, and more specifically erotic as well as decorative functions are noted.

### Recent History and Subcultures

“Body piercing” is generally distinguished from (unstretched) earlobe piercing, and is more recent in popularity. In its late-twentieth-century version, the interest in such piercing can be traced largely to a handful of figures, particularly Doug Malloy along with Jim Ward and Fakir Musafar (Roland Loomis) in the United States and Mr. Sebastian (Alan Oversby) in the United Kingdom.

With Malloy serving as patron and in some respects teacher, Ward began making specialized piercing jewelry in the early 1970s (Ward is credited with the design of the ubiquitous captive-bead ring, also called the ball-closure ring). He and Musafar opened the Gauntlet, a

piercing shop that seemed a natural outgrowth of the jewelry business, in Los Angeles in 1975. Gauntlet shops in other major cities opened in succeeding years. Later he began the journal *PFIQ* (*Piercing Fans International Quarterly*), an important source of both information and community for those interested in body piercing. Mr. Sebastian, likewise taught at first by Malloy, was more secretive with his techniques, but was widely known as a piercer. For both, the initial clientele was largely gay men from the sadomasochistic (s/m) community.

In the 1980s, Elayne Binnie (known as Elayne Angel in the early 2000s) joined the staff of the Gauntlet, attracting many more women clients. Angel, who was the first person to obtain the “Master Piercer” certificate from the Gauntlet, is also widely credited with popularizing the tongue piercing (having five herself). Along with the navel, the tongue is one of the most popular piercings in the early twenty-first century.

Musafar, who later fell out with his former partner, is responsible for the term “modern primitive,” with which a number of highly pierced people have identified. Musafar emphasizes commonalities between contemporary and older, particularly tribal, traditions; he also emphasizes the psychological and spiritual elements of all sorts of body modifications, including piercing. Many serious piercers in the early 2000s are trained in his seminars. Modern primitives may ritualize the processes and meaning of their body art and often draw on traditional cultures for design in both piercing jewelry and other arts, such as tattooing.

From its start among gay leathermen, piercing grew in popularity to include a number of communities. Among the most influential in the spread of piercing’s popularity was punk. The punks in both the United States and the United Kingdom were fond of non-ear piercings, particularly on the face (lip, nostril, and cheek piercings attained popularity early in this group). The punk emphasis is on rebellion and unconventionality; the modern primitive emphasis on cross-cultural connection and spirituality is quite absent here, replaced by punk’s interesting combination of outrage and playfulness.

Music and cultural styles that emerged out of punk often have a place for piercing as well. The straightedge movement, generally dated to the early 1980s, though it attained more popularity later on, provides today a large subset of the heavily pierced. Along with tattoos (often of straightedge symbols such as XXX or sXe) piercings show both the punk influence on straightedge music and the subculture’s deep interest in the body (most who identify as straightedge are vegetarian or vegan and abstain from the use of alcohol and other recreational drugs). Straightedge thinking may emphasize the slightly mind-altering sensation of the piercing experience, incorporating elements of the modern primitive emphasis on ecstasies (overcoming the limits of time and selfhood in experience) alongside punk unconventionality. The Goth scene emergent in the early 1980s and again in the

1990s has a religious sensibility very different from modern primitive spirituality, tending toward highly stylized and cultivated artifice in its use of religious, particularly Catholic and Wiccan, imagery. As these associations suggest, Goth style tends toward intense theatricality, and visually striking piercings are widespread; the “dark” emphasis of much Goth culture also meets up with an acceptance of s/m imagery and the pain that may be inherent in body piercing.

The rave scene emergent in the 1990s also includes an interest in visually compelling piercings, particularly facial and navel piercings. Often glow-in-the-dark or battery-powered flashing jewelry is used, giving the piercings a hypnotic effect in dimly lit spaces and playing off the more rapid pulse of the very high beats-per-minute music generally favored.

Not all highly pierced groups or scenes are connected to particular species of music, of course. S/m communities remain strongholds of piercing. Here both the physicality of the piercing experience (and the enhanced sensation often provided by healed piercings) and the symbolism of the jewelry are significant—with the significance ranging from pain-tolerance to community affiliation to ownership. Piercing is also popular, though not so much as tattooing, in biker culture. Here large-gauge (thickness) piercings are often favored, complimenting the traditional bold lines of biker tattooing. Finally, many people also simply understand themselves as members of a body-modification or body-art community, with a respect for body modification and an interest in its being practiced well—as well as in having their own bodies modified.

### The Move to the Mainstream

Most piercers, however, will emphasize that the people who get pierced do not often fit into any of these groups, and may indeed be, for example, corporate or grandparental types whose under-the-clothes piercings almost certainly go unsuspected. The more fashionable piercings—particularly tongue, navel, nostril, and eyebrow—tend to attract a younger and more specifically (or overtly) fashion-oriented clientele. A significant influence on the entry of body piercing into mainstream fashion has been popular music, as formerly “edgy” or marginal looks were assimilated into pop and made widely visible in music videos. The most famous instance here is undoubtedly the inspirationally pierced navel of the singer Britney Spears, which has taken thousands if not millions of young women into piercing shops they might not otherwise have frequented.

In general, “mainstream” body piercing involves relatively small-gauge jewelry, often (particularly for navel piercings) with ornamental, even jeweled, beads. Gold, while expensive, may be used as well as more commonly used nonreactive metals including stainless steel and titanium. Perhaps in response, those who identify as more

marginal or as members of the body-art community tend to prize piercings that are unusual in location or style, such as surface piercings (piercings that go under the skin rather than through a protruding part of the body—the eyebrow is a surface piercing, but less common versions include the nape or front of the neck, the back along the spine, and the wrists), multiple piercings in a single location (even the navel offers top, bottom, left, and right options), or very large-gauge piercings.

As body piercing has grown in popularity, it has come to be increasingly regulated, though it is still much less so than tattooing. In most of the United States, and in parts of Canada and Australia, local legislation sets hygienic standards via departments of health, and limits the piercing permitted to minors, either banning it outright or requiring parental permission. Interestingly, earlobe piercing is almost invariably excluded from this legislation, a reflection of its well-established and unthreatening presence. The Association of Professional Piercers, a voluntary organization, promotes self-regulation regarding cleanliness standards and piercing practices, and many piercers are members.

Legislation in the United Kingdom is somewhat ambiguous, although piercing seems in general to be legal so long as its purpose is solely cosmetic. In 1991, Mr. Sebastian was found guilty of “gross bodily harm” to thirteen of his clients (they had not complained, but their names were located in his records), on the principle that one cannot assent to assault or mutilation. Cosmetic piercing is regulated in London, and ear piercing elsewhere in the United Kingdom, but it is not quite clear how or whether laws on injury, surgery, or female circumcision might apply (see Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council).

Despite occasional suggestions that the proper legislation regarding body piercing is to ban it outright, the phenomenon seems unlikely to disappear altogether. Undoubtedly its popularity will wane, perhaps to wax again at some point, but the longevity of the practice among human beings suggests that it has an enduring, as well as cross-cultural, appeal.

See also **Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery; Punk; Scarification; Tattoos.**

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*Karmen MacKendrick*

**BOGOLAN** *Bogolan*, also known as *bogolanfini*, is an African textile whose distinctive technique and iconography have been adapted to diverse markets and materials. The textile is indigenous to Mali, where it has been made and worn for generations. The cloth’s bold geometric patterns and rich earth tones make it distinctive and readily adaptable to new contexts. In the past, bogolan was made exclusively by women, who created it for use in specific ritual contexts. During the past two decades, new techniques, forms, and meanings have brought bogolan to international markets even as the cloth continues to be made and used in its original contexts. In North America, where the cloth’s patterns have been adapted to a wide range of products, this textile is marketed as “mud cloth.”

Although bogolan is associated with a number of Malian ethnic groups, it is the Bamana version that has become best known outside of Mali. *Bogolanfini* is a Bamana word that describes this textile dyeing technique; *bogo* means “earth” or “mud,” *lan* means “with” or “by means of,” and *fini* means “cloth.” Bogolan is unique both in technique and style, which makes the cloth particularly appealing to contemporary artists and designers. Many are also drawn to the fact that bogolan is uniquely Malian, made nowhere else in the world.

#### The Cultural Role of Bogolan

Until its recent revival in urban Mali, bogolan was made only by women, who learned techniques and patterns from their mothers and other older female relatives. The making of bogolan requires both technical knowledge and mastery of the cloth’s many symbols. Some bogolan artists become well-known in their communities and beyond. The recent rise in bogolan’s popularity has changed the lives of some of these women, who now sell cloth to art collectors and teach aspiring bogolan artists, who are primarily young men from Bamako, the capital of Mali.

The cloth’s traditional uses reflect important aspects of Bamana social organization. Bogolan tunics are worn by hunters, a highly respected and powerful group for whom bogolan’s earth tones serve as camouflage, ritual protection, as well as an immediately recognizable emblem of their occupation. The cloth is also present at important events in a woman’s life. Bogolan wrappers are worn by girls following their initiation into adulthood, a process which includes female circumcision, and by women immediately following childbirth. The cloth is believed to have the power to absorb the dangerous forces released at these significant moments.

### Making Bogolan

Bogolan cloth is woven on narrow looms by men to create long strips of cotton fabric approximately six inches wide, which are stitched together to create wrapper-sized cloths (approximately a yard by five feet [1 by 1.5 m]). Production of dyes and decoration of the cloths is the work of women, who develop their skills over years of apprenticeship to their elders. The first and most essential step in the dyeing process is, paradoxically, invisible in the final product. Leaves from a tree called *n'gallama* are mashed and boiled or soaked to create a dye bath. After immersion in the dye bath, the now-yellow cloth is dried in the sun. Using a piece of metal or a stick, women paint designs in special mud that has been collected from riverbeds and fermented in clay jars for up to a year. A chemical reaction occurs between the mud and the *n'gallama*-dyed cloth, so that after the mud is washed off, the black or brown design remains. The yellow tone of the *n'gallama* dye is then removed from the unpainted portions of the cloth: the undecorated parts of the fabric are treated with soap or bleach, restoring the white of the undyed cotton.

The patterns that adorn the cloth are created by applying the dark mud *around* the motifs. This work is very difficult; every line, dot, and circle must be carefully outlined not once but several times in order to create a deep, rich color. The designs that adorn bogolan often carry a great deal of cultural significance. The symbols may refer to inanimate objects, to historical events, to mythological subjects, or to proverbs. One popular pattern refers to a famous nineteenth-century battle between a Malian warrior and the French colonial forces. Other patterns depict crocodiles, a significant animal in Bamana mythology, and talking drums used to spur Bamana warriors into battle. Artists may select from a wide variety of motifs, which they employ in various combinations to produce a single piece of cloth.

### Bogolan as a Contemporary Symbol

Over the course of the past two decades, bogolan has become a symbol of Malian identity, appearing at government-sponsored events and in official publications. Outside Mali, bogolan is made into a variety of products that represent Mali or, more broadly, Africa. The cloth is particularly well suited to serve as a symbol; in addition to being uniquely Malian, bogolan's bold colors and patterns are readily recognizable. In addition, its important uses in traditional contexts appeal to Malian national pride and to foreigners interested in Malian culture. Today, the cloth is familiar to nearly all Malians; it is made and worn by people of all ethnicities and ages. In Mali, bogolan is associated with local cultures, part of the heritage of the artists who make it and the merchants who sell it. In the United States, where bogolan is also popular, the cloth is foreign, exotic. While in some contexts bogolan is marketed as a symbol of African American culture, in others the cloth is presented as vaguely "ethnic."



### BOGOLAN AND FASHION

*Bogolan* clothing, worn by Malians and non-Malians alike, is a common sight in urban streets, classrooms, and nightclubs. The cloth is prominent in Malian cinema and it is often worn by the country's musicians, many of whom tour internationally. Bogolan is used to make clothing in a wide range of styles, from miniskirts and fitted jackets to flowing robes in traditional styles. The designer Chris Seydou is credited with adapting the cloth to fashion in international styles, cultivating interest in this indigenous art form both in Mali and abroad. For some who wear it, bogolan clothing is an expression of national or ethnic identity. For others, the cloth is simply chic, a fashion statement rather than a political stance. Bogolan clothing is particularly popular among young people, who are often in the forefront of shifting fashions.

See also **Textiles, African; Traditional Dress.**

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Victoria L. Rovine

**BOHEMIAN DRESS** "Bohemian" was the label attached to artists, writers, students, and intellectuals in early nineteenth-century France after the turbulent years of the Revolution. The reason for the name was that these artists were likened to wandering gypsies, and it was be-





**Greenwich Village café.** The Gaslight coffee house in New York's Greenwich Village in the late 1950s, and others like it, provided the setting for the Bohemian movement throughout the years. Artists, writers and students used their dress to illustrate both their poverty and their originality. © BETTMANN/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

lied (incorrectly) that gypsies came from Bohemia in central Europe. With rapid economic and social change, the artist's status became financially insecure as the market replaced the old system of patronage. At the same time the Romantic Movement introduced the seductive notion of the "Artist as Genius." An artist was no longer someone with a particular talent, but became a special kind of person. In earlier times dress had signified social status, a trade, membership of a princely retinue, or a profession. Now for the first time, dress became part of the performance of an individual personality, as the young bohemians used costume to signify their poverty and originality.

There was no single chronological line of development in bohemian dress; rather, there were several different strategies. In the 1830s the styles of dress favored by French bohemians had echoes of the Romantics' love of the medieval and of orientalism. Influenced by the fevered poetry of Byron, they favored rich materials and colors, wide-brimmed hats, and long flowing curls.

A second style, described by the novelist Henri Murger (1822–1861), whose bohemian tales are best-known today as the basis for Giacomo Puccini's opera, *La Bohème*, was simply the uniform of abject poverty, threadbare coats and trousers, leaking shoes, and general dishevelment. A third influential style was the restrained

black and white of the male dandy. Dandyism originated in Regency England and, although distinct from bohemian dress, was influential in that dandies, such as George Bryan “Beau” Brummell (1778–1840), developed a cult of the self. They went to such lengths that their appearances became almost works of art in their own right, blurring the dividing line between life and art. This was significant for the bohemian way of life, since for many bohemians this line was blurred in any case, and style, surroundings, and dress became as stylized and carefully wrought as any more conventional artwork.

Then there were those who were influenced by the nineteenth-century movements for dress reform. Dress reformers advocated an end to the distortions and restrictions of fashion, especially women’s fashions, and searched for a permanently beautiful form of clothing that would put an end to the fashion cycle. The English Pre-Raphaelites were the best known such group. One of their members, William Morris (1834–1896), who built a successful business on the design and sale of alternative textiles, wallpapers, and embroidery, designed robes for his wife, Jane, that were far removed from the crinolines and corsets of the mid-Victorian period. These innovators were part of the Arts and Crafts movement that spread throughout Europe during the second half of the nineteenth century and by the 1890s had reached Germany, where the styles were combined with art nouveau motifs. The painter Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944), for example, designed dresses for his lover, the artist Gabriele Muntter (1877–1962), which had the natural Pre-Raphaelite line, with full sleeves and loose waists for ease of movement.

Kandinsky and Muntter belonged to the artistic and bohemian culture that flourished in and around Munich during this time, where bohemianism was taken to extremes seldom seen before or since. Some of these eccentrics and revolutionaries expressed themselves by adopting what amounted to fancy dress, in imitation of ancient Greece and Rome, or sometimes borrowing from peasant culture.

Bohemian dress, like the whole bohemian counterculture, underwent many vicissitudes during the course of the twentieth century. Between World War I and II, bohemianism became for many young people little more than a phase during which they would dress in a picturesquely rebellious manner, live in artists’ studios, and go to bohemian parties—a way of life not so different from that of students in the twenty-first century. The link between genuine creativity and a style of life became attenuated. The idea of “lifestyle” was developing, even if the word did not come into use until after World War II. Yet the idea of bohemia as a privileged and special place—or even just an idea—remained as a kind of umbrella concept beneath which society’s dissidents, geniuses, misfits, and eccentrics still gathered to encourage and support one another. For example, lesbians in the

1930s often regarded themselves as bohemians rather than as belonging to a distinct “lesbian subculture.”

After 1945 this changed. Bohemia had always effectively been a land of youth, but it was only with the development of the mass media and popular music that the existence and costuming of the generational divide became explicit. Jazz, swing, and rock and roll came with their own uniforms of rebellion. Then came beatniks with, for young women, white lips, black Kohl-ringed eyes, peasant skirts, black stockings, and “arty” jewelry—but now for the first time such styles were quickly broadcast via the mass media to a much wider circle of bohemian wanna-bes. The 1957 Audrey Hepburn film, *Funny Face*, for example, satirized Greenwich Village style—at the beginning of the film the star is shown working in a bookshop, dressed in a tweed jumper, black turtleneck sweater, horn-rimmed-glasses, and flat ballerina shoes.

Artists and writers that were displaced as minority groups took center stage in the creation of countercultural dress. Alongside the huge influence of black American style, beginning with the zoot suit of the 1940s, the emergent lesbian and gay culture began to make an impact. Although the most familiar form of alternative dress in the 1960s and 1970s was the hippie style, which boasted bricolage, secondhand clothes, and ethnic items to create a statement about an alternative lifestyle opposed to the consumer society.

Yet at the dawn of the third millennium, it hardly seems as if rebellion can any longer be expressed in the wearing of outrageous garments. Bohemian dress was always a provocation, but in Western, or westernized urban settings, at least, there hardly exists a style of dress that can shock anymore. Grunge, and the styles of Nirvana in the early 1990s, was the last form of dress that aimed to express dissent of the traditional kind. But, like every style, it was no sooner seen on stage than it appeared in every mass-market fashion store in the Western world.

Some have suggested that rebellion of the old bohemian sort is no longer possible, since there no longer exists a single mainstream or dominant form of society against which to rebel. Instead we have what one French sociologist terms “neo-tribes,”—groups with fluid membership of young people who are no longer confrontational, but have an allegiance to certain styles of music, dress, and clubbing. There are exceptions: Goth style and the accoutrements of the anti-globalization movement single out participants fairly definitively. Yet what was once the casual originality of bohemian dress has become the height of celebrity fashion and of high-street style. It therefore follows that in the twenty-first century, when everyone is bohemian, no one can any longer be.

See also **Brummell, George (Beau); Subcultures.**

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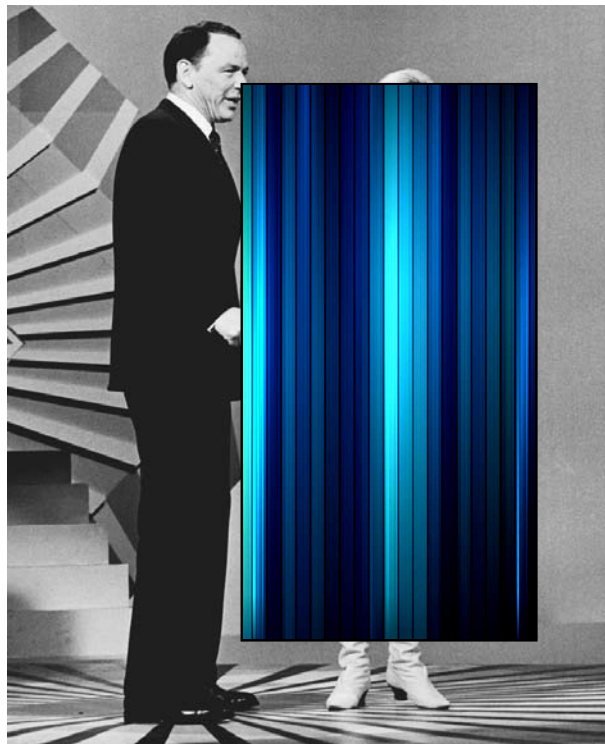
Elizabeth Wilson

**BOOTS** The modern definition of the term “boots” is a loose one; footwear covering the entire foot and lower leg. This is believed to have developed from one of the earliest forms of footwear—a two-piece unit covering the foot and lower leg. This wrapping of the leg formed the building block on which all modern forms of the boot have derived.

Throughout history the essential form of the boot has been adapted to fit the needs of the wearer and the culture. Materials vary as does form—but the essential purpose of the boot remains the same throughout most cultures; to provide protection from the elements. Boots are usually made of leather, but have been made of many other materials, including silk, cotton, wool, felt, and furs. A perfect example of this is the *kamiks* of the Inuits. The Inuits pride themselves on their efficient use of their resources and their traditional boots, called *kamiks*, are no exception. Crafted of caribou hide or sealskin (their two main food sources), these boots are warm and waterproof thanks to an ingenious raised band of stitching with sinews that ensures a waterproof join at the sole and upper.

The oldest known depiction of boots is in a cave painting from Spain, which has been dated between 12,000 and 15,000 B.C.E. This painting seems to depict man in boots of skin and a woman in boots of fur. Persian funerary jars have been found which date from around 3000 B.C.E. and are made in the shape of boots. Boots were also found in the tomb of Khnumhotep (2140–1785 B.C.E.) in Egypt. The Scythians of about 1000 B.C.E. were reported by the Greeks to have worn simple boots of untanned leather with the fur turned in against the leg. These simple baglike boots were then lashed to the leg by a thong of leather. This basic form can be found in the traditional dress of many Asiatic and Arctic cultures as well.

In the ancient world, boots represented ruling power and military might. Emperors and kings wore ornate and colorful examples; this was a significant distinction when the majority of the population went barefoot. Leather was expensive, and roman emperors were cited as wearing colorful jeweled and embroidered examples—even with gold soles. Boots were also already associated with the



**Frank and Nancy Sinatra, 1966.** Nancy Sinatra's song *These Boots Are Made for Walking* came at a time when the footwear was enjoying particular popularity. © BETTMANN/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

military—the *campagnus* was worn by the highest-ranking officers and some senators in ancient Rome, the height of the boot denoting rank. Other styles, such as the high, white leather *phaecasin*, were worn as ceremonial garb.

