

# The Application of New Unisex Style in Modern Clothing Culture and Art

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**Abstract:** Derived from the influence of unisex clothing style's formation and development upon modern clothing culture and the application of unisex style brand design on modern clothing, this paper concludes that the existence of unisex clothing phenomenon is not occasional or individual, but the result of the continuous development in cultural thoughts, social trends, individual identities, economics and politics. It also indicates the rise of women's social status with the mix-gender in the workplaces, and the reversed design thinking in men and women's clothing, as well as the developing trend of people's personality performance and psychological needs modern clothing.

## 1. Introduction

Clothing is a reflection of social culture in certain degrees. The development of clothing, from Adam and Eve's leaf aprons to the diversified fashion nowadays, is entitled with more value than a simple protection from shame and cold, it is an abstract form of social performance, connecting the social culture and artistic performance of a specific era.

"Unisex clothing", also known as "ungendered clothing", emerges in the era of diversified and personalized cultural trend. This design style breaks the inherent definition of men or women's clothing in traditional clothing design. This style suggests that there can be no obvious boundary between men and women's clothing, and they can draw lessons from each other without losing their own unique style features. Unisex clothing demonstrate women's self-confidence in the social competition with its simple and neat silhouette. It engulfs the whole fashion circle with its diversified modeling design. It is favored by major clothing brands and loved by young female customers, and it exhibits the charm of modern independent women.

## 2. Development of Unisex

According to the historical records, the dress styles varied largely in each dynasty, but no matter how they change, women's clothes always hide women's legs with skirts, emphasize women's curvy beauty with slim design, express women's gentle temperament, which is a symbol of women's gentle and virtuous character. The emergence of women's liberation thought and feminism makes women's clothing tend to be unisex. Those newly-risen thoughts demand that women should have equal rights with men rather than a part of men's possession and has improved women's social status. The outbreak of World War in 19th and 20th century changed the whole social pattern dramatically. The outbreak of World War I resulted in a lot of material shortage. Due to the needs of the war, all men had rushed to the front line, and women had to participate in social activities to provide a large number of materials for the front line. However, because women's productivity were seriously hindered by the tights they wore at that time, women transformed men's pants and put on men's clothes that were easy to move. As a result, women's clothes gradually became unisex, they started to explore for more free space in the turbulent social trend, and then women's clothes has changed from "S" shape to "I" shape.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Paul Poiret, a fashion designer, overthrew the tight clothing design that restrained women for a long time. His main design feature was to express the natural beauty of human body curve, he has opened up a new fashion design path as he overthrew the tights, but his long, tight skirts limited women's body movement to a certain extent. The 1920s is also known as the "La Garconnes" era, because of the outbreak of World War, a great recession

occurred in the whole world, so women had to participate in social activities at that time, and the tight design of women's clothing at that time greatly hindered women's participation in social activities, so most women put on men's clothing. Coco Chanel, the master of fashion design, has grasped this design element and established his own fashion career with men's design element as the center. Her inspiration for women's clothing mostly comes from men's clothing, such as men's suits, uniforms, coats and other styles. Due to the need of the war, most of the clothing factories at that time produced military clothing, and short hair and hats were popular too, so the clothing style and design in this period gradually became unisex.

There was a great crisis in the world economy in the 1930s, and the whole society was under the shade of the Second World War for 10 years. In this period, women's clothing emphasized on the elegance and charm of women, which is obviously different from the anti-traditional and personalized style of the 1920s.

In the 1940s, the outbreak of World War II did not hinder the fashion trends in Paris. In this period, women's unisex clothing became irremediable along with its formation. The boundaries between men and women's clothing became less and less clear, the entire clothing market filled with a large number of T-shirts and jeans, leading to a continual expansion of unisex clothing.

The 1950s was a time when elegant clothing were highly praised by Dior's "New Look". In the 1960s, the concept of fashion design and style in the whole fashion industry changed qualitatively. This is an era of anti-tradition and pursuit of individuality. It is the era with the greatest change since the 20th century. Teenagers have their own unique personality and expression mode. Anti authority and self-awareness have become the cultural trend pursued by this generation, they were pursuing the expression of the most real self. In this era, an outstanding fashion designer became a decisive role in the unisex style. Pierre Cardin designed the world's first clothing without gender difference in 1958, breaking the situation that it has been difficult to subdivide men and women's clothing. This may be the stage when women's unisex clothing development tends to be perfect since the beginning of the 20th century.

