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MINIMALISM AS A KEY TREND OF FASHION INDUSTRY IN RECENT YEARS

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The author explores the roots of minimalism, its tendencies of growth in the fashion industry, key people, that changed the flow of the history of minimalism as a style. The author's purpose in writing the article is to analyze minimalism and forecast tendencies of its development in the nearest future. The object is minimalism as a style, with the main focus of research in recent trends in the fashion industry. Experimental, theoretical (analysis, definition and classification) methods were used.

Key words: *minimalism, fashion trends, the history of fashion, brands*

INTRODUCTION

Minimalism as a movement began in post-World War II in Western Art and was integrated into the fashion industry in the 1970s, and then was shaped by Japanese and European designers at the end of the 20th century. After 3 decades, the minimalism of the 90s managed to stay in the fashion arena with some slight modern alterations and there are many reasons for that, which will be discussed in this article.

PURPOSE

The study aims to determine whether minimalism will remain in the fashion arena in the next few years, forecast the possibility of its growth by analyzing its history with the focal point of fashion history of the 90s.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Daniel Lee, who previously worked at CELINE under Phoebe Philo's supervision, became the creative director of Bottega Veneta and made a grand return of the brand. That unexpectedly made Bottega Veneta Kering's new black horse after Gucci. Lee's tailoring designs are imbued with simplicity and express modern aesthetics. Modern, vivid, and crisp silhouette of outerwear, which suits all ages, created the so-called "Lee aesthetics" [1]. When Lee joined, clothing accounted for just 15% of sales of the brand, which gave the new creative director an extremely unique chance that barely happens at one of the biggest fashion houses – they could afford to risk losing the RTW customer, meaning Lee was able to be as creative as he wanted to and he won it.

In the mass market, H&M Group has also developed two minimalistic brands, including Arket and Cos. Also, the market value of Uniqlo, which is a minimalistic brand, has surpassed Zara, becoming the world's number one fashion company.



The value of Uniqlo owner Fast Retailing reached 10.8 trillion yen (\$103 billion) at the end of trading Tuesday, exceeding Zara parent Inditex's 81.7 billion euro (\$99 billion) market capitalisation for the first time, Nikkei Asia reports. [2]

Minimalist style has grown sharply in the field of designer brands. For example, Swedish Toteme can be described as a minimalistic fashion brand that appealed to bloggers and influencers. The founder Elin Kling is a blogger and an enthusiastic supporter of Scandinavian minimalism, so his design concept of the brand is comfortable and simple clothes, neat tailoring, high-quality texture of fabrics that he loves. Interesting fact - Toteme often uses elements of sports in the American style, which allows us to combine and wear things, regardless of the event.

Besides, recently Vietnamese niche brands also have become more minimalistic. SUBTLE STUDIOS outlines the unique aesthetics of high fashion through light cotton and linen fabrics, volumetric contours and low-saturation natural colours. The futuristic PETER DO has also integrated the minimalist style into the brand, and it was well-received by their customers.

Therefore, we can see how minimalism has become the most important fashion trend in recent years.

Minimalism was created in Western Art after the Second World War and was named "Minimal Art". To understand the essence nature of minimalism we can use the short saying of a German architect L. Mies Van der Rohe (1886-1969) "Less is more". Finally, minimalism got integrated into the fashion industry in the 1970s. Designers skimmed out too complicated decorations to create simple but neat designs. Gradually minimalism became one of the most popular styles so far.

At the end of the 20th century, the minimalist design received a new interpretation with the help of Japanese designers. The spiritual power and philosophy of Zen were integrated into the minimalism, thus injecting deeper meaning into it. Represented by designers such as Naoto Fukasawa, Kenya Hara, Tadao Ando, etc., Japanese minimalism was introduced to the world.

In the 1990s, Helmut Lang was one of the most important designers who brought minimalism into the fashion industry. He changed people's dressing style from the heavy and colourful 80s to the simple and light 90s. Lang initially focused on black, white, and low-saturated pure colours, and also paid attention to fabrics and tailoring. He was even called "Austrian Edward Scissorhands" of fashion at that time, which has influenced many young designers later [3]. So far, many fashion designer's studios still have a piece of clothing by HELMUT LANG, not for wearing, but as a model for reference in the industry.