During the Middle Ages, the styles shoes and boots established by the ancient world continued. Courtiers of the Carolingian period were depicted wearing high boots laced halfway up the leg. Under Charlemagne the term *brodequin* is first used for these laced boots and roman terms rejected. The *buese*, a high, soft leather shoe and forerunner to the boot appeared toward the ninth century. During the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, a short, soft boot called the *estivaux* was popular. Toward the middle of the fourteenth century, people often wore soled hose, which precluded the need for shoes and boots.

In the fifteenth century, men wore long boots that reached the thighs and were usually of brown leather. This style was prevalent among all of the classes. Despite this widespread popularity, this was emphatically not an appropriate style for women; in fact this was one of the chief criminal charges against Joan of Arc in 1431. It was more common for women of the fourteenth century to wear laced ankle boots, which were often lined in fur.

By the sixteenth century, high boots of soft perfumed leather were worn to meet upper stocks and would soon

develop into the wide, floppy cavalier styles of the first half of the seventeenth century. Soft boots folded down—and slouchy boots worn with boot hose elaborately trimmed with lace flaring out into wide funnel shapes to fold down over the boots—characterized these fashions. Boot hose was worn both for its decorative qualities and to protect the costly silk stockings. These high boots featured a leather strap on the instep (the *surpiéd*), and a strap under the foot, which anchored the spur in place (the *soulette*). They had funnel tops, which covered the knee for riding and could be turned down for town wear. Under Louis XIII a shorter, lighter model of boot emerged, the *ladrine* (Boucher, p. 266). In the early years of the eighteenth century, under the influence of the French court, boots disappeared except for those worn by laborers, soldiers, and devotees of active sports, such as hunting and riding.

The seventeenth century had seen the emergence of the first military uniforms, and the boot had played an essential role in this standardization. The high-legged cavalier boot of the previous century was transformed by a highly polished and rigid leg—the prototypical military jackboot. The high top and rigid finish was supremely practical and successful at protecting legs while on horseback. This style was seen as early as 1688 and continued to be worn into the 1760s. Other popular styles were essentially military in origin. One notable example was the Hessian or Souvaroff, which was brought to England by German soldiers circa 1776. This style featured a trademark center front dip and was trimmed with tassels and braid.

For the more gentlemanly pursuit of sport riding, the high cavalier boot of the seventeenth century developed into a softer and closer fitting “jockey” style boot with the top folded down under the knee for mobility which showed the brown leather or cotton lining. This style originated in 1727 and became increasingly fashionable into the 1770s. The popularity of the English style riding boot was a part of the greater Anglomania of the eighteenth century and foreshadows the “Great Masculine Renunciation” that would follow in the wake of the French Revolution and the early years of the nineteenth century.

The vogue for democratic, English style dress had made the boot more popular than ever. Beau Brummel epitomized the radical simplicity of the dandy. His typical morning dress was reported as “Hessians and pantaloons or top boots and buckskins” (Swann, p. 35). Despite this endorsement, the shape and design of the boot inevitably shifted with fashion. The Wellington supplanted the Hessian since the tassels and braid of the Hessian were difficult to wear with the newly fashionable trousers. The Wellington boot was essentially a Hessian that had had its curved top cut straight across with a simple binding. This style was reputedly developed by the Duke of Wellington in 1817 and dominated menswear in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The success of the Wellington was

so pronounced that it was said in 1830, “the Hessian is a boot only worn with tight pantaloons. The top boot is almost entirely a sporting fashion...although they are worn by gentlemen in hunting, they are in general use among the lower orders, such as jockeys, grooms, and butlers. The Wellington...the only boot in general wear” (*The Whole Art of Dress* as quoted in Swann, p. 43).

The Blucher was another important style of the early nineteenth century named for a popular war hero. The Blucher was a practical, front-laced ankle boot worn by laborers in the eighteenth century, which had popularly been known as the “high-low.” After 1817 this style was known as the Blucher and was worn for casual and sport wear. This basic laced-front style would prove to be popular in modified forms to this day, and has served as the basis of the modern high-top sneaker, hiking boot, and combat boot.

The popularity of boots began to influence women’s fashions during the early years of the nineteenth century. Women had been wearing masculine-style boots for riding and driving during the eighteenth century, and by the 1790s their styles had become distinctly feminine with tight lacing, high heels, and pointed toes. By 1815 fashion periodicals begin to suggest boots for walking and daywear; boots were widespread by 1830. The most common style was the Adelaide, a flat, heelless ankle boot with side lacing. This style would remain in use for more than fifty years.

During the Victorian period boots of all kinds reached the peak of their popularity. The trend was for greater comfort and practicality in footwear for both men and women and was aided by technological advances like the sewing machine and vulcanized rubber. In 1837 the British inventor J. Sparkes Hall presented Queen Victoria with the first pair of boots with an elasticized side boot gusset. This easy to wear slip on style would be popular throughout the rest of the century with both men and women. By mid-century the two most popular styles were the elastic side—also known as the congress, side-spring, Chelsea, or garibaldi—and the front-lacing boot. The two most popular styles for front lace were the Derby and the Balmoral. The latter boot was designed for Prince Albert and was similar in style to the modern wrestling or boxing shoe. By the late Victorian period, balmorals or “bals” were most popular and frequently featured contrasting cloth tops and pearl button closures.

Although the Wellington had been almost entirely abandoned in England in favor of the short ankle boot by the 1860s, the style survived in United States and contributed to the development of the cowboy boot. The cowboy boot is believed to have originated in Kansas, and is considered to be a combination of the Wellington and the high heeled boots of the Mexican *vaqueros*. In the United States the Hessian continued to be worn as well and can be seen in photographs of the outlaw “Billy the Kid” from the 1870s.

For women in the mid-century, the majority of footwear was in boot form. The elastic side was a popular choice for daywear, but by the 1860s was replaced by front lace balmorals in satin or colored leather for dressy occasions. Tightly laced boots gave the impression of modesty but also accentuated the curves of the ankle and calf. Increasingly boot styles emphasized this aspect. By 1870 the principal styles worn were side springs, balmorals, and high-button boots. A new development was the barrette boot, which can be viewed as an extension of the shoe since so much of the stocking could be seen through the delicate straps.

In the early years of the twentieth century, boots were still prevalent but soon abandoned by fashionable dress in the 1920s. In this period boots returned to their functional role, and traditional forms remained in use for specific military and sport activities. The exception to this was the vogue among women for knee-high leather Russian boots which featured relatively high heels and a side zipper for a close fit. In the second half of the twentieth century, boots reemerged as an important element in the counterculture fashions favored by the young. Early rebels adopted the sturdy Engineer or Motorcycle boot as a visible sign of their rebellion inspired by films such as *The Wild One* and *Rebel Without a Cause*. In the late 1950s a trend developed for elastic side boots copied from the nineteenth-century originals, but with the addition of a high heel and a pointed toe which were worn with the new slim-fitting tapered trouser. These were the Chelsea boots and would later become known as "Beatle boots."

Women saw an explosion of fashion boots after 1960. While the flat-heeled, white kid leather boots launched by Parisian couturier André Courrèges was the ubiquitous boot of the decade, many styles of boot were popular. Go-Go boots could be ankle, knee, or thigh high and with or without heels, they all served as the perfect accompaniment to the miniskirt. By the end of the decade, retro styles became popular, and the front lacing granny boot became an essential part of the hippie style.

Styles were increasingly unisex in the 1970s, with both genders wearing suede chukka boots, cowboy boots, and high zip-up platform boots. The Dr. Martens boot, originally designed as an orthopedic shoe in the 1940s, was adopted by the punk counter-culture in the 1970s, but by the 1990s had been assimilated into popular fashion. Masculine-styled boots worn by women have been considered extremely provocative, especially when paired with more conventional symbols of femininity.

While traditional forms of boots continue to be worn throughout the world for specific functions, they have also played an important role in fashion throughout history.

See also **Inuit and Arctic Footwear; Sandals; Shoes.**

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Clare Sauro

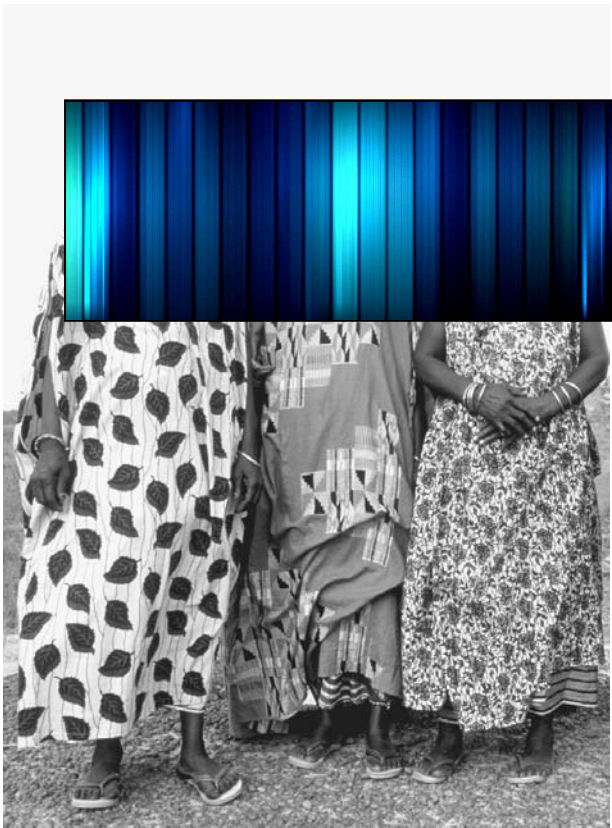
**BOUBOU** The boubou is the classic Senegalese robe, worn by both men and women all over West Africa and in West African diasporic communities of Europe and the United States. Sewn from a single piece of fabric, the boubou is usually 59 inches (150 cm) wide and of varying lengths. The most elegant style, the *grand boubou*, usually employs a piece of fabric 117 inches (300 cm) long and reaches to the ankles. Traditionally, custom-made in workshops by tailors, the boubou is made by folding the fabric in half, fashioning a neck opening, and sewing the sides halfway up to make flowing sleeves. For women the neck is large and rounded; for men it forms a long V-shape, usually with a large five-sided pocket cutting off the tip of the "V."

When stiffly starched and draped over the body, the boubou creates for its wearer the appearance of a stately, elegant carriage with majestic height and presence. Men wear the classic boubou with a matching shirt and trousers underneath. Women wear it with a matching wrapper or *pagne* and head-tie.

#### Fabric, Embroidery, and Dyeing

Tailors who specialize in making boubous invest their skills in the art of embroidery. The fabric for these embroidered boubous is cotton damask, called *basin* in the francophone West African countries. Although the fabric can be bought in colors, connoisseurs prefer to buy white cloth and have it hand dyed in rich hues by women dyers working out of their homes. Available in market stalls in several grades of quality, the damask at its most expensive comes from Europe, while cheaper imitations come from Asia or Nigeria.

After the fabric is dyed, the tailor creates the embroidery design with a small sewing machine, either electric or pedal driven. Traditionally, the embroidery was white or beige, but in the 1970s, tailors in Dakar, Senegal, introduced colored embroidery, and in the early 2000s they vie with each other to create intricate, multi-colored designs in vibrant hues for women. Men continue to wear white or beige embroidery, or else use threads the same color as the damask, often dyed deep purple or green. The exception for men is a white voluminous boubou with gold embroidery. This is the special costume of *El Hage*, the Muslim who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. It thus connotes wealth, prestige,



**Senegalese women wear the Senegalese robe, or boubou.** The garment is sewn from a single piece of embroidered cotton damask fabric. The boubou is the most basic garment in the Senegalese culture, much like blue jeans in the United States.

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and piety. As with the fabric, the high prestige embroidery threads are silk and come from France. Polyester imitations are imported from Asia.

Non-embroidered fabrications include *basin* resist-dyed in striking designs. For stitch-resist or tie-dyes, designs can be large enough to use one motif for the whole boubou, or small enough to demand thousands of tiny stitches in a fine repeated motif. It takes a group of women three months to sew the stitches before dyeing and three months to cut them out with a razor afterward. Techniques also include starch resist or wax resist. One technique, called *indigo palmann*, uses indigo in such a way as to dye the fabric a rich, deep bronze hue. Although a solid color, the *indigo palmann* boubou is so resplendent in its simplicity that it forgoes embroidery. For less elegant occasions, women have boubous made of Holland wax print or of imitation wax print called *légos*.

### Historical and Geographical Changes

The word “boubou” comes from the Wolof *mbubbe*. (Wolof is the principal African language of Senegal.) This linguistic origin suggests that in contrast to borrowed

dress styles, like the Arab caftan and the European suit, the boubou, as Senegalese people say, has always been Senegalese. In Anglophone West African countries, the cognate, *buba*, has a somewhat different meaning. Especially in Nigeria and Ghana, the *buba* is a hip-length shirt, with sleeves made of separate pieces of fabric and sewn to the body. It is worn under the long boubou, which in these countries is called the *Agbada*. The men’s *buba* is also worn alone with matching trousers called *sokoto*. Women wear the *buba* with a wrapper.

This linguistic link suggests the historical changes in style that the boubou has undergone. In the nineteenth century, the Senegalese boubou, made of bulky, handwoven strip cloth, was often as short as the modern Nigerian *buba*, although without the sleeves (see P. David Boilat’s sketches in Boilat 1853). In the course of the nineteenth century, the expanded use of imported factory-woven cloth and the expansion of Islam combined to bring into fashion for Muslim men the longer, more voluminous *grand boubou*, which resembled an Arab caftan. By the early twentieth century, as urban Christian men started wearing suits, and urban middle-class men had to wear suits for work, Muslim men adopted the *grand boubou* for leisure and for ceremonial or religious occasions. Peasant and working-class women wore a *grand boubou* of plain, imported factory-woven cloth. But wealthier urban Muslim women wore a hip-length boubou that showed off their *pagnes* (wrappers) of rich hand-woven strip cloth or fine imported French fabric. Young Christian women adopted a loose, high-waisted dress, called *boubou à la française* (in Wolof *ndoket*).

The elegant *grand boubou* for women did not come into fashion until after World War II. By the end of the twentieth century, young women would sometimes adopt a hip- or knee-length boubou as a fashion alternative and for more casual wear. The *boubou à la française* also returned as a high-fashion item, newly named the *mame boye* (Wolof for “darling grandmother”).

### Cultural Meanings

As the centerpiece of classic dress in Senegal and neighboring Francophone countries, the boubou occupies the symbolic position of the most basic garment in other cultures, comparable in this respect to blue jeans in American culture. Like blue jeans, the Senegalese *grand boubou* accrues to itself a multiplicity of contradictory uses and meanings. It can connote sexiness or modesty. It can attain the height of elegance or serve a utilitarian purpose. A stiffly starched, embroidered boubou, falling alluringly off one shoulder and perfumed with incense, can be worn with high heels, gold jewelry, a starched matching head scarf tied in a rakish knot, and dramatic makeup. This is the outfit young women wear for weddings, baby-naming ceremonies, and Muslim feast days. This is also the outfit of the *Dirriankhe*, a woman who fulfills the Senegalese ideal of seductive beauty. She is large, sensuous, and conveys the mystique

of independence and wealth. She has mastered the art of wearing the boubou. Yet the boubou is also the obligatory dress of respectable Muslim matrons, considered too old and too modest to wear the form-fitting trousers and leg-baring skirts sported by slender young women. For Muslim men, an embroidered, damask boubou can be the height of elegant prestige, but it is also the dress required for praying at the mosque.

See also **Africa, North; History of Dress; Africa, Sub-Saharan; History of Dress; Pagne and Wrapper.**

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Leslie W. Rabine

**BOURDIN, GUY** Guy Bourdin (1928–1991) has an extraordinary cult following within the field of fashion photography, expanded by the 2003 retrospective of his work at London's Victoria and Albert Museum. Critical, autocratic, dictatorial, and quirky, he had a personal life that was chaotic and probably sadistic, pushed his models to the point of tears and passing out, and even undermined his reputation during his lifetime and his legacy upon his death. Yet despite—or possibly because of—the morbidity and violence of his personal and professional life, Bourdin has had a profound influence on photographic and artistic currents of the late twentieth century.

#### Bourdin's Background

Guy Bourdin was born in Paris. His mother abandoned him when he was still an infant, and he was alternately

raised by his grandparents in Normandy and Paris and placed in a boarding school. Bourdin was the only child to the age of fifteen, when his brother, Michael, was born, and he spent much time in the solitary pursuits of reading and drawing.

At age twenty Bourdin joined the French air force for his mandatory two years of military service, working as an aerial photographer in Dakar, Senegal. After he completed his service, he wanted to buy a small wedding photography business in Magny-en-Vexin, near the family home in Normandy. Refused a loan by his father, Bourdin worked at Bon Marché, the Paris department store, selling lenses and at a variety of odd jobs, including cleaning floors, acting as a messenger at the U.S. Embassy, and washing dishes at the Brasserie Lipp. During this period, he continued to draw, photograph, and produce paintings inspired by Balthus, Francis Bacon, and Stanley Spencer.

In the late 1940s Edward Weston's photograph of a pepper showed Bourdin that photography could be art. He was also inspired by the monumental landscapes of Ansel Adams and developed a friendship with the dada painter and photographer Man Ray, who wrote the gallery announcement for Bourdin's 1952 exhibition at Galerie 29 on the rue de Seine in Paris. It was undoubtedly through Man Ray that Bourdin became acquainted with surrealism, which was to infuse his photography throughout his life.

#### Bourdin's Editorial and Advertising Photography

In 1954 Bourdin took his work to French *Vogue*, where he was given a fashion assignment on hats. It included a shot, which has become one of Bourdin's early classics, showing a model walking by a butcher shop, three skinned and bloodied calves' heads swinging just above her impeccably turned head. Bourdin continued his exclusive editorial work for French *Vogue* from 1955 through 1987. Bourdin's advertising work for Charles Jourdan shoes from 1967 to 1981 was extremely important. He also did advertising work for the designer Grès and in 1976 photographed the controversial Bloomingdale's "Sighs and Whispers" lingerie brochure, which has become a collector's item.

The Charles Jourdan shoe campaign was groundbreaking in its approach, originality, and daring. In Bourdin's hands, the shoe was presented as a fetishistic object, both as an object of desire and the focal point of scenarios of violence. Bourdin's infamous 1975 photograph depicting the scene of a bloody automobile fatality, the body marked in chalk on the pavement next to the featured shoes, was a benchmark in the history of attraction by shock. The power and perversity of this image were legendary: that an image of death and tragedy (though fictitious) would be used to sell shoes was unthinkable, yet unforgettable. The image itself possessed the same power of attraction that causes a crowd to gather at the scene

of a gory accident. In other shots Bourdin juxtaposed gigantic shoes and tiny shoes, which had been made especially for this purpose by the Jourdan company. In this way, Bourdin played on the type of size discrepancies often used in surrealist works, such as the paintings of René Magritte.

### Background of Bourdin's Style

Bourdin clearly transformed his personal obsessions into a body of work that was stunningly daring and visually unforgettable. "What Guy did," his stylist Serge Lutens has said, "was conduct his own psychoanalysis in *Vogue*" (Hayden-Guest, p. 143). Abandoned as an infant by an unloving woman, he obsessively depicted women tied up, in compromising situations, or dead. He was said to favor models with pale red hair, because they reminded him of his mother, and he was renowned for making bizarre, macabre, and sometimes cruel demands on them. Stories abound about models being made to balance on a rock during an electrical storm, being subjected to props that cut into their flesh, and passing out after being suspended to appear as if they were flying.

One model, Louise Despointes, was said to have been kept waiting in a freezing studio, then wrapped in plastic and lowered into a bathtub of extremely cold water on which black enamel paint had been floated. She emerged from the tub "enameled" in black paint, uncomfortable and unable to work for days. Bourdin even reputedly placed models in life-threatening positions and delighted in the idea of their deaths. In another famous story, Bourdin initially smeared the faces of Despointes and another model with a thin layer of glue as a way to stick dozens of pearls to their faces. When he decided to cover their entire bodies with pearls, they passed out because they were not getting enough oxygen to their skin and could not breathe, and the editor stopped the shoot, thinking the models would die. Bourdin was reputed to have said, "Oh, it would be beautiful—to have them dead in bed!" (Hayden-Guest, p. 136).

### Eroticism and Violence in Bourdin's Photography

Eroticism—and the link between sex and violence—is a major component of Bourdin's photography. The foundation had been laid by the imagery of the preceding decade, particularly the sexual emancipation of Richard Avedon's work of the 1960s. Yet the brilliant and sensitive use of nudity and sexual innuendo that Avedon and Bob Richardson had introduced into fashion depiction in those years—confronting lesbianism and the ménage à trois, for instance—was tame by 1970s' standards. The time was ripe for Bourdin's stylized violence and the darker realities of voyeurism, death, and rape.

Bourdin's photographic violence is thematically akin to the bloody climax of the film *Bonnie and Clyde*, the dental torture in *Marathon Man*, or the orgiastic violence of *The Wild Bunch*. This brand of violent depiction plays with

the audience's attraction to the escalating brutality and demands that the viewer consider violence glamorous. The new brand of violent fashion photography and film supplies the viewer with a fantasy fulfillment unavailable in everyday life. As Stephen Farber explains in his *New Yorker* article "The Bloody Movies: Why Film Violence Sells":

One of the functions of popular art has always been to give people some notion of experiences denied them in reality—a taste of romance, glamour, adventure, danger. But perhaps as everyday life becomes more smoothly homogenized, people need splashier, more grotesque vicarious thrills. Today, . . . [we only experience violence] at professional hockey and football games, at high-powered rock concerts, or at the movies. (p. 44)

Or, one might add, in fashion photography.

Guy Bourdin's violence against women—both actual and photographic—played on their vulnerability, which is a leitmotif in his work. Shadows are an effective device often used for creating an air of mystery, implied physical threat, and even frenzy. Bourdin used such shadows as early as 1966 to suggest the presence of Batman—normally a hero figure and protector—chasing a confused, worried woman through the streets. The thrown shadows, used repeatedly in Bourdin's oeuvre, represent the woman's living nightmare of vulnerability, of being threatened by indistinguishable forms and unseen presences.

