

History of chanel iconic classic flap bag

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“ A girl should be two things: classy and fabulous”, is a famous quote said by the infamous Gabrielle Bonheur or as known as Coco Chanel. Today Chanel is known as a luxury brand that specializes in women’s haute couture, clothing, goods and fashion accessories. The first major introduction of clothing was open in 1913 and was mainly focused on designing practical sportswear which was made of an unheard fabric known as jersey. Jersey fabric is made up of wool, cotton and synthetic fibers. Introducing this type of clothing at the start of World War One was ideal for women who had to take on hard working, practical factory jobs while the men were away fighting. At this point, Chanel was introducing comfortable, casual suits and dress in contrast to the domination of corsets. Famous for its little black dresses, quilted bags and the iconic double C logo, this French fashion house is one of the world’s most well-known and recognisable brand. Chanel operates in many fashion systems but the one that will be focused on is bags. Many have lusted over a signature quilted bag for years. Hugely popular with the rich and famous they are instantly recognisable with a chain handle and double C shaped lock on the front. The epitome of luxury they are always made from lambskin, fur or calfskin. The bag that will be focused on is the Chanel Classic Flap Bag. This bag was first introduced in 1955 and since then there has been numerous variations. The double flap is complete with a mademoiselle metal chain and closure. The idea of the double chain was to allow hands-free use of the bag, a cutting-edge innovation at the time, and allow the bag to be slung over one’s shoulder or carries in the crook of the arm.

This iconic bag has been in the industry for years and loved and lusted by many. As mentioned before the fashion system that will be focused on is

bags. Focusing on the Design, this bag was created for women to show her status and wealth. At first this bag was available to upper-class women which meant only a selected community got to purchase this bag. Also for the first time, it was socially acceptable for women of considerable social status to carry a bag on their shoulders.

The material of this bag was high-quality leather, often lambskin. Known, for being soft and luxurious; however, is prone to showing scratches and blemishes. Lambskin is very fragile and will flatten over time. Lambskin is the skin of a young sheep and works better with dark colours. The production and the thought process into making this bag related much to the upbringing and struggles Gabrielle Bonheur faced. Starting with the interlocking CC locks. Often known as the mademoiselle lock which gets its name from the fact Coco Chanel never married. These locks come in a variety of finishes like shiny/matte gold and silver. The metal parts of the handbag are gilded with an alloy containing 24-carat gold.

Inspired by the likeness of a soldier bag strap and the resemblance of the chains that were used by nuns as key holders at the time Chanel was growing up in an orphanage is the inspiration for the handles. The interior the bag was inspired by the bag which was a custom shade of burgundy which was similar to the uniform she wore in the orphanage where she was raised. The exterior of the bag was a signature quilting inspired by male stable hands. Under the top flap, the bag has a little zipper compartment that is quite strange and won't be found in bags with similar structures from

other brands but the story goes, Coco designed it to have a secret spot to stash her love letters.

The actual method and production of the bag was handmade and used to be made to order. It starts off with many sketches and mock-ups are produced before selecting a final prototype based on proportions and stitching details. The bags are then cut in three specific ways: by hand, digitally and using a special metal plate. The assembly of Chanel bags is unlike any other handbag in the world. They refer to two methods; first being the inside out method and the molded technique. The iconic classic flaps are made using the inside-out method where the bag's stitches are hidden unless turned right side out. Workers and craftsmen hand weave the bags and attach the hardware bag by bag. Even the dust bag is hand bag to avoid any scratches and tear when storing the bag away. Since Chanel uses leather and lambskin it transports its materials from Spain. The town of Ubrique in southern Spain is where many of the top fashion brands source their leather goods.

However almost none of the many designers are willing to speak about their goods being from here and the workers are forced to sign a contract which states they cannot take pictures or talk about design and products to avoid any copyright issues. When it comes to marketing and promotion, each season Chanel produces the classic flap in new materials and colours. Many celebrities are seen with this bag which is a way of marketing as there is no commercials or ads in regards to the classic flap. Magazines like Vogue who cover the various fashion weeks around the world broadcast the new

collections and the new variations to the bag. Many magazines would place editorials that would intrigue the reader and inform them about the bag.

