The History of Fashion

“I saw it in the window and just had to have it!”

• “Went With the Wind Dress”
• Designed by Bob Mackie for the Carol Burnett show, 1976

Now in the collection of Entertainment History at the Smithsonian
Donated by Bob Mackie at the request of Carol Burnett

Designed by Walter Plunkett, 1939
Questions to leave with:

• What is fashion?

• What are the principles of great fashion design?

• What does fashion mean to you?

• How can the past and present be interpreted through ideas and characteristics of fashion?
Takeaway:

• Basic principles of design: silhouette; line; color; and texture

• Basic fabrics used until the 19th century

• An argument of how fashion relates to and mirrors fine art. The connection of fashion to fine art and architecture through the ages

• The basic classical clothing elements of dress of Egypt, Greece, and Rome

• The ideals of fashion as they were in classical times in Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. We will look to see how these ideals carry-on through the ages
Crossover: Fashion and Art
The Golden Age of Couture:
Paris and London 1947-1957
Terms with which to describe fashion: Four Elements of Design

- Line
- Form/Silhouette
- Color
- Texture
Silhouette or Shape
Silhouettes and style lines
Underwear often is the most important element in creating the silhouette.
Color Wheel

Color Definitions:
Primary Colors: Red, yellow and blue – cannot be mixed from any other color.
Secondary Colors: Two primary colors mixed together resulting in orange, green and violet.
Tertiary (Intermediate) Colors: Gray primary and one secondary color mixed together.
Aggressive (Warm) Colors: Red, orange and yellow.
Harmonizing (Cool) Colors: Greens, blues and violets.

How to use “Color Wheel”:
- Turn a color on the dial to an outside color. The mixture appears in window.
- An artist’s guide to mixing color.

ARTIST’S COLOR WHEEL
Textures speak volumes about people/characters

- Hyacinthe Richaud, *Louis in Robes of State, 1701*
- Anthony Van Dyck, *Charles I at the Hunt, 1635*
- Piero della Francesca, *Federico da Montefeltro, 1472*
- Pieter Bruegel, *The Peasant Wedding, 1568*
The elegance, simplicity, balance, and attention to the human form begins with the ancients....
Through their attention to silhouette, line, color, and texture, we begin our story of the history of fashion
Basic Egyptian clothing styles

3000 BC-30AD

- Clothing said to be: roomy, light, and spare

- Men and women:
  - Loincloths;
  - wrap around skirts= shenti
  - robes/longer garments—made of rectangular lengths of cloth
  - Cloaks and shawls—long and short
  - Garments made of squares and rectangles of fabric
  - Sashes and straps
  - sandal

- Women:
  - kalasiris or Calasiris= sheath dress
Kalasiris/Calasiris or bead-net sheath dress

Statue of an Offering Bearer, Metropolitan Museum

Skills include: beading; pattern weaving, embroidery, applique

Beadnet dress  MFA Boston 2323–2150 B.C.
constructed of: faience cylinder beads, reconstructed
Wooden statue of the Lady Thuya, 1570-1320 B.B.

Pyramids at Giza, 2540

1330 BC
Attention given to the genital area in men’s clothing was due to the fact it was regarded as sacred because of its involvement in procreation.
Watercolor by Henry Salt of a painted relief in the early 19th Dynasty tomb of Sety I.

Standard symbols used include: water plants, lotus, papyrus, scarab, and the sun disc (Aton). Cobra head = Uraeus signified the Pharaoh.
18th Dynasty
1370BC
Nebamun’s tomb, musicians and dancers, frontal view of faces

With after dinner coned head melts
Shenti in pyramid shapes & an assortment of headdresses—later Egyptian history.

Looms that wove ornamental tapestry and patterned fabric date from 1500 BC.
Collar / Mantle: gold, carnelian, glass
Wide collar = Mantle
Horus = falcon God, protector of Egyptian Pharoah

Collars could be made from:

- Shells
- Beads
- Flowers
- Precious stones set into gold
- Worn as necklace or set attached to leather or cloth neckline
- Extended over the neck and shoulders, nine rows of inlaid beads, on each side is a falcon head

Reign of Tut, 18th dynasty

Egyptians believed in magic: that by representing religious figures in jewelry, the positive quality of the deity would be transferred to the wearer.
King Tut’s pectoral
sun/ protective vulture wings/ uraeus or cobra/ scarab: symbol of life and the solar cycle

Two most prominent types of jewelry: pectoral and collar
Weighted in back with counterweight
• linen shirt, about 1360 BC
  Victoria and Albert Museum

• Pleated tunic. 1st dynasty, c. 3100-2890 BC.
  Petrie Museum, London

Linens tunic over four thousand years old. The Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology.
Nefertiti: “A Beautiful Woman has Come”

- Ruled with Akhenaton, his reign: 1352 BC-1336 BC
- Life: ~1367-1336 BC
Pyramids at Giza
What is Classical beauty?