### Influence of Bourdin's Personal Life on His Work

Bourdin even materialized the reality of violence toward women into his personal life: his first wife is thought to have committed suicide, his second hanged herself, one girlfriend lived after slashing her wrists, and another died after falling out of a tree. As Tim Blanks suggested in his *New York Times Magazine* article, "Both masochism and sadism were bedfellows." Bourdin also seemed bent on undermining himself and his own reputation. He was infamous for not allowing his work to be used in books and exhibitions and for refusing to grant interviews. In 1985 he rejected the \$9,000 Grand prix national de la photographie, given by the French Ministry of Culture.

In his article "The Return of Guy Bourdin," Anthony Hayden-Guest explained how Bourdin, when he died of cancer at age sixty-two, left his estate in disarray, compounding a horrendous tax situation and further paralyzing his legacy (p. 137). He had deeded his pictures to Martine Victoire, his common-law wife of seven years, in a signed and witnessed (but not notarized) contract; Samuel Bourdin, the photographer's estranged only child, contested the action. The legal decision gave Victoire possession of the archives but allowed Samuel to exercise his discretion in their use. Without his consent, Victoire could not publish, sell, or exhibit the photographs she owned. Subsequently, the reproduction rights were contested in court.



### Bourdin's Influence

The vast influence Bourdin had on subsequent art and photography is only now becoming clear. Like it or not, Bourdin broke taboos and reflected the escalating violence in society, blazing the path for contemporary artists like Paul McCarthy and Matthew Barney in combining the disgusting with the exalted. He pioneered the narrative approach to photography that has become one of its dominant strains, from the work of Gregory Crewdson to that of David LaChapelle. Bourdin created pictures filled with what seemed to be clues in a mystery, hinting at meanings rather than articulating them. We are often unsure of what is going on; we know only that we are dealing with a specific moment in which something has happened or is about to happen. Bourdin scatters clues in his pictures, such as water spurting from a pool with a shoe by its edge, a girl "talking" to a shark, or two girls dressed only in lingerie watching as items fall from a purse, frozen in midair.

Bourdin was also one of only a handful of photographers who had almost complete creative freedom within the field of editorial and advertising fashion photography. In both realms Bourdin was a technical virtuoso. His brilliance in producing a wide range of ideas with a continually fresh vision was equaled by his mastery of technique and execution. His background as a painter influenced his approach, particularly the way he built his compositions. Each shape and color was painstakingly and thoughtfully composed to contribute to the whole.

Bourdin's concern for the final effect of his work, including the exact placement on the printed page, is evidence of his commitment to fashion photography. With respect to the photograph itself as a compositional element, he created some of the most unusual and visually exciting layouts ever published in fashion periodicals. Particularly effective was his frequent grouping of photographs in multiples or sequences, repeating sections of the picture or making unexpected juxtapositions to heighten interest.

See also **Art and Fashion; Avedon, Richard; Fashion Advertising; Fashion Magazines; Fashion Photography; Vogue.**

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Nancy Hall-Duncan

**BOUTIQUE** Synonymous with the youth movement and counterculture fashions of the "Swinging Sixties," the boutique radically changed ways of making, marketing, displaying, and buying clothing. Names and places such as Mary Quant, Biba, Paraphernalia, the King's Road, and Carnaby Street evoke the spirit of freedom, individuality, and rebellion that characterized the social upheaval of that decade, and defined a style of dressing. As a retailing concept, the boutique is associated with a distinct identity that reflects the taste of the designer or owner; small-scale production with rapid turnover of merchandise; fashion novelty and experimentation; innovative displays and interiors; and an informality among owner, salespeople, and clientele. Although the boutique phenomenon of the 1960s played itself out by the mid-1970s, boutiques remain a vital part of the commercial world of fashion—whether as an individual enterprise or incorporated into a larger setting, such as a department store.

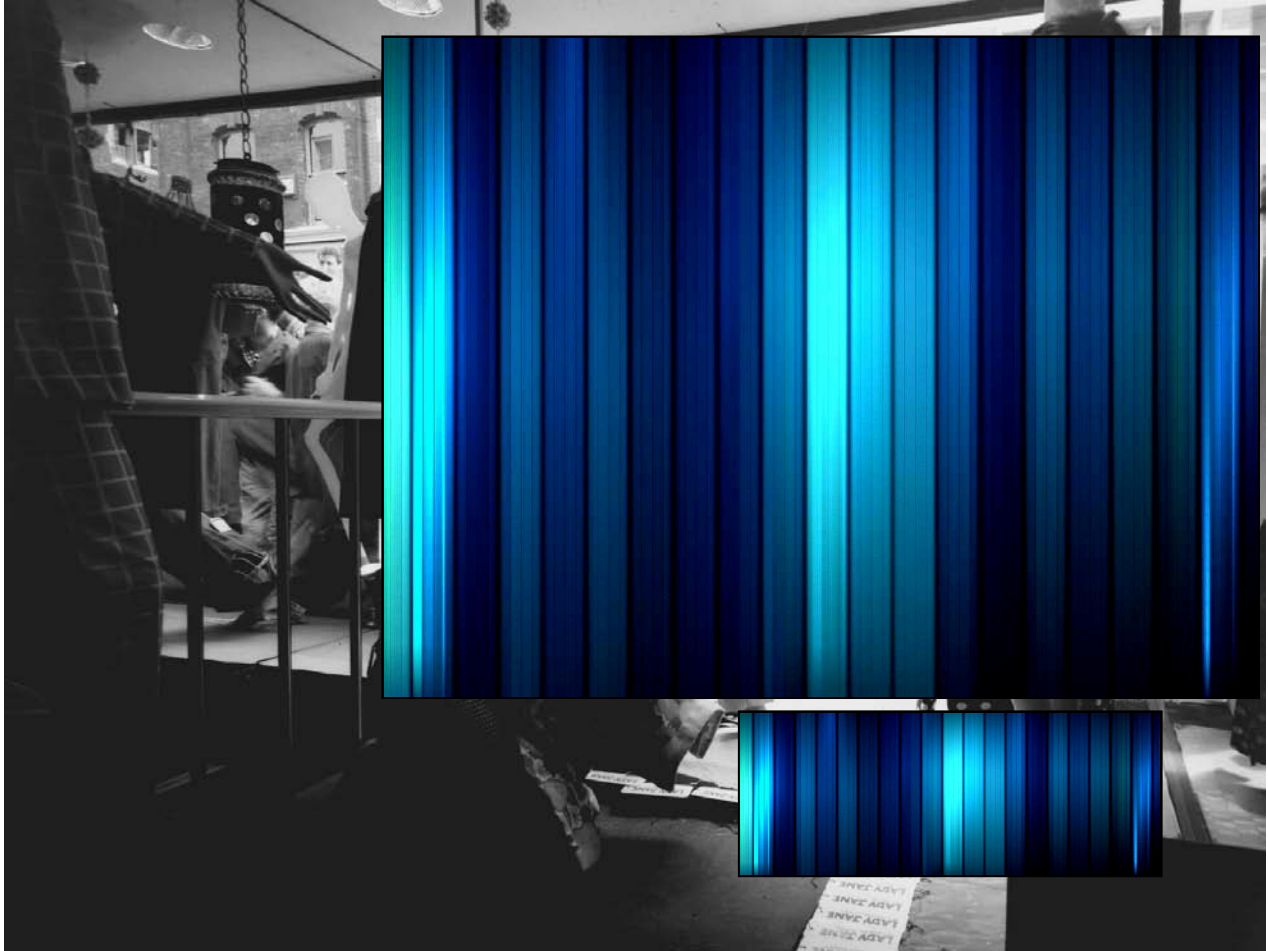
### Origins

Small retailing establishments were not new to the post-World War II period. In the first half of the twentieth century, Paris, London, and New York all had specialty shops. Usually owned by a single designer or proprietor, these operated between the highly exclusive couture houses and the large department stores, and catered to a well-to-do clientele with an emphasis on personal attention to the customer.

As early as the 1920s, Parisian designers began to open small shops within the premises of their *maisons de couture* where they sold a variety of (often less expensive) merchandise including accessories. In 1925 Jean Patou, for example, opened *Le Coin des Sports* (The Sports Corner), a series of rooms on the ground floor of his couture house that offered specialized sports clothing. From its opening in 1935, Elsa Schiaparelli's boutique featured unorthodox and whimsical window arrangements that anticipated the eye-catching, frankly outré displays and interior decor of 1960s boutiques. By the 1950s, boutiques were well-established venues for selling designer clothes and accessories.

### New Consumers, New Producers

The coming of age of the baby boomers in the late 1950s and early 1960s created a new consumer market that significantly affected the boutique explosion. The economic hardships of the war years had ended and a period of prosperity began in both Europe and America. Young men and women not only had money to spend but also sought to distinguish—and distance—themselves sartorially from their parents. Dissatisfied with what they saw as outmoded, irrelevant, and conformist styles promoted by the Parisian haute couture, emerging young designers, particularly in Britain, began to create clothing that reflected a new aesthetic and attitude toward dressing. Equally significant was their determination to produce clothing that was affordable to their peers. Rather than



**A novel window display in the “Lady Jane” boutique on London’s Carnaby Street, 1966.** Boutiques in the 1960s changed the way merchandise was displayed and sold. The shops reflected an informality between the owner and clientele and included novelty fashions, smaller retail volumes, and innovative displays and interiors. © HULTON-DEUTCH COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

work within the restrictions imposed by a couture house or a large manufacturing company, these designers often began by sewing garments in their homes and opening boutiques in out-of-the-way locations.

Dubbed the “Swinging City” by *Time* magazine in 1966, London was the undisputed capital of the youth movement in the early and mid-1960s, and young British designers were in the vanguard of the boutique scene. Of this group, Mary Quant was the highly influential pioneer. Her boutique, *Bazaar*, which she opened on King’s Road in 1955 in partnership with her publicist husband, Alexander Plunkett-Green, and business manager Archie McNair, was the first of its kind. *Bazaar* offered clothing and accessories aimed at a youthful audience ready for fashion that emphasized informality, irreverence, and playfulness.

Quant’s *Bazaar* set the standard for the many boutiques that opened in London and New York in the following decade, including Barbara Hulanicki’s *Biba*; Alice

Pollock’s *Quorum*, which featured clothes by the celebrated husband-and-wife team of Ozzie Clark and Celia Birtwell; the entrepreneur John Stephen’s numerous emporia on Carnaby Street; and *Paraphernalia*, where Betsey Johnson’s exhibitionist designs were modeled by Warhol “superstar” Edie Sedgwick.

### **Boutique Shopping**

Inventive window displays and interior decor not only formed a particular boutique’s image and identity, they also added a sense of fun and discovery to the shopping experience. Unconventional windows were designed to engage—even shock—passersby. At *Bazaar*, Quant created whimsical vignettes using attenuated, stylized mannequins in awkward poses, props, large-scale photographs, and banners. Historicism was the hallmark at *Biba* that would become famous for its art nouveau and art deco inspired interiors (and fashions). *Paraphernalia* was characterized by a space-age minimalism in which white and

silver predominated. In these varied settings, clothes and accessories might be hung on walls or old-fashioned coat stands (as at Biba), or tucked away in dimly lit corners. The unexpected juxtaposition of different types of merchandise also encouraged the boutique shopper to linger and explore.

Although Biba's clientele was primarily working-class while Quorum was patronized by the Rolling Stones lead singer Mick Jagger, Marianne Faithfull, and other pop stars, boutique shopping in the 1960s was a shared social experience among young men and women. Strolling down King's Road or Carnaby Street and frequenting the "in" shops were part of the hip lifestyle. Boutiques were first and foremost places to see and purchase the most up-to-the-minute styles, but they were also "happening" places where one went to meet friends and listen to the latest rock music. Their generally small, often dark interiors and casual atmosphere fostered an intimate ambience. Some boutiques (such as Paraphernalia) stayed open late at night; music and live models dancing on platforms further blurred the distinction between store and party scene.

#### **Boutiques and Fashion in the Early 2000s**

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, the success and popularity of boutiques resulted in their being co-opted by mainstream fashion and big business. In New York, large department stores such as Bloomingdale's opened designer boutiques aimed at attracting a share of the enormous youth market. Geraldine Stutz, president of Henri Bendel, transformed the staid specialty shop into a highly visible showcase for the work of young British, American, and French designers, each with their own boutique space. By the time it closed in 1976, Biba had moved twice from its original, small location in Abingdon Road to occupy the former premises of Derry and Toms, a 1930s multi-storied department store in Kensington High Street.

In the "Swinging Sixties," fashion was a defining aspect of the counterculture movement, and boutiques were the matrix in the creation and dissemination of those fashions. The boutique scene introduced a new set of expectations regarding fashion and shopping that is still a factor in the early twenty-first century. Boutiques expanded the concept of fashion as catering to more individualized—and adventurous—tastes. Along with the multiplicity of styles available was the possibility for creative self-expression through clothing, while the shopping experience became part of fashionable behavior. Boutiques continue to offer alternative fashions to elitist haute couture and mass-produced, mass-distributed ready-to-wear.

See also **Biba; Quant, Mary.**

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*Michele Majer*

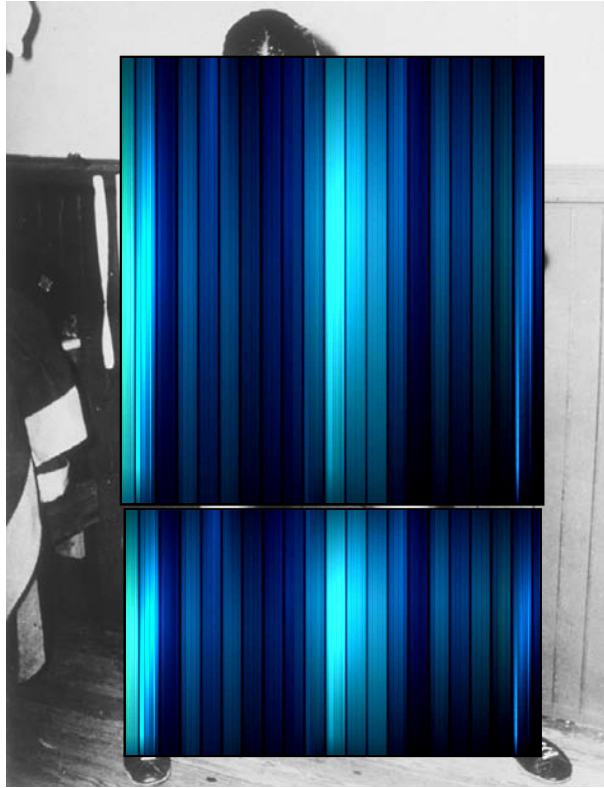
**BOXER SHORTS** Derived from the loose, full-cut shorts worn by professional boxers in the ring, boxer shorts are cotton or silk underdrawers with an elastic waistband, back panels, and buttoned front closure. The only form of underwear that can still be made to measure, many versions have vents at their sides to allow for ease of motion and to be unobtrusive beneath a well-tailored suit. The term is more often than not, shortened simply to "boxers."

#### **History**

Boxer shorts trace their heritage back to the long woolen drawers worn by boxers in the nineteenth century. But it was when the heavyweight fighters Jim Corbett and Bob Fitzsimmons both abandoned traditional boxers' tights in favor of loose-fitting trunks, at the turn of the twentieth century, that an icon was born. Shorts of similar cut, made of lightweight fabrics, were soon being produced as underwear. Prior to the twentieth century, most men wore undergarments that were akin to those worn as far back as the Middle Ages. They consisted of tight-fitting linen under-trousers of varying length that, rather than having a fly front, had a buttoned opening at the rear.

Boxers gained popularity when they were issued to United States infantrymen for summer wear during World War I. As with many pieces of functional military clothing issued during both World Wars (the parka, duffle coat, trench coat, and T-shirt) soldiers retained their boxer shorts during peacetime and became instrumental in accelerating their adoption by the general population. Soldiers found their baggy undershorts to be comfortable both because of their loose fit and because they allowed air to circulate in warmer temperatures. The association with military men (as well as with professional prizefighters) may also have helped to make boxer shorts a symbol of manliness. Many men prefer boxer shorts to the more restrictive briefs for those reasons.

Although the underwear market has changed dramatically since the 1940s, with many men opting for tighter-fitting styles such as briefs and bikini shorts, men's boxer shorts cut loosely and made of cotton or silk (or a mixture of the two) have remained standard men's wear items. Once made only in white fabrics, boxers are



**Champion boxer Henry Armstrong wearing boxer shorts.** Not long after boxers began wearing the looser shorts in the ring, they were produced in lighter fabrics as mens' underwear. AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

available in every color as well as in novelty prints. Winston Churchill was said to be partial to pink boxer shorts, and Union-Jack boxer shorts were popular at the coronation of George V (they have since been adopted by British football hooligans). Like many other leisure garments, boxer shorts are often heavily branded with conspicuous designer names. Name brand designer versions by Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren, Armani, Tommy Hilfiger, and many others, of both boxers and briefs have turned the men's underwear trade into a multimillion-dollar industry. Men's underwear is no longer just a functional afterthought to completing a wardrobe, but an element in the creation of a casual-wear image. In the mid-1980s Jean Paul Gaultier paraded a pair of men's trousers down the catwalk with a pair of boxer shorts visibly built in, symbolizing their importance to the new male look.

In the twenty-first century, boxer shorts are still as relevant to men's wear consumers as they have ever been. They have had an entirely new incarnation in hip-hop fashion, which established a trend for wearing them with very low-riding jeans or other trousers, with several inches of cloth (often including a brand-emblazoned waistband) of the boxers clearly visible.

### Boxers or Briefs?

Although few custom tailors will take orders for bespoke boxer shorts any longer, neither will they be impressed with a customer who prefers to wear briefs instead of boxers. Not only have briefs and thongs brought about the tightening of men's trousers, to the dismay of tailors, they may have had adverse health consequences as well. Medical research points to evidence that tight underwear can lead to a low sperm count brought on by increased temperatures. Boxer shorts on the other hand offer the wearer greater movement of air, which keeps the temperature lower. Thus for medical as well as sartorial reasons, boxer shorts seem likely to remain a staple item of male dress. But ultimately the choice between boxers and briefs is an individual one, subject to the essential goals of cleanliness and comfort.

See also **Underwear.**

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*Tom Greatrex*

**BRACELETS** Bracelets, cylindrical-shaped ornaments worn encircling the wrist or upper arm, have been one of the most popular forms of ornamentation since prehistoric times. Incredibly varied, bracelets are a universal form of jewelry. Historically and culturally, they have been worn singly or in multiples by both genders. Bracelets have been used for protective and decorative purposes, in rituals, and to indicate one's social status.

### Materials

Materials for bracelets are innumerable. Peoples from all cultures across the globe have used indigenous or imported materials, man-made, and natural materials to make them. While the majority are made from metals, they also have been made from insect secretions (such as lac), rattan, wood, feathers, tortoiseshell, horn, teeth, tusks, feathers, leather, and stone. Man-made materials include glass, faience, enamel, ceramic, and plastic. Ancient Egyptians used bone and pebbles, adorned with finely worked beads and pendants of jasper, turquoise, alabaster, lapis lazuli, cornelian, and feldspar. In Eastern cultures, folk jewelry was often made of horn, brass, beads, and copper, while more expensive and finer quality bracelets were designed of mother-of-pearl, gold, and silver. Skillful jewelers in China were able to make bracelets cut from a single piece of jade. In India, the

*patwa* (jewelry maker) often creates bracelets from braiding, knotting, twisting, or wrapping yarns made of cotton, silk, wool, or metallic fibers.

In the early 2000s bracelets are being made of soft or hard glass (such as borosilicate). While these glass bracelets can be made from molds or be free-formed, the latter process is slower and not nearly as precise. Micro-electronics used in some modern bracelets can now produce movement, light, and sound.

### Styles

There are many different styles of bracelets and where they are worn on the body determines what they are called. For instance, bracelets worn above the elbow are called “armlets,” but “anklets” when worn around the ankle. The main design consideration for a bracelet is sizing; it must be neither so large that it slips off the hand when it is relaxed, nor so small that it cannot be slid over the hand or fit around the wrist. In general, there are three different types of bracelets: link, slip-on, and hinged. *Link* styles are sized to fit the wrist comfortably and to allow the links to drape flexibly. *Slip-on* styles are rigid shapes, and may be either open-ended or a closed circle or other shape. According to one source, solid circle or oval bracelets should be from 8½ to 9¼ inches in circumference. In the early twenty-first century, this is the most common style of the three types. *Hinged* styles require a hinge and locking catch to allow the bracelet to be opened and yet fit the wrist snugly at a recommended 6½ to 7 inches around with an opening of 1 to 1½ inches for the wrist. The bracelet should have rounded ends in order to fit the wrist comfortably. Solid hinged bracelets should be made from a thick gauge of metal (from 12 to 14 gauge) to maintain the necessary springiness of the form. Stones inserted in bracelets should rank at least 5 or 6 on the Mohs’ scale, to prevent their damage.

Every period in history has had an impact on bracelet styles. Styles can range in complexity—from simply sawing off part of a mollusk shell to the intricate designs evident in East Asian metalworking. During the twentieth century, bangles, charm bracelets, and identification bracelets were some of the most popular styles.

Bangles are rigid bracelets with no closures, and may be worn singly or in multiples. Most bangles are made from bold colors or are decorated with numerous types of repeating motifs.