When it comes to the retail value of this bag, it is certainly not on the low end side. The starting price can be around \$4000 USD depending on the size and make. Each year the price is rising on this bag due to maintain the exclusivity and to keep increasing profit. Many individuals look at this bag as an investment. Specially the limited edition collection is something many prefer to spend a huge amount of money on. The Chanel classic flap tends to retain its value on the resale market since prices continue to rise each year. For example, a 2.55 flap bag only costed \$1945 in 1955 and today the retail value is \$6000. Since its been proven its versatility and longevity, many compare this investment to a Hermes Birkin. Below is a chart showing the growth in value of a Classic Flap.

Since the bag is made well and with a rich and luxuries material there is no end to the life cycle, however Chanel will repair all purchases made at the official Chanel boutique for up to one year after purchasing. There is huge influence this bag brings to the society. Starting with culture, it symbolizes high status. Chanel is definitely part of pop culture with influencers such as Kim Kardashian being seen with a bag often. Due to a high price and demand many replica bags are illegally produced on a daily basis. Many fake bags are produced in every designer brand but the market is flooded with fake Chanel. They are made from a cheap material and are sold at a fraction of the cost. Those paying for a fake Chanel are not paying for the quality but

the social status. Although many complain the price is not worth it but the demand is always rising.

Chanel has also been politically blasted by Peta for using animal leather. Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is an organization dedicated to animal rights and the usage of animals in the numerous industries. Peta has on numerous accounts condemned the brand for using animals for a materialistic item. There are many reasons as to why the Chanel Classic Flap has been a successful bag for many decades. Many have loved and dreamt to own one which has maintained its label as an exclusive high-status bag. Further looking and critiquing the influence of a Chanel classic flap. The psychological connection to today's society and this bag is high status. Since the first day it was introduced only a selected few were allowed to purchase one and many were turned down their request to purchase one. As humans we tend to have a psychological connection to materialistic items. Society makes us believe we must love certain items and buy them to show our social status and well-being. Wealth must be shown in personal possessions such as bags, cars, clothing and more. To be materialistic means to have values that put a relatively high priority on making a lot of money and having many possessions, as well as on image and popularity, which are almost always expressed via money and possessions.

With the influence of social media and many influencers owning a Chanel classic flap, research shows this affects materialism in young individuals. Research shows the more people spend time on social media platforms such

as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook the more they have values to put a relatively high priority on making money just to gain possessions of items. As well show an image of money and items to gain popularity. This happens because ads and posts send messages that happy successful people are wealth, have nice things, are happy, beautiful and popular. By putting this image and thinking and the consumers at a young age have changed the way each generation behaves. However, there may be a positive effect on this behavior. Money is the main motivation for millennials and they tend to be highly drive towards success, twice more than the rate of baby boomers. Many are motivated to get a proper education and work to provide these luxurious and this lifestyle. Hence the competition between millennials are higher than ever, as they always want to look the best and have the best.

Another effect on the Chanel Classic flap to today's society is social and political influence of Peta. Peta has on multiple occasions attacked Chanel for their use of animals in clothing, accessories and makeup. This organization has targeted many companies before for many years and has often done protest and used the media to create awareness. Recently the animals' rights organization blasted the creative director of Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld, on his statement of defending the use of fur in fashion. Many have different views on the fashion industry using fur but Karl stated many people eat leather so what's the message. The "out of mind, out of sight" mentality is what keeps most of the world okay with the production of fur garments.

Finally, the economically effect of a Chanel classic clap on today's society. Like many invest their money in stocks some do in handbags. In the fashion

industry, Chanel bags have the highest demand and are worth to investment. The classic design has been around for years and many will pay a heavy ticket to own limited edition bags. Like the Hermes Birkin, each year the value of a Chanel bag increases. There are many factors for this increase such as demand, the amazing quality and most importantly the social status. In a society mainly dominated by men, Coco Chanel has changed the fashion world and evolved it into what we wear today. Combining the idea of femininity and a working woman, she inspired other fashion designer to continue and evolved simple elegance. From perfume, makeup to clothing and accessories she ran the industry for 50 years. From bags such as the classic flap to the boy bag, each signified a meaning and status. The classic flap has affected the fashion system through the luxurious material and the social status.