Audrey Hepburn, 1961
Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra, 1963
Nemes head-dress

King Tut’s, about 1350 B.C.

Khat or Klaft headdress
Wedjat eye = the Eye of Horus
the symbol of healing and protection

Worn to protect from:
Sun; insect disease; sand
Protective amulet. Worn as a popular good luck charm.
Image of Elizabeth Taylor for Cleopatra, 1963
Costume design
Irene Sharaff, Vittorio Nino, Novarese Renie

Vulture and falcon
Egypt inspires Art Deco, 1925-1939
Comparison of ancient statuary: body ideals

King Mycerinus and His Queen 2548-2530 B.C.E.

Statue of a kouros (youth), ca. 590–580 B.C. Archaic

Kouros Late Archaic

4th century BC

The Winged Victory of Samothrace, c. 220-190 BC, also called the Nike of Samothrace,
Words to describe Greek ideals exhibited in art and fashion...

- Naturalism
- Harmonious proportion
- Harmony in feeling and in form
- Rhythmic harmony
- Sensuousness; lithe proportions; play of gentle curves; sense of relaxation
- Fluidity
- Balance
- Interest in uniting motion and human emotion
- Ease of movement
- Deeply felt poetry of being
- Animated with an inner life force
Ancient Greece: 800 BC-146 AD

admiration for the human form guided dress

Parthenon, Three goddesses Hestia, Dione, Aphrodite) from the east pediment, 438-432 BC.

Greatest temple: The Parthenon built 448-432

4th century BC

Ionic Chiton
Colors could have included: red, blue, yellow, and green

Textiles could have patterns of:
- Stylized floral motifs
- Geometric patterns
- Meander
- Greek key

Designs could have been:
- woven
- Embroidered
- painted
Chiton:
Doric (450-300 BC)
Ionic (550-300 BC)
Hellenistic (300-100 BC)
Nike of Samothrace, 190 BC
Charioteer’s chiton (ky’tn) = xystis. His shoulders are seamed variations from: belting; fold at the top; varying placement of the pins. Soft, thin linen cloth compressed with belt into soft columnar folds. Fabric often pleated.
The Doric Chiton or Doric Peplos
5th and 6th centuries B.C.
Accessories

Greeks wore fine and delicate earrings, bracelets, necklaces, brooches, and rings made of precious and semi-precious stones. Gold was in short supply but increased by 6th century BC.

**The Ganymede Jewelry**, ca. 330–300 B.C.; Hellenistic
Gold, rock crystal, emerald
Olympic Victor
Priest of Dionysius  King
Rustics
Priestess
Noblewoman
Captain
Charioteer’s headband: Greek key or Meander
Greek decorative borders
Could be printed, woven, or painted

Halston designs,
Ancient Greeks

Ancient Romans
Roman, 753 B.C. – A.D. 476

Visual Summary Table

Major Roman Garments

- Tunic
- Toga
- Woman in under tunic, outer tunic, and palla
- Woman in under tunic, stola, and palla
Comparison of Greek and Roman columns & men’s fashions

The Charioteer of Delphi, 478 BC, wearing a xystis
Fastened with a belt and straps to keep it out of his way
The Toga!

Statue of Caesar Augustus, c. 30 BC-20 BC;
The Coliseum, 70 AD
The Toga

A masterpiece of draped grandeur

Became the symbol of Roman authority and power
In Ancient Greece wreaths awarded to victors, in athletic competitions in Rome symbols success and military power. Laurel leaves used to make crowns for victorious Roman generals.

Refers to a victory. The expression "resting on one's laurels" refers to someone relying entirely on long-past successes for continued fame or recognition.
Alexander McQueen (British, 1969–2010). Dress, autumn/winter 2010–11