Charm bracelets are a special and unique type of jewelry with a long history dating back to Ancient Egypt. Charms were meant to ward off evil or to endow the wearer with special powers. The original charm bracelet was the Egyptian eye bead, attached to a circlet, used to charm, fascinate, or reflect the malevolent intention of others. Its spiritual function became so popular, it was adopted by neighboring cultures, and it is still worn today in many Middle Eastern countries. In the United

States, charm bracelets gained popularity during World War II. Made of silver, gold, or silver-plated metals, enamel, plastic, and shell, most were inexpensive and mass-produced. The charms included military insignia, flags, planes, and wings worn by women in recognition of those serving in the armed forces. Postwar prosperity turned the inexpensive charm bracelets into fine quality jewelry made of medium to heavy gold links on which charms could be attached.

In the late 1950s, charms representing one’s travel experiences became fashionable, and there is still a wide range of charms available. Like quilts, letters, and journals, these types of bracelets have a narrative quality that define some of the more important moments in a woman’s life, or share information about her values, beliefs, interests, and personality.

Identification, or ID, bracelets are twentieth-century link bracelets with text engraved onto a flat metal plate. The text could be one’s name or nickname, or it could contain important information about an individual’s medical condition. One fashion trend in the United States has been stylish medical-alert bracelets, which have the primary function of alerting medical professionals to special medical considerations like diabetes or an allergy to penicillin. In the early 2000s, they also have an aesthetic appeal, as some of these bracelets are made with crystal, sterling silver, and 14-karat gold-filled beads, hooked onto a stainless steel medical-alert tag.

### History

After neck ornaments, bracelets for the wrist, arm, or ankle are perhaps the oldest form of jewelry. One of the first written records of humans wearing bracelets is in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Bible mentions that there are three types of bracelets: one worn exclusively by men, one worn only by women, and one that may be worn by either sex. Although bracelets are mentioned frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures, their distinctive characteristics are not described. Some of the oldest bracelet artifacts were constructed of bronze and gold and date back to the Bronze Age. Most were penannular, or oval, with expanding, trumpet-shaped ends. The gold bracelets were typically unadorned, and hammered and bent into shape, while bronze bracelets were decorated with patterns and designs. At about this same time, German and Scandinavian warriors often wore spiral armlets for decorative and protective purposes. These armlets covered the entire forearm. In pre-Columbian America, indigenous artisans made bracelets from gold, precious minerals, and rock crystal.

In Ancient Egyptian tombs, strings of gold beads, hoops, and single, hinged bracelets have been discovered. Many of the bracelets made from plain or enameled metals were unadorned by stones. During the First Dynasty, bracelets worn by royalty were made of rectangular beads called *serekhs*, with turquoise, gold, and blue-glazed compositions. In Ancient Minoan and Mycenaean periods,

bracelets were made of sheet metal and had elaborate loop-in-loop chains. Ancient Assyrians and Greeks often had two types of bracelets: coiled spirals in the form of interlocking snakes and stiff penannular hoops with enameled sphinxes, lions' heads, or rams' heads. In the Iron Age these spiral forms were common in Europe as well. Scythian nobles wore rigid gold bracelets with animal motifs around the eighth century B.C.E. The Scythians, a group of powerful, nomadic tribes of southeastern Europe and Asia, were known for their fine metalworking and artistic style.

The Etruscans were among the first to create bracelets with separate, hinged panels, a style still popular in the early twenty-first century. Ancient Roman soldiers often were given gold bracelets to indicate their valor in battle. In Great Britain during the Celtic period, men often wore massive protective armllets and serpent-shaped bracelets. These may have been an adaptation of German and Scandinavian bracelets worn during the Bronze Age and used to protect against sword attacks. Toward the end of the pagan period in Europe, plaited silver bracelets and intertwined strands of silver wire became popular. A decline in interest in bracelets occurred during the Middle Ages in Europe, probably due to the fact that Christian beliefs discouraged adornments, as they suggested an "unhealthy regard for personal vanity" (Trasko, p. 27). The Renaissance focus on humanism prompted a renewed interest in bracelets and other types of jewelry.

### Cultural Examples

Bracelets have been worn by cultures all over the world since ancient times. Bracelets and other forms of jewelry were considered especially important in warm geographic regions, such as India and Africa, where few items of clothing were worn. Although both genders historically have worn bracelets, they seem more typically associated with women, especially in contemporary times. Cultural variations may be seen in the wearing of bracelets, for example, in the number of bracelets worn. In the United States, wearing one bracelet is common; however many Eastern cultures favor wearing several bracelets on one wrist. Some cultures in India wear anklets and armllets, as well as bracelets, while this is not as common in Western nations. In addition, Westerners often view bracelets as transitory, removing them at the end of the day. Married women in India, however, wear conch and glass bangles for life. They are broken only if the women becomes a widow.

While many cultural examples of bracelets abound, the intricacy of meanings behind bracelets are found among the people of Timor, a remote island in Indonesia. In Timor, bracelets are natural, stylized, or abstract. Using the lost-wax process, which requires a new mold for each bracelet, ensures a one-of-a-kind result. Timorese bracelets, as family heirlooms or household treasures, may indicate a marriage alliance, social status, and serve as protective amulets or as important artifacts for

ritual dances and other ceremonies. In premodern times, bracelets also were badges awarded for the taking of heads. The Timorese have special bracelets for fertility, life cycle and life crisis ceremonies, and other important cultural rituals. Timorese men wear the most spectacular bracelets; the women's are similar in style, but smaller in size. Many bracelets display a traditional symbol indicating one's relationship to a specific Timorese house or family, called an *uma*.

See also **Costume Jewelry; Jewelry.**

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*Julianne Trautmann*

**BRAIDING** The word "braid" has many different meanings that change over time and between social groups. For example, a braided fabric once meant material that had faded, but this definition is obsolete now. In the United States, the common use of the word "braid" would be called a plait in the United Kingdom. With global communication becoming commonplace, the problem of terminology increases in importance, as agreed definitions create a common understanding of terms.

International authorities still differ in their opinions. In *The Manual of Braiding*, Noemi Speiser defines "braid-

ing” as “interworking a set of elements by crossing, interlacing, interlinking, twining, intertwining” (p. 146). On the other hand, Irene Emery in *The Primary Structure of Fabrics* sees braiding only as oblique interlacing (p. 68). This leaves a problem of classifying such braid techniques as card weaving, making inkles, cords, knotting, knitting, or lucet work. All these techniques as well as structures made using stand and bobbin equipment, free-end braiding, ply-split, and loop manipulated pieces are part of the costume world, though only some would be defined strictly as “braids.”

Some of these techniques used to be domestic skills while others were more specialized methods, made in workshops after long training. In the domestic range come lucet work and loop-manipulated braids. Loop manipulation has a very long history and can be simple as the braids used as ties for clothing or to assemble samurai armor, or it can be very complex and decorative. We know from seventeenth-century household pattern books that these braids were in common use for all manner of things from purse strings to ties for clothing, and by the end of the eighteenth century a lucet was a common tool in most households, making ties for stays and other lacings. Reference has been found in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the inkle loom, which was developed for the making of garters, sashes, and other necessary ties.

While not always considered braiding, card weaving, which dates far back into European history, is a weaving technique in which the warp threads, running the length of the work, are held by cards with holes at the corners. The textile is made by turning the cards to change the shed, the space between the warp threads, for the insertion of the weft, the threads running across the piece. It makes highly complex and decorative wares that have been found on early garments worn by the nobility and senior clerics. A medieval tomb opened during the restoration of York Minster contained card-woven edgings on vestments. Older pieces have been found in excavations in Verucchio, Italy, where they were used as edging for cloaks. Some of these were used as the starting edge of the garment while others were skillfully woven using the ends of the cloak warp as the weft to incorporate the edging into the garment.

Pieces made on stands with the threads on bobbins are chiefly associated with countries in the Middle and Far East, although they are not unknown in Europe. In Japan, braids made on equipment such as the circular warp loom, or *marudai*, were used as braids for ties (*obi-jime*) worn with kimonos. In Europe, a method for making a braid using bobbins is described by Lady Bindloss in the seventeenth century while *Diderot's Encyclopedia of Trades and Industry*, first published in 1751, illustrates two types of stand and bobbin equipment. In the early 2000s, the main use is in Sweden where the craft of hair braiding continues in the making of jewelry, and in many places, in the use of equipment to make decorative pieces

traditionally associated with Japan. A technique such as free-end braiding, where the work is attached to a fixed point at one end and then worked in the hand, is still in use. Notable among these are the Dida skirts made from many hundreds of threads, attached to the worker's toe and then braided in the weaver's hands into a tubular garment.

Braids have been used for ties such as stay lacing, shoelaces, and points; to secure clothing as braces, belts, and garters; for ceremonial pieces and those with specific meanings such as military braids, and for decoration as in the Miao silk work from China and Khajuja work from the Middle East, while in Peru very old and varied patterns are used to make slings. North American First Nations produced long, wide sashes and belts, often with beads and cross-fertilized with European techniques and ideas. Braids are still being used for some of these things; although in the early twenty-first century, braids for costumes in the Western world are either mass produced or made as individual pieces by skilled makers. Ply-split, a technique originally used mainly, but not exclusively, for animal regalia in India, is being developed for highly decorative accessories, such as belts and bags, for neck pieces, bracelets, and even whole garments. There are also many developments in making jewelry pieces on stand and bobbin equipment.

See also **Homespun; Knitting; Knotting; Loom; Weaving.**

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Jan Rawdon Smith

**BRANDING** Branding is a body modification that permanently transforms the surface of the skin by causing a visible scar. The process of branding involves extreme heat or cold applied by a variety of methods. The branding burns and destroys the surface tissue of the skin and stunts or permanently changes the color of hairs growing from the resulting scars.

### Historic Branding

Historically, branding has been used on the skin of animals and slaves, as a proof of ownership, and on the skin of criminals as proof of guilt. In Greece, Rome, and many parts of Europe convicted criminals were branded with specific marks that indicated their crime. French, English, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese slave traders branded their initials on slaves each time the slaves changed owners.

### Contemporary Branding

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, microcultures, such as the modern primitives and punks, utilize branding as body modifications. These brandings visually indicate group identity, personal identity, rites of passage, spiritual beliefs, and body decoration. Fraternity members, such as Michael Jordan and the Reverend Jesse Jackson, also have brandings of their Greek fraternity letters. These brandings indicate lifelong membership and commitment to their fraternity's ideals and bylaws.

### Strike Branding

Strike branding is the most common form of branding. A strike refers to an individual branding “hit” to the skin. Brandings can be created with either one strike or multiple strikes. The one-strike brand is pressed to the skin long enough to burn through all of the surface skin. The multiple-strikes brand divides the design into many smaller sections about an inch long, shorter if the branding has smaller details. Strikes will overlap and some areas may be re-branded for consistency. A uniform branding requires that all of the strikes be evenly distributed in relation to the surface of the skin.

The strike iron should be hot enough to cause third-degree burns to skin tissue, in order to form a permanent scar. Sources of heat can be anything from a propane torch to an open fire. Strike brand instruments are fabricated from metal, either as complete tools or as small, shaped designs held by a gripping tool. Metal retains and transfers heat effectively, quickly, and predictably to the skin.

Most strike branding tools are made from thin, high-grade stainless steel sheet metal. Other materials used as branding tools include the following: silver, copper, random metal findings, and ceramics. Thin materials are preferred for branding irons, because they are easy to heat and form, and decrease the risk of unwanted damage.

### Cautery Branding

Cautery branding uses modern tools and technology, such as soldering irons and lasers, to apply the branding. An electrocautery unit, invented by Steve Haworth, has been called laser branding. This branding technology is similar to an arc welder, but designed for the skin. The body is negatively grounded while the positively charged electric spark jolts from the branding electrode to the skin, searing the skin tissue it touches. An electrocautery unit provides precise control over the depth of the brand and intricate nature of the designs. Cautery branding, regardless of the tools and technology utilized, is considered to be the most painful form of branding.

### Chemical or Freeze Branding

Freeze branding is similar to strike branding. Instead of putting the branding iron into a fire to heat it, it is immersed into liquid nitrogen or another cooling solution. The iron is then pressed into the skin. If the hair grows back it will be white. Freeze branding takes longer to do than fire branding and may take days to become visible, while fire branding shows results immediately. This branding method is extremely rare and not often used among body modification enthusiasts, but ranchers consider it as an extremely effective method for branding their livestock, because it does only minor damage to the hide and leaves distinctive branding marks of white hair.

### Branding Health Hazards

Branding fumes contain dangerous biological substances from the skin of the person being branded. While some of these airborne viruses and bacteria are dangerous to humans, the heat of the branding destroys most of these germs that can affect humans. Still, branders use HEPA air filters, ventilation systems, and respiratory masks while branding to prevent the transfer of airborne viruses and bacteria.

### Branding Aftercare and Healing Process

There are two schools of thought regarding the aftercare of brandings—LITA or “leave it alone,” or irritation. Leaving the branding alone will allow the body to heal consistently; however, if a person is not genetically disposed to keloiding, the raised area of the scar will be minimal. Irritating a healing branding wound increases the height of the resulting scar; however, it also produces unpredictable healing and scarring. Picking or rubbing the healing area with steel wool or a toothbrush, or using exfoliating agents can successfully irritate the healing branding.

The healing process for brandings usually lasts at least a year. Separate from the pain of the branding procedure, during the healing process the branded area will be extremely sensitive and sore. If the branding is on a body part that flexes, it may cause the wound to tear open



during movement. Healing brandings undergo a few phases, which vary in length and extremes from person to person. A branding will first scab over, which can last from a few weeks to just over a month. At this phase, the appearance of the branding is a bright red raised scar, which slowly becomes lighter than the normal skin tone. This phase lasts about twelve months, and the scar tissue may rise slightly more during this time.

The appearance of a healed strike branding ideally is a design of thick raised lines, lighter than the skin's natural tone. The height of the branding varies significantly on a large number of variables, such as the method of branding, body part and area branded, and skin texture. Strike brandings produce thicker, raised scars, whereas cautery brandings produce thinner lines. Brandings typically heal three or four times the width of the branding tool used to make it.

### Branding Removal

Cosmetic surgery claims the ability to remove a branding by using lasers or other advanced techniques; however, it is expensive and not always successful. Currently it is not possible to completely remove a branding without leaving some type of scar.

See also **Punk; Scarification; Tattoos.**

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Theresa M. Winge

**BRANDS AND LABELS** Brands developed as a means of commercial distinction within the marketplace in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. The process of branding begins with the attachment of a name to a business, product, or a family of products, and involves the creation of an image for that business which sets it apart from its competitors. Brand image is usually disseminated through advertising, but the value of a brand generally resides in its reputation and the level of loyalty or desirability it can generate amongst consumers. In the fashion industry, a desirable brand name allows companies to bridge the gap between expensive, high-fashion garments and affordable mass-market goods such as perfumes, accessories, and ready-to-wear diffusion lines.

The emergence of brands is closely linked to the establishment of copyright, patent, and trademark legislation in the nineteenth century, as this allowed companies

to legally protect their names, and seek redress from their imitators. Many other factors affected the emergence of modern brands, such as the growth of new distribution and retail networks; the increased dominance of fixed-pricing, the concomitant growth of the advertising and packaging trades, and the shift from local to national (and international) markets for consumer goods.

The fashion industry can seek legal protection for designs through patents legislation, which protects the unauthorized use of original designs for manufacture. It also benefits from complex trademark legislation, which protects the words, names, symbols, sounds, or colors that are used to distinguish goods and services. Effectively, this covers the use of a company's logo and brand identity from both counterfeit and "look-alike" goods, where the visual identity of brand is suggested rather than exactly copied.

One celebrated early example of branded clothing is Levi Strauss and Co., who incorporated many trademarked features into their garments (such as rivets and stitching) and gave proof of authenticity in the form of a patent and trademark "certificate" with each garment (later to be sewn on as a label). Authenticity is a central promise of branded goods, and the fashion industry has used it to generate high cultural value in a world of rapid turnover, fluctuating consumer loyalties, and the seemingly incessant demand for novelty. Fashion branding has become synonymous with a late-capitalist consumerist culture where it is the experience rather than the product that drives demand.

Many fashion houses developed as brands through the practice of franchising and licensed copying. In the period 1880–1914, couture businesses such as Worth and Paquin sold through an international network of department stores. In their attempts to cut down on illegal copying, they also sold reproduction rights to private dressmaking salons. The copying of models was a fundamental part of the nineteenth century fashion trade, and designer "names" such as Worth would produce models specifically for copy by retailers in both Europe and America, in order to gain some financial benefit from this practice. By the 1860s it was necessary for Worth to incorporate a house label into products, carrying the Worth name and address either stamped or woven into garments (labels were in turn copied by counterfeit producers).

This two-tier system of couture models and more accessible ready-to-wear lines bearing the same label was exploited by successive generations of designers, including Paul Poiret and Coco Chanel, who used it to build their international reputations. The "signature label" became a defining characteristic of twentieth-century fashion, allowing fashion houses and named designers to attach their names to goods including fashion, perfume, cosmetics, and even household products in order to give these goods distinction. In this way, fashion branding

moved beyond the “naming” of a product into the creation of desirable lifestyle scenarios, which could supposedly be replicated by consumers purchasing even the smallest named item. During the 1930s, most of the major couture labels including Elsa Schiaparelli, Coco Chanel, and Jean Patou successfully marketed their signature perfumes well beyond the market for couture.

Franchising became a more widespread activity in the postwar period. Designers such as Dior used the success of franchise agreements in the 1940s to underpin the more risky business of couture. In the 1970s and 1980s designers such as Paco Rabanne, Pierre Cardin, Calvin Klein, and Ralph Lauren capitalized on the value of their brands by franchising their names to the producers of housewares, accessories, and beauty lines. Some labels quickly became debased by the lack of quality control, and crossed the fine line from exclusivity to down-market ubiquity. Now that the practice is more commonplace, it is also more heavily controlled by the presence of major global conglomerates such as LVMH and the Gucci Group. Many brands, such as Donna Karan, have successfully created a family of brands or diffusion lines, each of which has a specific character and target market (Donna Karan and the various DKNY lines including Kids, City, Sport, and Pure).

Aside from the diversification of fashion houses, brand culture has also been driven by the expansion of the sports and leisure sectors into fashion. Despite its claim to be motivated only by the needs of athletes, the global sportswear brand Nike has become synonymous with street fashion since its diversification in the mid-1980s. Nike’s phenomenal expansion was also due to its direct appeal to a sense of personal achievement through its “Just Do It” slogan and highly emotive advertising. It also fueled overt brand loyalty on the part of its wearers. The popularity of branded goods amongst closely defined “style tribes” has resulted in a profusion of goods where the logo is prominently displayed.

By the twenty-first century, investment in brand building has reached unprecedented levels, with many familiar brand names reinventing themselves by the hire of celebrity designers and radical company overhauls. Fashion and luxury brands have been most affected, as brands known for a particular product category (such as leather goods) launch couture and ready-to-wear collections. With a combination of business acumen and designer credentials, brand “auteurs” such as Tom Ford have transformed the fortunes of a company such as Gucci in a few short years. Many individual designers now work in several capacities at once: creating their own couture and ready-to-wear collections, producing a collection for another fashion house (John Galliano and Alexander McQueen have both held this post at Givenchy) and perhaps acting as consultant to a department store’s own label (Betty Jackson for Marks & Spencer, Jasper Conran for Debenhams in the United Kingdom). These designers

may risk their individual reputations on the success of named collections, but the companies behind them are now multinational conglomerates, each with a huge portfolio of brands.

*See also* **Logos.**

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*Jane M. Pavitt*


**BRASSIERE** A brassiere is a garment worn next to the skin with two shaped cups or pockets to hold female breast tissue; it is supported by a chest bandeau and generally two over-the-shoulder straps. It may have elastic, wire, padding, lace trim, and a variety of other parts. Strapless versions are also used on occasions where the shoulders are exposed. Specialized brassieres are made for holding breast prostheses of those with surgical removal of one or both breasts, in addition to the particular needs of maternity and nursing mothers. Brassiere styles are often dependent on the fashionable silhouette of the time: breast-flattening bands of the early 1920s, softly curved bias-cut styles of the 1930s, structured and circular stitched “torpedo” shapes of the 1940s and 1950s, unstructured and naturally shaped bras of the 1960s and 1970s, until the introduction of the Lycra-based knitted fabric sports bras of the 1980s. Any of those could be found in lingerie wardrobes, along with the ultimate in uplift and underwire by Wonderbra, Victoria’s Secret, Warnaco, and others. It is not anatomically or physiologically necessary to support the breasts, but is strictly a fashionable or socially demanded item.

Breast coverings, in the form of tight bandeaus, have been worn throughout history and by many different ethnic groups of women, but the particularly designed and shoulder-supported garment we know today was a product of the nineteenth-century Dress Reform. United States patent #40,907 issued to Luman L. Chapman in 1863 may be the first recorded design in America, but is almost certainly not the first such garment produced for women wishing to substitute a more comfortable garment for their fashionable tight-laced corsets.

A Norman French word for a child’s undershirt, the term “brassiere” was adopted in America about 1904 when it appeared in New York advertising copy of the DeBevoise Company to describe their latest bust supporter, thus giving it French cachet. Prior to that time,

## Special Values in Attractive Brassieres

**32D7488**  
Your Choice for **39c**




**32D7484**  
**32D7480**

**Cambric Brassieres**  
Your Choice Each **39c**  
Three for **\$1.14**

Sizes, 34 to 48-inch Bust.  
Ship. wt., 5 oz.  
State bust measure.

Women's Brassieres of fine Cambric. 32D7488 is trimmed with lace in cluny pattern and 32D7480 and 32D7484 embroidery trimmed. Open front. Corset hook attached.

**32D7520**  
Your Choice for **63c**



**32D7508**  
**32D7456**  
**32D7457**

**Cambric Brassieres**  
Your Choice for **63c**  
Three for **\$1.84**

Sizes, 34 to 48-in. Bust.  
Shipping weight, about 5 oz.  
State bust measure.

Material is of good quality cambric. Front and back yokes alike, one is trimmed with wide embroidery insertion and the other two with lace in cluny pattern. Open front. Corset hook attached.