Also, the minimalism of the 90s is associated with Jil Sander for many. She was a real hit of the 90s. They were working side by side with Helmut Lang to develop minimalism as a fashion style. Jil Sander gained the title of "Queen of Minimalism" for this. She was inspired by the menswear design and gave a push to unisex clothing, seeking for a more neutral style to alter the traditional womenswear, constantly creating harmonious, simple, dynamic, and elegant designs, changing the concept of beauty with purism and creating modern urban women's style.



Speaking of the 90s minimalism, we cannot miss how important was Phoebe Philo, too. The era of Phoebe Philo in Celine changed our interpretation of simplicity. For example, today we consider oversized clothes as something that makes our shape tougher and stronger, thus more confident.

Here are 6 reasons why minimalism is still popular nowadays.

1. People have different interpretations of beauty when it comes to complexity, but the beauty of minimalism has a universal standard. After experiencing extreme retroism of the street style, people have once again turned their attention to functional and practical minimalism in recent years.

2. Minimalism is appreciated, because it is easy to understand, and doesn't require an additional explanation. Starting with Gucci, Balenciaga to Bottega Veneta and Kering's Corporation the logic of luxury brands' rejuvenation became very simple: when fashion has become highly democratized and popular, the minimalistic style has the possibility of rapid spread and fast development.

3. The minimalism opens up people's longing for order and balance. Minimalist style is a lifestyle, an attitude that takes freedom as the basis, and expresses beauty by being comfortable and practical. The minimalistic style advocates "giving infinite imagination with the least design", which reflects people's needs for a balanced and orderly life in the intense high-speed rhythm of today's impetuous society. Whether it is daily life or work and any kind of social interaction, minimalism is created, considering the fundamental needs of people. This attitude of simplicity and practicality sharply contrasts with the materialistic era of consumerism; and that allows people to return to their roots, to spiritual purity.

4. Minimalism cares about the practical and versatile considerations of the fast-flowing urban style. The minimalism pays attention to comfort, and does not deliberately define the body curve, but at the same time pursues the simple and clean lines, without any complicated modifications. It gives us a sense of being stylish and trendy without extra affords, which is a must for anyone's closet. On the other hand, traditional minimalism matches more saturated colours and emphasizes how important the coordination of colours is, which makes it easier for people to choose the colour palette and still feel comfortable and fashionable on various social occasions.

5. Minimalism is famous for using excellent natural fabrics as well as high-quality materials to create a neat look. Style and quality are the most important feature of minimalism. Because of the pure and pure colour scheme, the minimalist style is relatively restrained and doesn't express the wearer's personality much. Therefore, this is the main difference between "minimalism" and "simplicity".

6. The prevalence of unisex (gender neutrality) was also a big booster of minimalism in the fashion industry. Driven by modern art and open culture, the boundaries between men's and women's fashion tend to be blurred, and unisex is flourishing, and minimalism is more suitable for that.

However, there are also other opinions on the future of minimalism. For example, there are survey reports that show that women office workers who are dressed classy and elegant will be considered as weak and as those who cannot do business or focus on work. Therefore, minimalism allows women to look more



powerful and professional, but this may also become an alternative type of abuse in the workplace for women, which will force them to choose minimalism instead of classic. In the future, with the deeper development of equality, women will hopefully decide for themselves, and won't be criticized for that. Hence, the development of the minimalism at workplace may face a great challenge.

We also found that Victoria Beckham and The Row, which are both minimalistic brands created by celebrities that transformed into designers, both show signs of decline [4].

Hulmut Lang's brand opposite to Jil Sander's was growing fast, so here we come to the conclusions, that the development of the brand is not only related to the brand itself and current fashion trends but its strategy and management activities.

Finally, futuristic cyberpunk maximalism, which is different from retro-baroque maximalism, has gradually become the favourite style of generation Z. It may also have a certain impact on minimalism, but we believe that minimalism will remain an important trend in the next 3-5 years.

CONCLUSIONS

Being established in Western Art after the Second World War, minimalism has become a significant tendency in the world of luxury and mass-market fashion industry. By analyzing its development and the modern approach of designers, we assume, that minimalism will be still chosen by fashionistas in the next 3-5 years. There is an explanation why minimalism is welcomed today: its beauty is in its simplicity; it gives us a sense of balance and order, that we often lack in today's society; minimalism is all about practicality and comfort; it is eco-friendly high-quality. However, there are also certain reasons why minimalism may lose its top position in fashion: women's abuse in the workplace; maximalism as a choice of Gen Z.

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