### 3. Application of Unisex Style

Unisex style is the most important design style of clothing designer George Armani. He has always been committed to adding some women's clothing elements in men's clothing design to weaken the masculinity and tenacity of men's clothing, and adding men's clothing design elements in women's clothing design, emphasizing women's fortitude and tenacity. To a certain extent, it has broken the limitations of traditional design concepts and skillfully used different design elements to express a unique and novel visual charm of fashion. For example, in the spring/summer clothing conference in 1980, a large lapel element in men's clothing appeared in women's clothing in an asymmetric way. Such a style expressed women's confident charm, as shown in Figure 1.

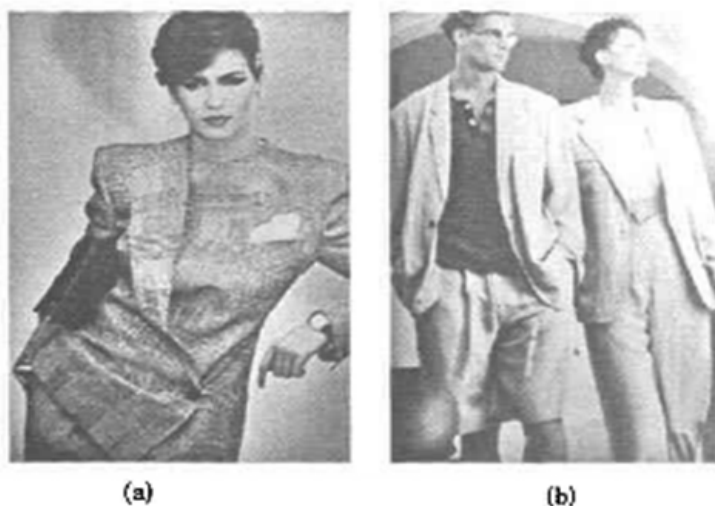


Fig.1. Giorgio Armani Spring/Summer1980 Ready-to-Wear

Antonio Berardi 2014 spring/summer fashion show highlighted the innovation of unisex elements through the use of unisex elements, clean cutting, shirt collar design and men's structure design, further expressed the development of unisex style in the fashion trend, as shown in Figure 2.



Fig.2. Antonio Berardi Spring/Summer2014

#### 4. Conclusion

In recent years, people's life style has become more and more varied, and their clothing styles has greatly increased. Fashion trend is closely related to people's life. Simple, elegant, cool and handsome unisex clothing meets everyone's aesthetic needs and becomes the fashion trend people after to. Unisex clothing has not only changed the inherent image of different genders in traditional Chinese society, but also changed their status in society. The appearance of unisex clothing indicates that the ideology and culture of equal rights between men and women has infiltrated into the clothing. It is the continuous progress of the new era, the update of old concepts and the trend of new fashion.

Unisex clothing adheres to the simple and personalized design concept, which conforms to the women's demands of clothing in contemporary society, and also meets the consumer psychology of individual female. In recent years, the emergence of unisex idols is deeply loved by the youth generation. This style is the catering to the current trend and the true expression of personality in the new era. The unisex style fully applies the unisex elements in the design of modern clothing. The design elements such as suit pants, shirt collar and waist cover lead us to re-understand the unique charm.

The unisex phenomenon of modern clothing is not only the result of social development, but also a trend of economic and cultural development. Men and women's mixed clothing design concept is constantly updating, expressing the unique beauty of women's personality. There are many aspects in a popular fashion style. As recorded in history, the reason for the popularity of unisex style is that it blurred the boundaries of gender, which can be understood as mutual reference. The various influences of unisex style on modern fashion design allow designers to break the shackles of conventional thinking in design, exhibit the fashion style of modern women's clothing, and women's charm. The unisex modern fashion design style shows the diversity and individualization of fashion, the fashion market is also blooming, which is conducive to the vigorous development of fashion trend.

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