**Cambric Brassiere**  
Each **59c**  
Three for **\$1.72**  
**32D7460**

Sizes, 34 to 48-in. bust.  
Shipping weight, 5 oz.  
State bust measure.

Open front Brassiere of fine Cambric. Front and back yoke and bottom of wide embroidery in cluny pattern. Reinforced under arms. Corset hook attached.

**Cambric and Lace**  
Each **98c**  
Three for **\$2.85**  
**32D7512**

Sizes, 34 to 48-in. bust.  
Shipping weight, 3 oz.  
State bust measure.

This Beautiful Brassiere is made of soft finished Cambric and lace in cluny pattern. Yoke finished with ribbon bow. Reinforced under arms. Corset hook attached.

**Silk and Lace**  
Each **\$1.09**  
Three for **\$3.16**  
**32D7438**

Sizes, 34 to 48-in. Bust.  
Ship. wt., 3 oz.  
State bust measure.

Beautiful Brassiere made of flesh color wash silk and lace in cluny pattern. Front and back alike. Reinforced under arms. Corset hook attached. Open front. Ribbon run at neck.

**Cambric and Lace**  
Each **97c**  
Three for **\$2.85**  
**32D7436**

Sizes, 34 to 48-in. bust.  
Ship. wt., 3 oz.  
State bust measure.

Open front Brassiere of good quality Cambric and lace in cluny pattern. Front and back alike. Reinforced under arms. Corset hook attached.

**Lace Bandeau**  
Each **69c**  
Three for **\$2.00**  
**32D7427**

Sizes, 34 to 48-in. bust.  
Shipping wt., 3 oz.  
State bust measure.

Bandeau of heavy quality lace in cluny pattern. Lace shoulder straps. Opens in back. Corset hook attached.

**Shield Brassiere**  
Each **69c**  
Three for **\$2.00**  
**32D7441**


Sizes, 34 to 48-in. bust.  
Shipping weight, 3 oz.  
State bust measure.

Shield Brassiere of fine white mesh with dress shields. Draw tape at neck. Open front. Corset hook attached.


**Cambric Brassiere**  
Each **89c**  
Three for **\$2.59**  
**32D7447**

Sizes, 34 to 48-in. bust.  
Ship. wt., 3 oz.


**Lawn and Lace Bust Ruffle**  
Each **39c**  
Three for **\$1.14**




**Cotton Mesh Bust Confiner**  
Each **39c**  
Three for **\$1.14**




**Fancy Batiste**  
Each **39c**  
Three for **\$1.14**



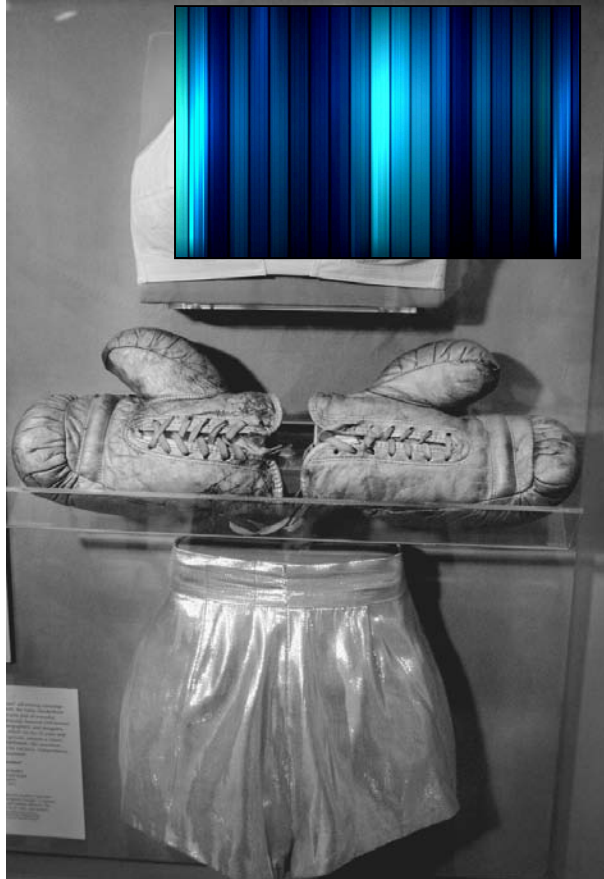
**Brocaded Batiste**  
Each **39c**  
Three for **\$1.14**



**Elastic and Cambric**  
Each **\$1.09**  
Three for **\$3.16**  
**32D7514**



**Brassiere advertisement.** This advertisement shows the soft, curved bias-cut styles popular in the 1930s. The French word *brassiere*, adopted in the United States about 1904 when it appeared in an advertisement in New York, gave the garment a French quality. They were previously known as "bust, bosom, or breast supporters/corsets." © BETTMANN/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.



**Maiden Form advertisement.** This advertisement was part of an exhibit at the “Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business” at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 2002. The design shows a brassiere, boxing gloves, and athletic trunks. AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

the garments specifically designed for breast covering and support were designated variously as bust, bosom, or breast supporters or corsets. Occasionally they were patented as braces, waists, foundation garments, halters, or simply covers. The term “brassiere” became widespread in English-speaking nations within a few years, but the French have maintained their designation of *soutien-gorge* (literally “bosom supporter”). In the 1930s, when slang shortened words like pajamas to “pj’s,” brassieres became “bras.” Custom-made in the nineteenth century, the brassiere made its entrance into mass production in the early twentieth century in the United States, England, western Europe, and other countries influenced by Western lifestyles.

The brassiere had early prototypes in undergarments worn by late eighteenth-century Western European women with the lightweight columnar fashions that emphasized the breasts and deemphasized the natural waist. Those unstructured pouchlike garments, fitted by draw-

strings, and commonly held by shoulder straps, may have inspired the dressmakers and reformers who attempted to produce garments later in the nineteenth century. One function that corsets provided was to help disperse from the waist, the weight of the crinolines, petticoats, and skirts, which may have been as much as thirty-five pounds. A garment with shoulder straps could transfer this weight to the shoulders by hitching lower garments to hooks and tapes. Dress Reformers, including about half of the doctors in a survey of the mid-nineteenth-century medical literature, encouraged women to wear garments that would not impede their digestion, lung capacity, or reproductive system; the new designs maintained the fashionable shape without harming the physique.

Several dozen American entrepreneurs patented breast-supporting garments in the decades up to World War I; about half were women. Olivia Flynt, Marie Tucek, Caroline Newell, and Gabrielle Poix Yerkes were early patentees and producers, with dozens following in the twentieth century. In the undergarment industry, enterprising women found opportunities in design, production, and management not readily available to them in other clothing manufacture. Dr. Jeanne Walters patented rubber brassiere designs with weight-loss claims; and Herma Dozier, R.N., patented three maternity and nursing bras for her company Fancee Free. The latter employed adjustable flaps to allow nipple access without removing the supporting garment. By the end of World War II, the vast majority of fashion-conscious women in America and Europe were wearing brassieres. Western fashions introduced the brassiere to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

There have been many attributions about the invention of the brassiere. One oft-repeated story concerns Mary Phelps Jacob (a.k.a. Caresse Crosby), a self-described New York socialite who patented a bias-cut brassiere in 1914; it was neither first nor successful. Frenchwoman Herminie (Herminie) Cadolle set up a lingerie business in Argentina just as rubber fabric became available and parlayed her elastic insert brassieres (not unlike L. L. Chapman’s 1863 design) into a fortune and eventually moved back to Paris, where her business survives in the early 2000s. Claims to her invention of the shoulder strap are misplaced. The Warner Corset Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, also professed invention, but can only declare innovation and patents for several excellent designs, mostly after 1890. The Gossard Company dominated the English market for many years, with many unique adaptations in brassieres. In fact, there were hundreds of innovators. Not all patented designs, but many found success in the marketplace as women demanded more comfort in their clothing and fashion moved away from the rigid silhouettes of the nineteenth century. In a changing society, women entered universities and work places in great numbers, they took part in sports like hiking, tennis and bicycling, and they drove

cars, activities that demanded greater freedom of movement and lung capacity than allowed by restrictive corsets.

As the idea of the brassiere became popular, patterns for the home seamstress were available, but the intricacy of stitching required skills practiced by specialists. Dozens of small entrepreneurial firms entered the market to supply the growing demands for brassieres. Production could be mastered and as assembly lines using readily available components were set up in small quarters, the industry flourished. Designs were patented by the hundreds, along with specialized machinery for cutting, sewing, making fasteners, and even packaging as sales of brassieres increased. Special industries produced the rust-proof wires, hooks, fasteners, and straps in addition to the fabrics, elastics, lace trims, stitching machines, and molding units. Brassiere construction involves up to forty components per garment, using specialized machines for cutting and sewing. In early designs, chromium wire fasteners were the norm; these have been largely replaced by plastic components, which like straps are produced by specialized firms. Improvements in rubber and synthetic elastics have resulted in their almost universal use in brassieres. Fabric selection for brassieres has evolved from the firm coutil and twill weaves used in the nineteenth century to the fine cottons, embroidered polyester blends, delicate silks, fiberfill, and soft knits of the twenty-first century. The brassiere business gave opportunity to women in ownership, administration, design, and manufacturing not readily available in other fields. There were some self-regulatory aspects within the industry, particularly regarding nomenclature. What differentiated a bandeau from a brassiere was more than two inches of length below the breasts. Until war shortages created problems with supplies, there were few government regulations for work standards or for wages.

By the 1910s, retailers featured specialist “fitters” in departments devoted to corsets and brassieres, which did not have universal cup sizing until the early 1930s. Brassieres, like other items of clothing, were sewn in small production companies, often by sweated labor. Despite demands of complicated designs, sewers were expected to produce items of uniform style and size. The term “cup” was not used until 1916, and letter designation for cup size was first used about 1933 by S. H. Camp and Company to imply progression in volume of breast tissue to be replaced with their prostheses. The under-breast circumference or band dimension is one part of early twenty-first-century brassiere size, with the cup volume designated in letters AA thru I available in retail outlets. Introduction of the minimally shaped “training bra” in the 1950s opened the fashion door for countless adolescents.

Fabrics that could be sewn with flat-felled or bias-tape covered seams were used to ensure comfort to the wearer. In pre-1900 brassieres, linen, cotton broadcloth, and twill weaves were favored. “Whirlpool,” or concen-

tric, stitching shaped the bra structure of some designs after 1940. As man-made fibers were introduced, these were quickly adopted by the industry because of their properties of easy care. Since a brassiere must be laundered frequently, this was of great importance. Zippers were used in some designs, as well as Velcro, but these fasteners caused discomfort or caught on clothing and complicated laundering.

Small, medium, and large companies were making brassieres in America during the 1930s and 1940s. Some fell prey to shortages of material during World War II, others to changes in business practices in the drive for export markets. There were union problems, and in later decades challenges switching to computer-aided design. The need to supply and advertise to a nationwide market stretched some firms to the breaking point. Offshore production was initiated to save labor costs following the war, eroding influence of garment workers’ unions. Introduction of self-service in lingerie departments was another cost-cutting measure, but did not stem the loss of declining brands. Individual brand-name manufacturers have been taken over by conglomerates, which resulted in fewer available designs and less attention paid to quality, in part due to manufacturing processes being moved offshore. Brassiere manufacturing companies like Kabo of Chicago and Kops of New York were in business from the 1890s until the mid-1960s. Many like G. M. Poix, Treo, Model, Dorothy Bickum, Van Raalte, and Lovable lasted fifty or more years, often run by successive family generations. Maiden Form (until 1948, when it changed to Maidenform) began production in 1922 as a direct competitor to the New York-based Boyshform Company, who made bandeau flatteners for the slim styles of the times. After being a leader in the industry and developing through their advertising campaigns one of the best recognized brand names in history, Maidenform continues eighty years later with a smaller market share. Familiar names like Olga, Bali, Exquisite Form, and Playtex played important roles in the brassiere industry but are now owned by conglomerates.

Eroticism is associated with breasts and brassieres, and brassieres do play a role in the fetish and transvestite dressing by males; however, the garment was designed with the female shape in mind. One prominent promoter of eroticism with a twist of humor was Frederick’s of Hollywood, who has been almost eclipsed in the early 2000s by the very market-savvy Victoria’s Secret Company. The latter has parlayed lingerie into an art form, taking eroticism from the boudoir to the front parlor in an upward thrust of lace. Décolletage, whether natural or enhanced by padding, is emphasized with the underwired push-up brassiere and by silicone gel in the cups. The metallic wire in many brassieres has been replaced by flexible plastic, perhaps in an attempt to increase comfort and durability. Brassiere designs have been adapted over the decades to fashions of backless dresses, open to the waist in center front, or completely

strapless. The Bleumette brassiere and other brands featured gummed cup-shaped supports to the breasts directly when both bandeaus and straps were eschewed.

In 1969, a planned demonstration by a group of feminists who protested the proceedings at the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City, to call attention to their cause resulted in the myth of bra-burning; however, no fire was ever lit, and participants claimed that the bra, high heels, cosmetics, and girdles thrown into the “freedom trash can” were to be a non-pyrotechnic display. The assembled press reported the incident in ambiguous terms, leading many to believe the fire had consumed the offending brassieres. A few more aggressive feminists urged the disposal of all bras; however the majority of American women clung to their familiar fashions, if not their personal comfort.

The elasticized knitted fabric bras introduced in the 1970s and 1980s are now widely worn by athletes and nonathletes alike as comfortable substitutes for the underwired wonders of this age. As female athletes doff their jerseys to reveal brand-name sports bras, few eyebrows are lifted. In the later decades of the twentieth century, the structured brassiere continued its popularity with the majority of women in the middle of the age spectrum, but the youngest and oldest have often either resisted or refused to wear them. Whether for reasons of comfort or personal choice, many women in the twenty-first century are choosing not to wear brassieres.

See also **Fasteners; Lingerie; Underwear.**

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Colleen Gau

**BREECHES** Breeches are a man's bifurcated outer garment, covering the lower body from waist to knees or just below the knees. The term “breeches” is synonymous with any form of short pants or trousers and has been used to describe several types of men's lower-body undergarments and outer garments from classical Roman dress through the twentieth century. However, breeches as a fashion garment were standard everyday attire for European and American men from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries (American men after 1565). The term comes from Middle English “breech,” which was originally the Old English word “brēc” or “brēc,”—the plural of “brōc,” a leg covering. The term “breech” also refers to the lower rear part—the haunches or the buttocks—of the human body. Related clothing concepts include breech-cloth or breech-clout, a short cloth covering the loins, also called a loincloth; and breeching, the archaic English term used to refer to the rite of passage in which young boys wearing skirts were dressed in breeches to signify reaching the end of childhood. The term “drawers” is also used synonymously with breeches when referring to a man's knee-length, loosely fitted undergarment of separate legs covering the lower body. However, “drawers” also refers to various women's undergarments that are constructed of separate legs attached to a waistband, especially after the eighteenth

century. In common usage today, breeches are essentially distinguished from trousers and pants by length.

### Origin and Early Types

Various lower-body undergarments made of linen for men have been referred to as breeches in the history of Western dress. These garments ranged from knee to ankle length and were made of diverse fabrics and by diverse construction techniques. For example, the *bracchae*, or long, shapeless trousers worn by northern European ethnic groups contrasted with the shorter, knee-length, and more-fitted leg coverings called *feminalia* worn by Roman soldiers and horsemen through the fifth century. By the end of the twelfth century, the masculine wardrobe included some form of knee-length, loosely fitted, natural-colored linen breeches or drawers called *braies* that were worn under tunics of varying length. The lower legs were left bare, covered by hose or long stockings of woven cloth, or wrapped with crisscrossed lengths of narrow bands like bandages (sometimes referred to as *chausses*, from the French, a type of lower-leg chain mail armor). Images throughout the Middle Ages show peasants and laborers working in fields or on building sites dressed only in baggy, natural-colored linen braies, sometimes tucked into brightly colored hose worn with short leather boots or shoes. Higher-status men wore longer tunics that completely covered the linen braies. Braies were held up at the waist or hips by wrapping with a cord or belt and images show them to have been thickly rolled over at the top. They appear to be simply cut and sewn to shape around the legs but open and widely overlapped down the front. The prevalent style appears to have been constructed of a wide, gathered width of fabric draped from front to back between the legs but left open down both sides and tied around the waist or hips or rolled over the top at the waist.

### Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

As hose became longer and more fitted to the shape of the leg, braies also became shorter and more fitted, and by the fifteenth century they were no longer seen as part of the outer wardrobe. By the early fifteenth century, the two separate legs of a pair of hose were joined at the crotch by a tied overlap or a codpiece and attached for support to the bottom of the doublet (a short, close-fitting jacket) with laces called points. This body-dominant style became the primary form of men's lower-body covering through most of the fifteenth century, providing the under layer for a variety of outer garment styles and the expression of regional and decorative design features. In the first half of the sixteenth century, by the 1540s, the full-length style of men's hose was broken up into two or three different sections called stocks (upper and lower, or nether, stocks) and trunk hose. Nether stocks were tightly fitted, knitted stockings covering the lower legs, ending just below or just above the knees, and sometimes fitted with garters under the knees. They were

tied into the leg band at the bottom of the upper stocks. Images show peasants and laborers working with points untied between the upper and lower hose, their lower hose rolled over and falling below the calf. The upper stocks, also called canions, covered the thighs and upper legs and were sewn into or tied onto the bottoms of the trunk hose, which covered the lower torso from waist to hips or mid-thigh. Although trunk hose were short and sometimes barely covered the buttocks in back or upper thighs in front, they were full and appeared puffy. Many were padded and constructed with an elaborate codpiece in front, but the codpiece gradually diminished and disappeared after the mid-sixteenth century. Compared with the lower hose, trunk hose were a more substantial garment designed to match the doublet with all of the fashionable and complex slashings (patterns of deliberate cuts in garments, allowing contrasting linings to show through), panes (narrow strips of fabric sewn over a contrasting lining), and parti-colorings of each period. It is a variation of the trunk hose that became the man's outer garment most commonly known as breeches, which also varied in cut and fit. Like hose, trunk hose and early breeches were constructed with pairs of hand-sewn eyelets along the upper edge and were laced or tied to the doublet for support. It was not until the seventeenth century that breeches became a separate, "stand-alone" garment constructed on a waistband, no longer worn suspended from the doublet.

Through the remainder of the sixteenth century, trunk hose expanded, and numerous variations in length and shape were common. Styles called round hose included paned and heavily padded shapes that resembled a ripe melon or pumpkin, ending at or just below the hip. Round hose were shaped and padded with horsehair, wool fleece, cotton, or linen tow. One extreme style of trunk hose rarely seen outside Elizabethan court circles was so abbreviated they resembled a wide pad around the hips, worn with very tightly fitted lower hose. Pluderhose (or *pluderhosen*, from the German) were another variation of trunk hose that resembled a pair of open breeches. Cut full and long, to below the knee, they were constructed of an under layer of contrasting fabric that spilled out between wide bands or panes of heavier fabric.

Trunk hose were at their most exaggerated in the last two decades of the sixteenth century. Different styles of longer, fuller upper hose called breeches were also fashionable in the late sixteenth century. Variations of breeches included Venetians, which were a baggy garment that were quite wide at the waist and tapered to the knee or just below. They were slightly padded to hold their shape and were constructed with seams on both inner and outer sides of the legs. The fullness at the waist was controlled with wide, deep gathers or cartridge pleats. Voluminous breeches called galligaskins, gally hose, *gascoynes* (from the French), or slops (also *slopp* or *sloppe*, from the Dutch) were cut with extra width at the knees, maintaining a bulky appearance without padding.

They had a softer and more informal appearance, drooping slightly over the knees with the extra fullness gathered or pleated into a band just below the knee.

### Seventeenth Century

In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the extreme and rigid shapes of trunk hose softened, and the full, longer breeches like Venetians and galligaskins were the predominant fashion. Many breeches were embellished with a row of ribbon loops or lace “ruffles” below the knees, called boot hose, to span the area between lower edge and boot top. Shorter styles of breeches were constructed with a wide fitted band over the knees or lower thighs also called canions. After mid-century, a shorter style called petticoat breeches or rhinegraves was most fashionable. There were two types, one bifurcated and one open, but both resembled a full wide skirt and many were heavily embellished with rows of ribbons at waist, hem, and side seam. Wide “flounces” of lace or ribbons over the knees were worn with some petticoat breeches. A flounce is a strip of fabric gathered along one edge and attached to the bottom of a garment, such as a skirt, that creates a ruffled effect.

As breeches became longer with varying degrees of fullness in the seventeenth century, the methods for attaching them to the doublet also changed. Earlier trunk hose and breeches were still tied to the doublet lining or waist with laces called points. Ribbon points tied in a bow through the outer waist of the doublet provided an important decorative feature in the early seventeenth century. By the 1620s, however, when breeches replaced trunk hose, they were suspended from the doublet by hooks-and-eyes. Large metal hooks sewn into the waistband of breeches were attached to hand sewn or metal eyelets on the inside of the doublet waist. By the early 1660s, breeches were no longer tied to the doublet at all, but were fastened instead at the waist with a button or strap and held up on their own by suspending them from a waistband around the body’s waist or tying them tightly around the waist with a cord gathered through a sewn channel. Breeches were constructed with a lining, and the center front opening was buttoned up or tied closed. Linen breeches or drawers were also worn as an undergarment with breeches.

### Eighteenth Century

By the end of the seventeenth century, breeches were quite simplified in shape and trim, slimmer and more fitted to the shape of the legs, but still cut with fullness in the seat, or over the hips and abdomen. They had a cuff or band that fastened just under the knee and were worn with separate stockings that rolled up over the knee. Throughout the eighteenth century, the fit and details of breeches changed as the style of coat and waistcoat changed. During the first two decades, breeches were virtually hidden under the knee-length vest and coat of the three-piece suit, and a somewhat baggy fit did not mat-

ter. As coats were cut away after mid-century, breeches became very slim and fit closely over the thigh and knee. As breeches became slimmer, they were cut on the bias to give movement to tightly-fitted thigh and seat areas. Knee-band closures included narrow cuffs with buckles, buttons, or ties. After 1730, as waistcoats shortened, the front of the breeches over the abdomen was more visible. For a smoother appearance, the buttoned-fly front changed. Breeches were closed down center front with a “fall,” a large square flap five to eight inches wide, that buttoned to the waistband to cover an open fly. The center-front buttoned fly remained a less fashionable alternative to falls.

Breeches reached the end of their fashionability as standard men’s garments by the early 1790s. Two other alternatives were gaining prominence, and the term “knee breeches” was used to distinguish them from pantaloons and trousers. Trousers were practical, ankle-length, loosely fitted bifurcated garments closely identified with the working class. In France, the combination of knee breeches and silk stockings was called *culottes*, and it was this elite style seen in such sharp contrast to the working class trousers that identified the French revolutionaries as *sans culottes*. Pantaloons were a type of longer, closely fitted men’s day-wear breeches that fit into the top of riding boots. They became a very fashionable alternative to trousers and were worn with a strap under the sole of a shoe to increase the effect of the clingingly tight fit.

### Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, fashionable young men preferred pantaloons or trousers while older generations continued to wear knee breeches. After trousers became standard everyday attire for men, breeches with a square front fall and diagonal side pockets were worn as riding breeches. By the 1890s, however, a specialized type of breeches was worn instead for horseback riding. The inside of each leg in these full-cut breeches was made with leather or suede, and tightly fitted wrappings for the lower leg were eventually constructed as part of this garment, creating the shape of the twentieth-century “winged” jodhpurs still used as riding dress. These late-nineteenth-century riding breeches were also worn by women, constructed with a detachable apron worn for modesty when astride a horse. Knee breeches were worn as the correct form of evening dress through the first decade of the nineteenth century and were worn with tailcoats as day-wear through the first quarter of the century. By the 1840s, the use of knee breeches was limited to British full ceremonial court dress. From the 1860s, the term “knickerbockers” was used to describe men’s knee breeches with loose, baggy knees and a knee-band fastened by a strap just under the knee. Knickerbockers were worn as informal country dress, with a sweater or Norfolk-style jacket, and for certain sports such as shooting or golf. An early-twentieth-



century style of knickerbockers known as “plus fours” were worn when hiking, biking, or playing golf. The name referred to the four inches added to their length to create an exaggerated overhang at the knee. Breeches were also used as livery for household servants such as footmen and chauffeurs in Britain and North America through the early twentieth century. In the twentieth century, a type of knee breeches was worn with leg wraps called puttees by some officers and troops fighting in World War I.

See also **Doublet; Hosiery, Men's.**

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Susan J. Tortore

**BROCADE.** See **Weave, Jacquard.**

**BROOCHES AND PINS** Brooches, pins, and fibulas can be defined within two overlapping categories of dress, as both functional and decorative items. Historically, they are primarily defined as utilitarian, as clasps and fasteners for use in closing garments on the body or in holding pieces of a garment together. They were also designed or used as personal adornment with ornamental features that communicate ideas about the wearer, and the wearer's period and milieu. The word “pin” carries the most broad and general usage that includes brooches and fibulas. However, fibula is most sharply defined within its historical usage while the meanings of pins and brooches have a much wider scope over time. The common element among all three is the more general fastening function of the pin. Historically, these fasteners did not have gendered associations, but in contemporary usage women wear brooches as purely decorative pieces of jewelry. In the early 2000s, while the word “brooch” could be used synonymously with “pin” as jewelry, pins were more com-

monly understood to be small, sharp, metal-wire fasteners called “straight pins” and used in sewing and tailoring processes, unless modified by a descriptive prefix such as in “hatpin.”

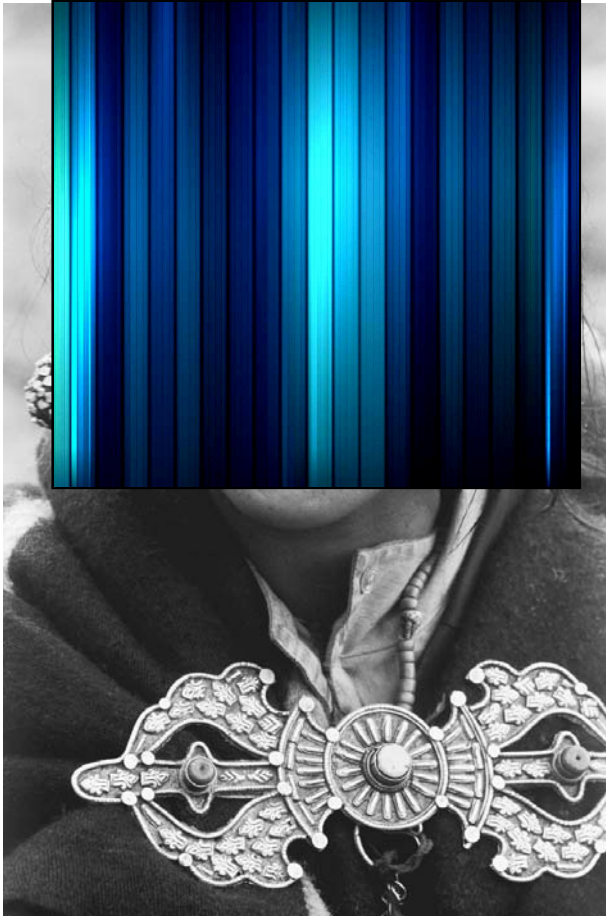
#### Pins

A pin is broadly defined as a straight, cylindrical piece of metal with a sharp point on one end and a blunt head on the other, used for fastening by piercing a piece of fabric twice. Throughout history and around the world, in their most simple shape and function, pins have been made in various sizes and from such diverse materials as bone, thorns, bronze, iron, brass, silver, and gold. The heads of larger, specialized pins used as elements of dress, such as hatpins, tiepins, and hairpins, have been elaborately decorated with gemstones and other jewelry techniques to create designs appropriate to their period. For example, long and elaborate hatpins secured European and American women's hats to their hair in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in the Victorian period through the 1930s. Combining materials such as glass, beading, gemstones, pearls, or various metals, these hatpins may be described as small, precious sculptures. In contrast, smaller straight pins with a flat head have been important as fasteners for women's dress. In the Renaissance, for example, a woman might have been pinned into her bodice, rather than laced or buttoned, for a tight, smooth fit.

In several periods of dress history, items such as aprons were pinned to a woman's outer garment. In the nineteenth century, in fact, the word “pinfore” was coined to describe the washable aprons pinned to the front of women's and girls' clothing to protect them from stains while working or playing. The kilt pin is a contemporary example of old-style pins worn to display one's ethnic identity. Plaid kilts from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are fastened with a large, sword-shaped pin made from metal, horn, or wood and embellished with Celtic-inspired motifs or cultural icons such as the thistle. Kilt pins might also be decorated with a clan badge to display the wearer's ancestry.

#### Fibula

The fibula is defined as an ancient or classical period clasp for fastening garments with a simple pin, spring, and catch-plate mechanism. The structural design of a fibula resembles that of a modern safety pin in that the wire pin is extended from a small coil of wire on one end that acts as a spring or hinge. This allows the pin to be opened and closed numerous times without breaking. The coiled spring also puts the pin under tension and secures it in the catch-plate on the other end. This integrally hinged pin structure is technically called an acus. Because of their resemblance, the safety pin is often said to have developed from the fibula. However, it is a simple, functional, and very common mechanism that has been used for millennia in many forms.



**A Tibetan woman wears a large metal brooch on her shawl.** Brooches have long been worn as ornamental and functional pieces of jewelry. The designs, materials, and workmanship indicate the wearers culture, religion, and social or economic position. © CHRISTINE KOLISCH/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

The most recognizable forms of ancient fibulae are the elaborately decorated, bow-shaped clasps of Greek, Etruscan, or Roman periods, with long thin sheaths covering the pin. Archaeological examples show they were made of gold, silver, and bronze and variously worked with filigree, enamel, repoussé, and granulation techniques, or embellished with gemstones. Several fibulae were required for Greek women to fasten the style of tunic called an Ionic chiton across her shoulders and upper arms.

A number of varieties of Byzantine, Anglo-Saxon, and Romano-British fibulae have been found. The use of fibulae declined as the rectangular, draped styles of clothing gave way to the cut-and-sewn tunics of the early medieval periods. Fibulae are seen in use again as translations of the Classical styles during the Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Small, jeweled clasps or the gold points called aglets or aiguillettes were pinned to hold paned or slashed fabrics together on the sleeves,

bodices, and doublets of fashionable upper-class garments.

In the early twenty-first century, pairs of large, worked-silver clasps are used by women of nomadic groups in North Africa to close their cloaks and wrapped garments. While the European word “fibula” is used to describe them, they are not called such in indigenous use. For example, in Morocco they are called *tizerzai*. These clasps do not resemble ancient fibulae in appearance or structure. One style is made with a long pin hinged onto an open circle so that it slides. As the pin is pushed through the fabric, the circle is turned and one end is caught under the pin to hold it firmly in place. These fibulae, as a form of jewelry, are important elements of women’s dress and reflect the wearer’s social status and wealth in terms of their size, weight, and amount of silver used, and in how elaborately they are worked.

If safety pins are seen as a direct descendant of the fibula, one example of their use from contemporary dress should be mentioned, specifically, the use of safety pins in body-art piercings by punk youth subcultures in the 1970s and 1980s. Safety pins, as common, inexpensive, throwaway items, brought vernacular antifashion statements into play. In the 1990s, these ideas were extended to embellishing torn garments with patterns of multiple safety pins in both street dress and popular fashion. High-fashion designers such as Gianni Versace and John Galiano, referenced these street styles and embellished many designs with safety pins.

### Brooches

A brooch is broadly defined as a large decorative clasp or pin, but it may be more specifically defined as a clasp with either a fixed pin attached to the back or a hinged pin and catch-plate on the back. The brooch has a long history as a functional clasp with great ornamental importance as a piece of jewelry. The body of a brooch can take many sizes and forms, and types of brooches can be based on specific shapes, such as bars, closed circles, rings, open or penannular circles, bows, knots, hearts, or crosses, or designed with more abstract forms. As with any piece of jewelry, the design, materials, workmanship, and forms of embellishment communicate many ideas about the wearer, and the wearer’s period as well as culture, religious, fraternal, or guild affiliations and social or economic position.

The style of brooches and design changes with cultural and fashion changes and trends. The ancient brooch was often the focal point of an ensemble. Early brooches were large and made from sturdy metals such as bronze or silver to secure heavy wool or leather cloaks. As such, they also represented one of the most important and valuable objects of material culture and were buried with their wearer. In the early Middle Ages, brooches were the most widely used form of jewelry for European ethnic groups such as Germans, Lombards, Franks, and Anglo-Saxons.

For all of these reasons, many ancient brooches have survived. European men and women in the tenth through thirteenth centuries wore a round brooch called a *fermail* or *afiche* to fasten their outer mantle or surcote.

Religious uses include the medieval pilgrim badges sold or given to visitors at a shrine. Made to meet different levels of expense, they were worn as evidence of a successful pilgrimage and as a protective charm. In the sixteenth century, these badges inspired a type of round brooch called the *enseigne*, pinned by Italian men on the upturned brim of their hats. By mid-century they were worn throughout Europe by both men and women. *Enseigne* were upper-class brooches made from gold, encircled by gemstones, with enameled designs or carved cameos in the center representing a biblical or patron saint's theme. Other specialized types of brooches include mourning brooches worn from the time of the Middle Ages in memory of a deceased loved one. In the nineteenth century, these preserved a lock of the beloved's hair behind a crystal or glass cover.

After the early twentieth century, brooches were primarily categorized as costume jewelry worn by women for decorative reasons. Late-twentieth-century trends included wearing brooches from folk or ethnic dress to denote ethnic identity or to display cultural heritage. For instance, a large, round brooch called the *solje* is considered the national jewelry of Norway. Its lacy filigree style is worked in silver, pewter, or gold and embellished with small, movable, concave metal disks that resemble a spoon bowl. It was originally worn in Norway, through the nineteenth century, as part of folk-dress ensemble by a bride, but by the early 2000s was worn by European and American women to show Norwegian heritage. Replicas of ancient Celtic brooches are also worn by men and women with plaid kilts and sashes from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

See also **Costume Jewelry; Jewelry; Safety Pins.**

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Susan J. Torntore

**BROOKS BROTHERS** The United States led a clothing revolution in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in which clothes went from being individually made to being mass produced and from class display to democratic dress. Brooks Brothers played a major role in this revolution.

Henry Sands Brooks was forty-five years old and a provisioner on seafarers and traders when he bought a property on the corner of Catherine and Cherry Streets in the thriving business district of lower Manhattan in 1818. Calling his business H. Brooks and Company, he was intent on a new career selling quality clothing to the gentry and prosperous businessmen. It was his innovative plan, according to an advertisement he ran in the local newspaper, the *Morning Courier*, that same year, “to have on hand a very large stock of ready-made clothing just manufactured with a due regard to fashion, and embracing all the various styles of the day.” “Ready-made” heralded the appearance of reasonably priced, mass-produced clothing that was one of the United States’ greatest achievements of the nineteenth century.

Through his readily attainable, mass-produced clothing, Henry Brooks became a great innovator and marketer for the democratization of society. “Ready-to-wear placed gentlemanliness within the reach of men who once inhabited the outer reaches of society, enabling them to subscribe to its tenets and tout its virtues” (Joselit, p. 79). It was the beginning of a great cultural shift.

After Henry S. Brooks’s death in 1833, the store was refurbished and enlarged by his sons—Henry Jr., Daniel, John, Elisha, and Edward—“Brooks Brothers” for the business in 1850. Manufacturing trends in mid-nineteenth-century America had begun to seriously encroach on the preindustrial world of made-to-measure clothing. The invention of the inch tape measure early in the century allowed for standardized patterns. The Wilson and Wheeler factory sewing machine, invented in 1852, was the first to be used in the clothing industry and marks the beginning of industrial methods in U.S. clothing manufacturing. As Brooks Brothers was both maker and merchant, it was able to take advantage of these inventions. The firm noted in the 1860s that an overcoat required six days of hand-sewing to make, but could be done with the help of machines in half the time (Kidwell and Christman p. 77).

Along with industrialization, population rose to 20 million by mid-century, and westward expansion increased rapidly after gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill in 1848. Brooks Brothers advertised its ready-wear clothing to the “California trade” and reaped profits for its own expansion.

As Manhattan's business district began to move northward along Broadway, Brooks opened a new store, a large four-story building at Broadway and Grand Street in 1858, which moved to South Union Square in 1869. The Broadway store became the principal place of business for the firm during the Civil War, and it was from this store that many Northern generals—including Grant, Hooker, Sherman, and Sheridan—were outfitted. Brooks Brothers also made frock coats for President Lincoln, one of which he was wearing on the fateful evening he was assassinated at Ford's Theatre in April 1865. The Brooks label on the inside of the coat was embellished with an embroidered design of an American bald eagle holding in its beak a flowing pennant inscribed "One Country, One Destiny."

By the turn into the twentieth century, Brooks Brothers was on the verge of a golden age, the period from roughly 1900 to 1970. By 1900, the modern corporation, with a new managerial class emerged, and a third of the population was urban. The firm became the clothier to this new "white collar" businessman who embodied the corporate ideal in a tailored dark suit, white shirt (or at least collar), and discreet necktie, a standard civil uniform that "served to obliterate ethnic origins and blur social distinctions" (Kidwell and Christman p. 15).

Around this time, Brooks introduced its "natural" look suit for the modern businessman. Known as Sack Suit Model #1 from that day to this, the coat had a four-button, single-breasted front, narrow lapels, center vent, and little padding in chest and shoulders, and was accompanied by narrow, flat-front trousers. It was a decidedly understated silhouette and quickly became the look of choice for the Eastern establishment. Another innovation was to incorporate a Boys' Department" (a "University Shop came later), so that parents could educate their sons in the proper appearance.

Other introductions of the early 1900s, which anglophile John Brooks (grandson of Henry) brought back from vacations in Britain, included the button-down collar, the polo overcoat, Shetland sweaters, Harris Tweed sports jackets, Argyle and Fair Isle knits, and oxford cloth shirting. It was this relaxed, country house approach to fashion that endeared Brooks to so many young men of the period and paved the way for the "Ivy League" styling that commanded the lion's share of American men's wear design from the Roaring 1920s to the revolutionary 1960s. This youthful, slim, stylish, and collegially casual image is Brooks's contribution to the United States' sartorial canon.

In 1915, Brooks moved north again with other business firms and built a handsome new flagship store at 44th Street and Madison Avenue, in noticeable proximity to the Harvard and Yale clubs and the New York Yacht Club. In a few short years, the elegant Italianate ten-story building became a mecca of discreet finery for the commercial and professional world. When the troops came

home from the Great War in Europe in 1918, Brooks Brothers entered its second hundred years with a roster of customers that included politicians and generals, old guard bankers, nouveaux riches manufacturing barons, and film stars. Literary voices such as Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and John O'Hara sang Brooks's praises in print.

The Brooks Brothers catalog now contained a wide variety of dress, casual, evening, military, and livery clothing. About 1920, a three-button sack suit was introduced and soon became the standard model. Other introductions, such as white buckskin oxfords and canvas tennis shoes with rubber soles, Panama hats, and corduroy sports jackets also became classics, renowned in prose and poetry, such as Jimmy Rushing's vibrant "Harvard Blues":

I wear Brooks clothes and white shoes all the time,  
I wear Brooks clothes and white shoes all the time.  
Get 3 "C"s, a "D," and think checks from home  
sublime.

In the 1930s and 1940s, several warm-weather fabrics were introduced into its tailored clothing line, each weighing considerably less than the typical twelve- to fourteen-ounce woollens men were accustomed to wearing in the summer. Cotton seersucker, madras, tropical worsteds, and rayon at a mere nine ounces or less, reduced the weight of a summer suit from over four pounds to less than three.

With the end of World War II, the United States assumed the mantle of leadership in the West, and significant advances in automated manufacturing technology began to provide a host of consumer goods to the public.

Brooks placed its imprimatur on the gray flannel suit as the democratic uniform of choice for America's businessmen, an image soon familiarly known by several names: the "Madison Avenue Look," the "Ivy League Look," and, of course, the "Brooks Brothers Look." Casual conservative clothing with a campus flair rose to major fashion importance, as demobilized soldiers went to college with government loans on the G.I. Bill. Bermuda shorts, colorful plaid sports shirts, odd trousers, argyle hose, and penny loafers, all endorsed by Brooks, began to appear in men's closets. Modern jazz musicians such as Miles Davis, Gerry Mulligan, and Dave Brubeck helped spread the word that Ivy League styles were "the coolest."

Ironically, just as Brooks Brothers was about to reach the epitome of its popularity, the company passed out of the Brooks family's hands. In 1946, Winthrop Brooks, the "president who had piloted Brooks through a depression and a world war" (Cooke p. 67), sold the firm to Julius Garfinkel and Company of Washington, D.C. Garfinkel's was the first of many owners to acquire it (Allied Stores Corporation in 1981, Campeau in 1986, Marks & Spencer in 1988, and Retail Brand Alliance in 2001).

In 1952, the chemical firm Du Pont chose Brooks to develop and market a wrinkle-resistant shirt fabric utilizing its Dacron polyester fiber, reasoning that Brooks had the reputation, prestige, and credibility to popularize the concept. The following year, Brooks introduced the “wash-and-wear” shirt, and a polyester-and-cotton blended poplin fabric suit in 1958. The era of Brooks influence reached something of an apogee when, in 1961, the very Eastern establishment-looking senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy of Boston—where there had been a Brooks Brothers store since 1928—was elected President. In 1960, the *New York Times* referred to Kennedy as “a model of Brooks Brothers perfection,” and his chosen cabinet comprised members of the Ivy League who favored Brooks-styled tweed sports jackets, club ties, and button-down shirts.

Perhaps the greatest clothing and sociological innovation of the postwar years for Brooks was the introduction of a Woman’s Department in 1976, to cater to the newly emerging professional woman. At the same time, a program of accelerated expansion increased the number of Brooks stores to twenty-six and aimed at putting a store in every major shopping mall in the United States. By 1979, the firm became a recognized international retailer with the opening of a branch store in Tokyo. The Brooks Brothers style of business dress—propriety, understated elegance, and comfort—now became a global fashion statement. European designers and manufacturers began to copy the look.

In 1992, the firm initiated a “Wardrobe Concept” program of manufacturing and marketing suits as separate pieces, a technique that gained favor with other manufacturers. It also instituted a new “Digital Tailoring” approach to custom-made garments, using an automatic scanner to enter the customer’s measurements into a pattern-producing computer. And, just a few years short of entering its third century, Brooks opened a large, new, more futuristic-looking store on Fifth Avenue in 1999.

However, the tide of popularity had been turning against Brooks for some time. First, the various owners of the firm seemed to be getting farther and farther away from Brooks’s sense of quality and style, and “Brooks regulars must have felt increasingly unwelcome at the front door” (Cooke p. 134). Many thought that the integrity was gone from the label and the company was doomed to a drifting mediocrity. Designers like Ralph Lauren, a former Brooks salesman, made heavy inroads. In 2001 the company was bought yet again, this time by Retail Brand Alliance. But RBA had the aim and goal of putting the “golden” back into the famous “Golden Fleece” Brooks logo. Guided by Claudio Del Vecchio, son of a successful Italian eyewear manufacturer, the firm has made cautious progress since 2001 toward regaining its prestige.

See also **Polo Shirt; Ready-to-Wear; Sports Jacket; Suit, Business.**

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G. Bruce Boyer

**BRUMMELL, GEORGE (BEAU)** George Bryan Brummell (or Brummel), most famously known as “Beau” Brummell, was born in Britain in 1778 and died in 1840 in France. His dress and demeanor established many of the canons of dandyism. Although he was not an aristocrat by birth, he rose in the ranks of Regency society (1795–1820) and belonged to the circle of the Prince of Wales, known as the Prince Regent, who became King George IV. His father was a civil servant and secretary to Lord North, though his grandfather was probably a valet. Brummell was educated at Eton and left Oxford at the age of sixteen when he inherited a sum from his father estimated to have been 15,000 to 65,000 pounds. He became a cornet in the Tenth Hussars, the Prince’s regiment, known as “the Elegant Extracts,” and was a captain by the time of his retirement from the military in 1798. He then began his life as a stylish gentleman in his houses in Chesterfield and Chapel Streets in London and was a member of Brooks’s and White’s on St. James’s Street, the most exclusive gentlemen’s clubs of his day in an elite founded on the principle of exclusivity.

Brummell lived above his means, but his association with the Prince of Wales and his personal sense of style and cutting wit assured him a privileged place among the fashionable set. Many anecdotes mythologize his life, and though there is speculation as to his possible homosexuality, he was never linked specifically with a man or a woman, which the writer Jules Barbey d’Aureville took as a sign of his narcissism. In the second decade of the nineteenth century he fell out with the Prince Regent, and his creditors became more insistent. On 16 May 1816 he left Britain for Calais, France, because of his mounting debts and spent his last twenty-four years as an impoverished exile in Calais and then in Caen, Normandy, where he finished his life in a sanatorium.

Brummell’s dress was austere and elegant. It was not flamboyant or extravagant but consisted of impeccably

clean linen and finely tailored clothes. As Captain William Jesse (who published his biography in 1886) noted and Robert Dighton's portrait of 1805 illustrates, "His morning dress was similar to that of every other gentleman—top boots and buckskins, with a blue coat and a light or buff coloured waistcoat. . . . His dress of an evening was a blue coat and white waistcoat, black pantaloons which buttoned tight to the ankle, striped silk stockings and opera hat." Although this description suggests that his attire was not extraordinary in the context of Regency society, Brummell's personal attention to detail, function, and cleanliness as well as the fine materials, rare craftsmanship, dignified bearing, and mastery of social etiquette required to maintain such a wardrobe set him apart. The casual equestrian origins of his dress challenged courtly protocol and heralded the pared-down simplicity of masculine attire in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Even in his lifetime Brummell was becoming a figure of fiction. A wide range of anecdotes and sayings were attributed to him. Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton satirized him in his 1828 novel *Pelham; or, The Adventures of a Gentleman*. Mr. Russelton, a thinly disguised Brummell figure, boasts that he employs three tradesmen to make his gloves: "one for the hand, a second for the fingers, and a third for the thumb!"

Brummell's reputation spread to France, where Honoré de Balzac fictionalized him in his *Traité de la vie élégante* (Treatise on the Elegant Life), first published as a serial in *La mode* in 1830. The most important French writing on Brummell is Jules Amédée Barbey d'Aureville's short tract of 1845 entitled *Du Dandysme et de Georges Brummell* (On Dandyism and George Brummell). It celebrates Brummell's dandyism as a spiritual achievement of the highest order and raises the dandy's status to that of the poet or artist. This text shifts the terrain of dandyism to a superior intellectual and philosophical ground. Later nineteenth-century texts highlighted the artistic nature of the dandy and his cultivation of both his environment and his dress as works of art. These literary interpretations preserved the heritage of Brummell through the nineteenth century and brought him, transformed, to twentieth-century audiences.

In the first half of the twentieth century, his life would be reenacted in new venues, in the theater and on the silver screen. The playwright Clyde Fitch was commissioned by the matinee idol Richard Mansfield to write a play based on Brummell's legend. *Beau Brummell* premiered on 17 May 1890 at the Madison Square Theatre in New York City, starring Richard Mansfield and Beatrice Cameron. An illustrated version of the play was published in 1908 and remained popular into the second decade of the century.

Three Hollywood films loosely based on Fitch's play were made in the first half of the twentieth century. The first, just sixteen minutes long and directed by and starring James Young, was released in 1913. The second film,

produced by Warner Brothers in 1924, was a star vehicle for John Barrymore. This lavish costume movie was released worldwide and was on the *New York Times* top-ten list of films in 1924. In 1954 MGM studios came out with an even more extravagant production. This version cast the swashbuckling hero Stewart Granger in the starring role, alongside Elizabeth Taylor and Peter Ustinov, who is wonderfully petulant as the Prince Regent. Although it was produced in America, it featured both British and American actors and drew on the talents of the celebrated British costume designer Elizabeth Haffenden, who worked in collaboration with Walter Plunkett on this film. Despite the British cast and costumes, this Americanized Brummell is presented as a social and sartorial reformer who leads Britain from outdated, luxurious aristocratic mores into the more democratic, industrial, and progressive era of the nineteenth century. This was the final cinematic version of the Brummell legend, which has found new currency in literary accounts, such as George Walden's essay and translation of Barbey d'Aureville's text, entitled *Who Is a Dandy?*

William Jesse referred to Brummell as "cool and impertinent." Brummell's self-mastery and calculated sense of cool, his rise to fame in Regency society, and his sartorial perfection are his hallmarks. His name has become synonymous with dandyism, and the plaque marking his house in Chesterfield Street reads simply and appropriately, "A Man of Fashion."

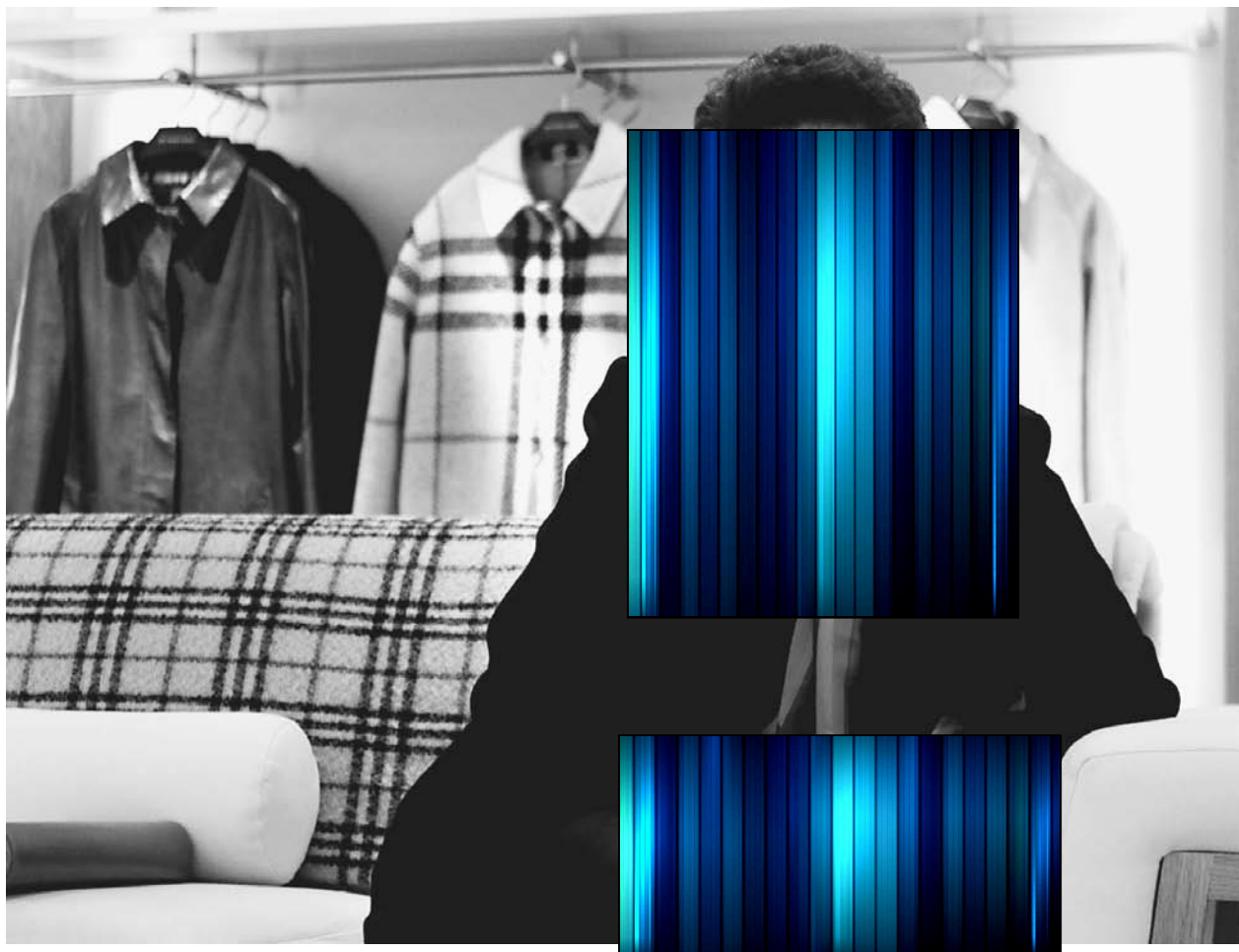
See also **Art and Fashion; Dandyism; Fancy Dress; Fashion, Theories of.**

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*Alison Matthews David*

**BURBERRY** Although overtly recognized by its trademark check of red, black, white, and camel, Burberry is principally renowned for its innovation in waterproof clothing, rather than for the design of the lining material that traditionally lies beneath the outer gabardine cloth. Yet such is the power of reinvention, that to many the reverse is true. Burberry as a company is a rare thing—a British brand of clothing and goods that has successfully held on to its traditions while being able to remold itself into a covetable luxury brand that competes in a worldwide market. Thomas Burberry's invention of waterproof gabardine cloth has ensured that the form of



**Burberry's chief executive officer Rosemary Bravo.** Bravo transformed the financially ailing company in 1997. Her decision to use the company's trademark check on the outer fabric of their famous raincoats, instead of on the lining material, marked the turning point for the company's bottom line. © REUTERS NEWMEDIA INC./CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

apparel his company sold became bound to his name, so that the definition of Burberry in the Oxford English Dictionary reads “a distinguished type of raincoat.”

Born in 1835, Thomas Burberry opened an outfitters shop in Basingstoke in 1856 at the relatively young age of twenty-one. As an ambitious country draper, Burberry was inspired by metropolitan ideas of fashionable dress, but drew upon local examples of work clothing to develop his ideas. His starting point was a loose-fitting linen smock that farmers and shepherds wore all year-round. Noticing that it kept the workers cool in summer yet warm in winter, he found on closer inspection that the close weave of the fabric helped to keep out the wet, while the looseness of the garment allowed for the circulation of air without inhibiting movement. By 1879 Burberry had refined his prototype fabric from his own mill to a cloth woven from long-staple Egyptian cotton. It created a fabric that was waterproof, breathable, rip-resistant and crease-proof. Burberry termed it gabardine cloth, reviving an old

term for a loose coat or cloak. It soon came to the attention of motorists, travelers, and explorers who used the weatherproof overcoat, often referred to as a “slip-on,” in all weather conditions. When supported on four sticks, many an intrepid Colonial knew its additional use as an impromptu bathtub.

With a London store opening on Haymarket in 1890 (it remains the company headquarters to this day), the company grew to include a wholesale division and shops in Paris and New York by the turn of the century. Ever ready to protect the interests of his business and its products, Burberry registered the logo in 1904 and the eponymous check in 1920 (it did not appear on the lining of the raincoat until 1924). Further, in 1932 the company pioneered the department-store concession devoted exclusively to the sale of Burberry's goods.

The British War Office in 1900 commissioned Burberry to design an overcoat to replace the heavily rubberized mackintoshes that were then standard issue.

The lightweight cotton raincoat designed incorporated D-ring belt clasps, straps, and epaulettes for better function in combat and it soon gained popularity when endorsed by Lord Kitchener. As the most suitable protection from the appalling conditions of trench warfare, it is the origin of what we now refer to as the trench coat.

In 1970, Burberry opened a New York flagship store on east Fifty-Seventh Street. With the resurgence of the luxury goods market in the last decade of the twentieth century, the financially flailing company appointed Rose Marie Bravo in 1997 from Saks, New York as Chief Executive whose responsibility was to revive the brand. According to a story in the *Daily Telegraph*, her American friends dismissed her new job as “selling raincoats in London,” but within five years the value of the company rose from £200 million to £1.5 billion (\$350 million to \$2.67 billion). The linchpin of this transformation was the decision to use the check of the lining on the outer gabardine cloth of the raincoat in the first collection shown at London Fashion Week for A/W 1999/2000. When the model Kate Moss was caught by the paparazzi wearing the raincoat in the street rather than on the catwalk, demand for the item was unparalleled. In being worn in such a casual way, the raincoat signaled a metropolitan savvy that claimed as much an understanding of the visual heritage of British clothing, as an understanding of fashionable taste.

Although credited to Roberto Menichetti, the first appointed fashion designer for the company, the fashionability of the item was influenced by the subversive ideas of American fashion designer Miguel Androver and British fashion designer Russell Sage, who had both flaunted the inside-out Burberry raincoat in their catwalk collections for A/W 2000/1. While Androver mined the cachet of the checked lining in terms of the selling of vintage goods and their reuse, Sage questioned the legal permissibility of appropriating registered goods, sardonically titling his collection “So Sue Me.” Later in the same year, Burberry commissioned Mario Testino to photograph their campaigns, astutely hiring Kate Moss as the chief model.

The allure of the check reached unprecedented heights: young mothers dressed their babies in checked bibs, hooligans wore Burberry scarves in tribute to the Casuals who wore them on football terraces in the 1980s, and even Cherie Blair, prime minister Tony Blair’s wife, once sported a handbag. Menichetti’s response to this popular exposure was to make the high-end Prosum range showcased in Milan even more directional, causing him to be replaced by Christopher Bailey in 2000, who brought a more commercial and digestible level of reinvention to the product range. To this end, the variation on a raincoat remains core to the company’s design repertoire.

From the water-logged trenches of military warfare at the beginning of the twentieth century to the swimming-pool terraces of the twenty-first century, the insatiable de-

mand for the Burberry bikini in 2001 indicates that the kind of water protection the company is now investing in may have diversified considerably, but it remains curiously consistent with Thomas Burberry’s sense of reinvention.

See also **London Fashion; Raincoat; Rainwear.**

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Alistair O'Neill

**BURQA** The seclusion and veiling of women in the Near East apparently long antecedes the emergence of Islam in the seventh century C.E. Islam, however, gives it religious sanction and enforcement. The Qu’ran (Sura XXIV.31) directs women to “be modest, draw their veils over their bosoms, and not reveal their adornments” except to certain specified male relatives, slaves, eunuchs, women, and children. In practice, this has resulted in the system of *purdab* (literally, “curtain”)—the enforced seclusion of Muslim women and their concealment under special outer garments in any situation where they might encounter non-familial men. These garments have taken different forms in various parts of the Islamic world.

In Afghanistan, Pakistan, and other parts of the Indian subcontinent, they take the form of the *burqa* (in Afghanistan, called a *chadri*), a voluminous, tentlike outer garment worn by women and girls from earliest puberty on, covering the entire figure from head to foot. Worn whenever a woman leaves her home or may otherwise be in the presence of proscribed males, it makes her totally anonymous and effectively invisible, also concealing and restricting her movements and activities. Its origins are uncertain, but may be pre-Islamic Persian.

The burqa is held in place by a quilted, fitted cap, elaborately embroidered in the same color as the fabric; from this cap flow many yards of fabric, gathered with masses of pleating at the sides and back, creating a hunched look. A small panel of openwork crochet over the eyes permits limited frontal vision. The unpleated front panel is only waist length, allowing the woman to use her hands. In permitted circumstances, this section can be thrown back over her head, exposing her face; otherwise, she holds the long side panels together for complete, stifling concealment. The fabric may be lightweight cotton, rayon, nylon, or silk, in a subdued color—gray, brown, white, pale blue, or green (but unlike the *chador* in Iran and coverings in many Arab countries, not black);



with the goal being anonymity, no bright colors, patterned fabrics, or individualized ornamentation are used.

The burqa is primarily urban, a symbol of nonlaboring status, and may conceal fashionable modern apparel. (Instead of the burqa, village women, whose farm and household work would be hindered, wear long, loose, baggy shirts and trousers and a large head scarf that they pull across the face in the presence of men outside the specified family circle. Some nomad women do not cover their faces.)

Efforts to eliminate or at least modify the rules of *purdah*, including the wearing of the burqa, have historically had mixed success. In Afghanistan in 1929, a modernizing king attempted to ban the *chadri* by fiat, triggering his overthrow. Wearing a burqa remained mandatory until 1959, when it was quietly made optional and was rapidly discarded by many urban Afghan women, particularly educated women, who adopted simple head scarves, long sleeves, and below-knee-length skirts to meet the requirement of modesty.

No such organized reform effort occurred in Pakistan or among Indian Muslims, where the burqa remains customary, though some modern educated women have abandon it. The rise of radical political Islamism in the 1980s revived its universal use, voluntarily or under duress, in Islamist-dominated areas, such as Pakistan's North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, and Afghanistan under the Taliban regime from 1996 to 2002.

*See also* **Islamic Dress, Contemporary; Middle East: History of Islamic Dress; Religion and Dress.**

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*Rosanne Klass*

**BURROWS, STEPHEN** Stephen Gerald Burrows was born on 15 September 1943 in Newark, New Jersey. He studied at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art from 1961 to 1963 and at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York from 1964 to 1966. Perhaps most influential to the future career of this original American designer was his seamstress grandmother, Beatrice Simmons, who taught him to sew when he was eight years old. At an early age he discovered and delighted in the zigzag stitch that would become a signature. As a de-

signer, instead of hiding stitching, Burrows celebrated and exaggerated it by using contrasting thread colors. He used a close, narrow zigzag stitch to create his trademark fluted "lettuce hem." In an endless range of shapes and combinations Burrows placed bright contrasting colors of chiffon or knit fabrics in a single ensemble.

After having success selling pieces to friends, Burrows cofounded the O Boutique at Nineteenth Street and Park Avenue South in 1968. Attracting the countercultural luminaries that hung out at Max's Kansas City across the street, the shop and its proprietor gained a following, but Burrow's lack of business experience resulted in O Boutique's eventual closure. In 1970 Geraldine Stutz, president of Henri Bendel, gave Burrows a space in the workroom of Bendel's Studio, the small manufacturing part of the store, and Pat Tennant, the manager of the design studio, became an important mentor to the designer. Stephen Burrows World opened in the summer of 1970 on the third floor of the store, as a packed audience watched a fashion show set to disco music. Leather garments with nail-studded embellishments, midskirts, skin-tight sweaters, suede bags dripping with fringe, and Burrows's famous super bright jersey knits shown on ethnically diverse male and female models impressed audience and press alike.

Burrows's fluid, sexy separates are iconic of the individualist, confident woman of the 1970s. The "black is beautiful" philosophy of the 1970s was showcased through Burrows's use of African American models and his success as an African American fashion designer. More than any other designer of the 1970s, Burrows captures in his designs the vivacious energy of the disco scene. By 1973 he was at the top of the field, winning the prestigious Coty award, the highest honor in American fashion, which he was honored with again in 1974 and 1977. He was one of five American designers invited to show their clothes along with five French designers at a fashion spectacle at the Palace of Versailles in 1973. Influenced by his success and the lure of Seventh Avenue, Burrows moved out on his own that same year. With this move he lost the guidance and protection of Bendel's staff, however, and his business suffered due to poor management. Used to overseeing the details of his clothing line's production, he was unable to achieve the same quality utilizing mass-manufacturing processes.

From 1977 to 1982 Burrows relaunched a successful collection with Henri Bendel. He stepped out of the New York fashion world in 1982 when the mood in fashion was changing and the disco era was coming to a close. He relaunched a third time with Henri Bendel in 2002, when his now-retro fashions were once again in demand.

*See also* **Fashion Designer; Jersey; Leather and Suede.**

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*Dennita Sewell*

**BUSINESS CASUAL.** See **Casual Business Dress.**

**BUSTLE** Exaggeration of the feminine posterior has been a periodic theme in Western fashion for several hundred years. The pulled-back overskirts of late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century mantuas (loose-fitting gowns) emphasized this area, and pads or "cork rumps" sometimes supported the swagged-up styles of the late 1770s and 1780s. Even early-nineteenth-century neo-classical dresses often featured a small back pad—a so-called artificial hump—to give the high-waisted line a graceful flow. As waists lowered and skirts widened, the pad was retained, and by the late 1820s it was called a bustle. Throughout the mid-nineteenth century full skirts were enhanced by a small bustle made of padding, whalebone, or even inflatable rubber. In the 1870s and 1880s, however, both the skirt support and the silhouette created by the bustle became the focus of fashion.

In an age when men and women were considered to have distinct social roles, the late nineteenth century assumed the natural forms of the two genders also diverged. One arbiter of etiquette and aesthetics, "Professor" Thomas E. Hill, explained that, in contrast to the broad-shouldered male, the female figure is characterized by narrow, sloped shoulders but width across "the lower portion of the form." He stated that to avoid looking "masculine and unnatural," women's dresses should be tight on top while dressmakers are "permitted to arrange tuck and bow and flounce without stint below the waist." These enhanced derrieres proportionately lessened women's small waists, produced by corseting. The idea that women are naturally steatopygous or fat-buttocked is no more aberrant than the late-twentieth-century idea that all women should have "buns of steel."

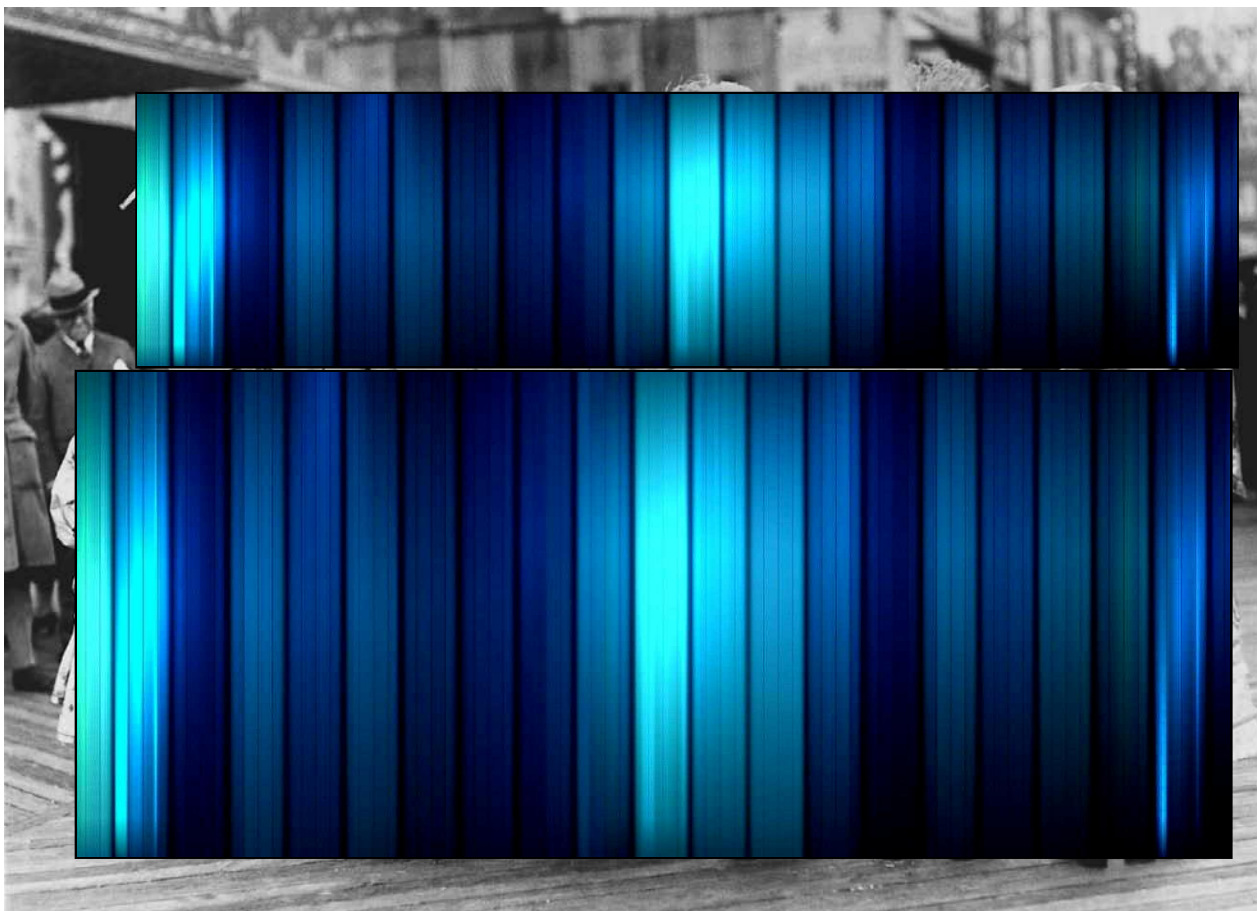
The bustle, also known as a tournure, pannier, or dress improver, could be made in a wide variety of materials and shapes. Some types were full length, such as sprung steel half hoopskirts called crinolettes and petticoats with adjustable inset steels. Many bustles, however, were made to pad only the rump area, secured to the wearer by a buckled waistband. These could be simple rectangular- or crescent-shaped pads filled with horsehair or other stuffing, but more intricate forms included down-filled devices and puffed or ruffled constructions of crinoline or stiff fabric such as tampico hemp. Woven wire mesh bustles were advertised as not only cooler than padding, but uncrushable, eliminating the need for

furtive rearrangement after sitting. Other structures featured several metal springs arranged vertically, placed a large crescent-shaped spring horizontally below the waist, or had projecting steel half hoops that adjusted with lacing and claimed to cleverly fold up when the wearer sat down.

The material used to create bustles was seemingly endless: M. V. Hughes in her memoir *A London Child of the Seventies* (Oxford University Press, p. 84) recalls that an acquaintance used *The Times* newspaper to achieve her effective bustle, saying, "I find its paper so good, far more satisfactory than the *Daily News*." Petticoats, often with layers of ruffles down the back, helped smooth the line of the bustle pad and support bustled skirts.

By 1868, the fullness of women's skirts had moved to the back, and a bustle was needed to support fashionable puffed overskirts and large sashes. The high back interest continued in the early 1870s as the bustle gradually swelled in size. Although the back of the skirt remained the dominant feature, the silhouette slimmed down after about 1875, when the skirt and petticoats, drawn back low and close to the figure and usually flowing into a long train, were often unsupported by a bustle. In the early 1880s, the bustle returned in dramatic proportions, often forming a shelflike protuberance at right angles to the wearer's body. An examination of images of fashionable women in extreme bustle dresses would lead an impartial observer to conclude—as Bernard Rudofsky proposed in the 1940s—that skirts shaped in this peculiar way must contain a second pair of legs behind the women's normal ones.

The wardrobe of a woman of the time included a chemise, drawers, corset, corset cover, stockings, and several petticoats, as well as a bustle. The bustle's size was accentuated by all the features of fashionable dresses, including tight sleeves, tight-fitting bodices with back tails, and elaborately constructed skirts with back poufs, swags, gathering, pleating, draperies, and asymmetrical effects. While a few called for reform of feminine dress for artistic and health reasons, most accepted women's convoluted clothing as in accord with High Victorian taste, with its love of the ornate, ostentatious, and overdone. A fashionable woman, dressed in a horsehair or spring bustle, layers of undergarments, and rich, heavy fabrics trimmed with fringe, did present an upholstered effect, similar to an overstuffed sofa of the time, both expensive, decorative objects. In 1899, Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* introduced ideas, such as the conferring of status by "conspicuous consumption," reflecting the bustle period's excesses. Yet to most contemporaries, highly contrived feminine clothing was not seen as contradictory to the spirit of this "age of progress," but rather as a concomitant of civilization, showing commercial enterprise and mechanical ingenuity and firmly establishing the "civilized" division of the sexes. Throughout the period, although ridiculed, the bustle silhouette was widely accepted and worn by women



**Women wearing bustles.** Bustles have been an element of Western fashion intermittently since the seventeenth century. Women's dresses were form-fitting on top and created with a tuck and flounce in the back, below the waist, to avoid appearing masculine.  
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from all classes, as well as by little girls with their short skirts. As *The Delineator* noted in February 1886 (p. 99), some women did not wear a bustle pad, “except when such an adjunct if necessitated by a ceremonious toilette,” relying instead on a flounced petticoat to support the drapery of simpler dresses.

After about 1887 the bustle reduced in size and skirts began to slim. The skirts of the early 1890s featured some back fullness, but emphasis had shifted to flared skirt hems and enormous leg-of-mutton sleeves, and bustle supports were not as fashionable. With skirts fitting snugly to the hips and derriere in the late 1890s, however, some women relied on skirt supports to achieve a gracefully rounded hipline that set off a small waist. While not as extreme as examples from the mid-1880s, the woven wire or quilted hip pads worn beyond the turn of century show the tenacity of the full-hipped female ideal.

Despite some historians' view that bustle fashions were surely the most hideous ever conceived, this very feminine silhouette has continued to fascinate. In the late 1930s,

Elsa Schiaparelli made playful homage to the bustle in some of her sleek evening dresses, while late-twentieth-century bustle interpretations by avant-garde designers, such as Yohji Yamamoto and Vivienne Westwood, have utilized the form with historically informed irony.

See also **Mantua; Skirt Supports.**

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H. Kristina Haugland

**BUTTONS** Button-like objects of stone, glass, bone, ceramic, and gold have been found at archaeological sites dating as early as 2000 B.C.E., but evidence suggests that these objects were used as decoration on cloth or strung like beads. Nevertheless, they have the familiar holes through which to pass a thread, which gives them the appearance of the button currently known as a fastener.

Buttons can be divided into two types according to the way they are attached to a garment. Shank buttons have a pierced knob or shaft on the back through which passes the sewing thread. The majority of buttons are this type. The shank can be a separate piece that is attached to the button or part of the button material itself, as in a molded button. Pierced buttons have a hole from front to back of the button so that the thread used to attach the button is visible on the face.

Almost every material that has been used in the fine and decorative arts has been used historically in the production of buttons. Buttons exist in a variety of materials: metals (precious or otherwise), gemstones, ivory, horn, wood, bone, mother-of-pearl, glass, porcelain, paper, and silk. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, celluloid and other artificial materials have been used to imitate natural materials.

### Early History

The precursor to the button fastener was the fibula, a brooch or pin used to hold two pieces of clothing on the shoulder or chest. The button began to replace the fibula at least by the early Middle Ages, if not sooner.

Buttons functioned as primary fastenings for men's dress earlier than for women's. This may be due to the fact that the women's, from the late Middle Ages into the twentieth century, was required to be tight and smoothly fitted. Lacings and hooks are better suited to providing the strong hold and smooth appearance necessary for tight-fitting garments.

One of the earliest extant pieces of clothing to show the use of buttons as fastenings is the pourpoint of Charles of Blois (c. 1319–1364). This new outer garment was fitted in the body and sleeves, with buttons used to

close the front and the sleeves from the elbow. At this point, however, men's lower garments (hose, and, later, breeches) were still fastened to their upper garments, or to an interior belt, by points (laces of ribbon or cord decorated with metal tips). These points with metal tips were often attached as purely decorative pieces to both male and female apparel.

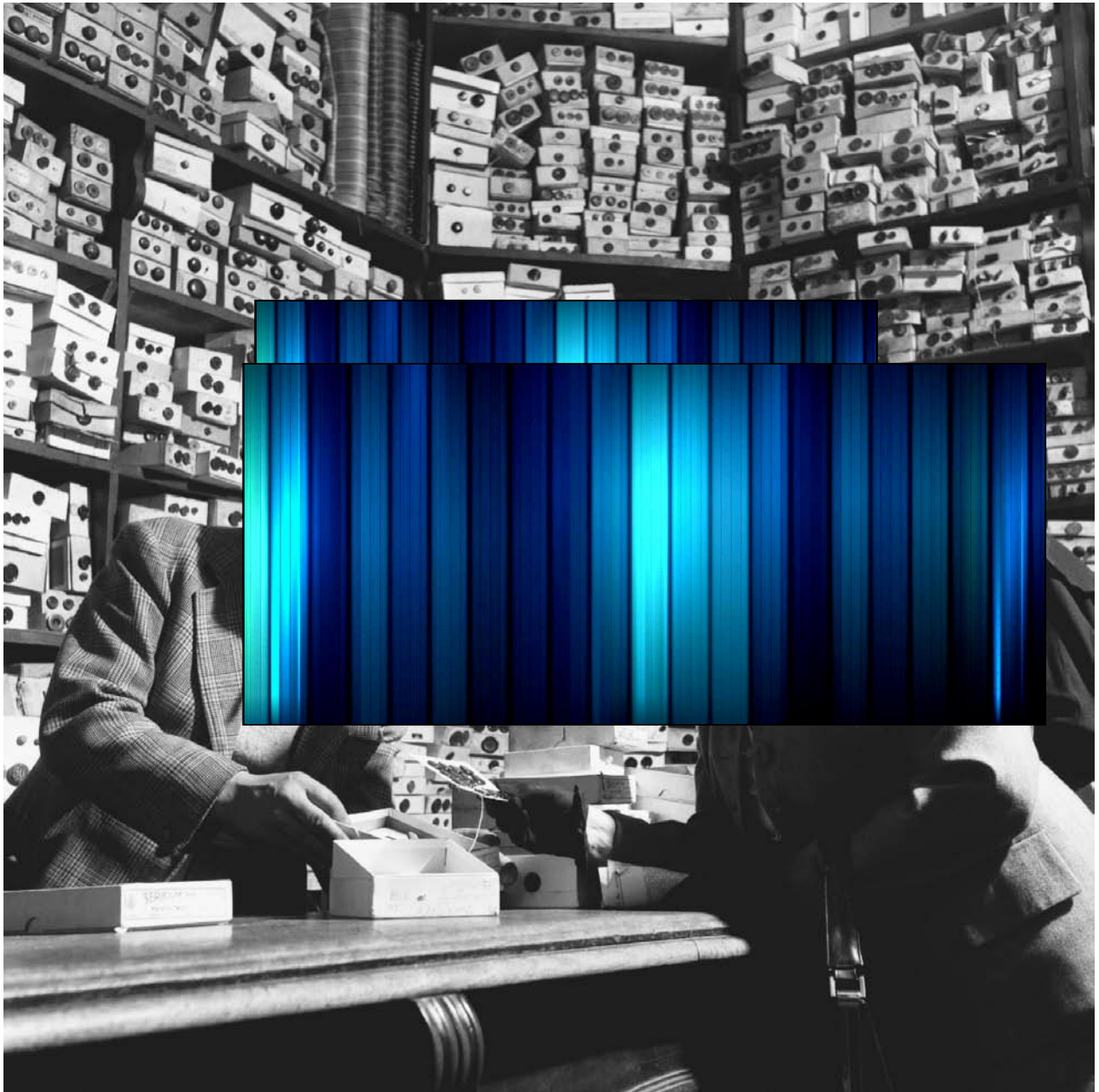
There are records of buttons in documents relating to nobility during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. For example, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1396–1497) ordered Venetian glass buttons decorated with pearls, and Francis I of France (1494–1547) is said to have ordered a set of black enamel buttons mounted on gold from a Parisian goldsmith. These were obviously special buttons of the same quality as contemporary jewelry. Buttons of any material were generally round in shape and made of decorated metal or covered with needlework in silk or metal threads on a wooden core. The ball-shaped toggle button is probably the type of button that replaced the fibula as a fastening for cloaks, capes, and other outer garments. A sixteenth-century example exists in Nuremberg hallmarked silver, attached to a thin bar by a flexible chain link.

### The Eighteenth Century

The eighteenth century is considered the Golden Age of buttons by collectors, as the variety of styles, as well as the physical size of buttons increase dramatically. Men's coats required buttons at the front opening, sleeves, pockets, and back vents. Waistcoats and breeches were also fastened with buttons. The size of the button grows and the shape generally flattens during the course of the century, ending in the flat disk as large as 1.38 inch (3.5 cm) in diameter. The value of decorations on a man's ensemble during this period, composed of metal thread embroidery and jeweled buttons, could account for as much as 80 percent of the cost of the suit of clothes. Thus, luxurious buttons became an increasingly essential part of the expression of status in upper-class men's dress. In Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (c. 1746) the creativity of button-makers is exalted, though for moralists costly buttons became one sign of excess in fashion.

The newly fashionable paste jewels (imitation gemstones) appeared in the 1730s and were used to create some of the most highly prized buttons of the nineteenth century. Georges Frédéric Strass, a Parisian jeweler, perfected techniques of making these glass jewels.

As the button evolved from a ball to a flat disk, another notable change in decorative technique was the use of the button as a palette for painting. Representational images became immensely popular in the second half of the eighteenth century and are related to the miniature portraits that were worn as pendants or pins during the period. Portraits and subjects like rococo genre scenes, historical events, tourist views, and architectural monuments were produced. An extraordinary set of French



**Women shop for buttons in London, 1953.** Buttons have been a mainstay of fashion since 2000 B.C.E. and continue to hold their place as an object of function and style. Buttons are created in a variety of materials, including metals, plastics, gem stones, ivory, horn, wood, bone, mother-of-pearl, glass, porcelain, paper, and silk. © HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

portrait miniature buttons was made about 1790 and included portraits of personalities from the French Revolutionary period; each portrait was set in silver with paste-diamond border and the name of the sitter engraved on the back. Artists of note participated in the production of portrait buttons; Jean-Baptiste Isabey (1767–1855), a miniature painter and pupil of Jacques-Louis David, records that he painted decorative buttons at the beginning of his career.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, button making in Europe fell into two categories: French button production remained a craft tradition allied with other high-quality decorative arts, while the English button industry developed mass-production techniques. Probably the most influential of the new English technologies was the development of cut-steel buttons and accessories by the steel manufacturer Matthew Bolton (1728–1809) of Birmingham in the 1760s. Bolton's cut-steel or faceted



**Button dyer at work.** Buttons exist in a variety of colors and motifs and are a critical element in modern dress, as suit jackets and shirts are worn by white collar workers. © HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION.

steel buttons were one of the most prevalent styles of the last three decades of the eighteenth century. The polished and faceted surface was created to imitate that of faceted gems or glass and the effect was quite successful.

The ceramic manufacturer Josiah Wedgwood began producing buttons made of his popular jasperware in 1773 as part of a collaboration with Matthew Bolton, who created cut-steel settings for the ceramic buttons. Jasperware ceramics, with their neoclassical motifs derived from cameos, had become the trademark product of the Wedgwood factory and the buttons were available in five colors and a variety of shapes. Another innovation in the ceramic industry, that of transfer printing, created a new type of ceramic button decorated with designs derived from copperplate engravings. At the end of the eighteenth century, buttons made from mother-of-pearl began to rival in popularity those of steel.

The eighteenth-century Enlightenment sensibility manifested itself in several unique types of buttons. Faithfully depicted insects and animals became the subject of button sets, as did buttons created from semiprecious materials such as agate, in which the natural patterns of the stones were the only decoration. The highlight of this natural history trend is probably the so-called Habitat

buttons, which contain actual specimens of insects, plants, or pieces of minerals encased under glass domes.

### Nineteenth and Twentieth Century

The standardization of military uniforms in eighteenth-century Europe led to the production of specialized buttons that continues to be a major portion of the button industry today. The number of buttons required for a soldier's coat could be as many as twenty to thirty. Each country, region, and specialization within the armed services required their own individual designs. Uniform buttons carried over into civilian life, as modern businesses, such as airlines, and local law enforcement agencies required special buttons for their uniforms.

Beginning in the early nineteenth century men's dress became much plainer and less ostentatious. Portraits by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) show men's fashion in the first half of the nineteenth century with plain gold metal or fabric buttons of the same color as the garment on which they are sewn. Women's bodices and outerwear became the outlet for the display of decorative buttons by the mid-nineteenth century. Women's buttons followed trends in jewelry: colored enamel, porcelain, pearl, silver, and jewels were used. Jet and black glass, introduced during Queen Victoria's mourning for Prince Albert, remained popular to the end of the century.

The nineteenth-century button industry continued along the two lines that had been established in the eighteenth century; industrial progress continued concurrently with handcraft techniques, which generally followed the historical revival styles of nineteenth-century decorative arts.

In 1812, Aaron Benedict established a metal button-making factory in Waterbury, Connecticut, to supply metal buttons for the military. Until that time many metal buttons were still coming from England, but the War of 1812 brought trade between the United States and Britain to a halt. As of 2003, Benedict's company, which became known as Waterbury Buttons, had been in business for 191 years. It is the oldest and largest producer of stamped metal buttons in the United States. Statistics from 1996 show that they produced 100 million buttons—about one-half for fashion trade and the remainder for military and commercial clients. Metal remains the main type of mass-produced button because the material lends itself to mass-production techniques.

The French firm Albert Parent et Cie, founded in 1825, exemplifies the brilliance of French manufacturers who combined mass-production techniques with the hand-finished details to produce luxury buttons in the manner of the eighteenth century. The company left an archive of sample books showing over 80,000 examples of buttons in every available technique of the time.

While more buttons were mass-produced in the nineteenth century that did not mean that fewer materi-

als were employed in the creation of buttons. Natural materials like horn and shells, which had been used for centuries, were rediscovered as mass-produced items. New materials such as celluloid, the first plastic, were used as early as the 1870s to imitate other materials.

Representational picture buttons, first introduced in the late eighteenth century, reached their peak between 1870 and 1914. The nineteenth-century scenes were generally mass-produced stamped metal designs depicting any motif imaginable, but contemporary marvels like the Eiffel Tower were especially popular.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw more and more men and women wearing suits with linen or cotton shirts underneath, the new uniform for the emerging white-collar working class. Both suit jackets and shirts required buttons as fastenings and they created the need for large numbers of inexpensive buttons. Thus, the four-holed pierced button was introduced to both men's and women's fashions. However, fine jewelry quality buttons were still produced by some of the best-known retailers of the day such as Cartier, Liberty's of London, and Georg Jensen.

Buttons received competition in the form of the new zipper that was patented in 1903 but did not come into general use until the 1930s. The zipper was considered a novelty at first and played a prominent role as decoration in the designs of top designers.

Bakelite was invented in 1907 and by the 1930s had replaced almost all other synthetics for accessories. Durable and versatile, Bakelite was the medium for some of the most extravagant buttons of the twentieth century, but other plastics eventually replaced it. Three-dimensional accessories, such as fruit shapes, were created in the 1930s and 1940s when small accessories like buttons were especially popular. The designer Elsa Schiaparelli (1890–1973), who was allied with surrealist artists in the 1930s, is notable for her use of extraordinary custom-made buttons.

Plastics replaced most inexpensive glass and pearl buttons by the 1960s. That coupled with the fact that natural materials such as ivory and tortoiseshell are now

banned in the United States and other countries has led to the dominance of plastic buttons made to imitate these materials. Mother-of-pearl is still used but in much smaller quantities than in the past. American-made pearl buttons can cost from twenty-five cents to three dollars apiece, as some of the work must still be done by hand and the best shells are imported from the Pacific Ocean coastlines.

The use of stretch fabrics and increasingly informal dressing have led to a decrease in the demand for button fasteners. They have become a symbol of nostalgia and anachronistic tradition, as evidenced by retro button-fly jeans introduced by denim manufacturers in the 1990s and the continued use of rows of tiny buttons on the back of bridal gowns.

Buttons have become extremely collectible. The National Button Society exists for collectors and publishes a quarterly bulletin and holds an annual meeting and show. There are similar societies in Britain and Australia and elsewhere in the world. Military buttons represent a specialty among collectors, as the challenge of identifying the insignias of segments of the armed services adds to the interest of these items.

*See also* **Fasteners; Zipper.**

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*Melinda Watt*