

# Literature review

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Literature Review Fashion as art; is art Fashion? \* Sanda Miller “ Like art, clothes can provide the subject of historical research. ” According to the reader by Miller, fashion, like architecture fulfills primarily a functional dimension. This is said with art being something of display, admiration and in some cases personal relation. Art being something decorative and less functional than clothing, because clothes can be worn, but avante garde fashion is where the differentiation between art and fashion becomes a grey area purely because no average human being that wears clothes only for covering the body, some more on trend than others, will wear avante garde wear in the streets. Art is described as a “ fuzzy concept”, because of the various art forms and the indefinite description of what exactly is seen as art. Stated by Wilson 1985: 3 , fashion is explored as a “ cultural phenomenon, as an aesthetic medium for the expression of ideas , desires and beliefs circulating in society”. Humankind feels the need for expressing and belonging and through fashion, an identity is communicated and people are categorized by society. The level and extent of expression through clothes is linked to the confusion of fashion being art, because of the unusual items and garments worn by some. “ Society is the necessary context for fashion”. This statement proves that in order for fashion to evolve, be reinvented and expanded, the criticism, expression and categorization of society is in deed necessary. FASHION AS ART Ludwig Wittgenstein states that instead of looking for logical definitions, we should establish “ family resemblances” between the discrete art entities. In the conclusion by Dickie, “ the parade of dreary and superficial definitions that had been presented was for a variety of reasons eminently rejectable” He describes a work of art as either a artifact or a set of aspects of which has been conferred upon in the status of

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candidate for appreciation by some person or persons acting on behalf of a certain institution — The art world. Even though “ the art world” was a new concept, Dickie states that it was not invented by Duncham, because it had been an existing institutional device, used in an unusual way and the art world had been there all along. (Dickie 1992 : 438) Institutional theories of art are very comprehensive and they do not answer “ pressing questions” such as : “ must all art emerge from a pre-existing network of social relations? Does it appear to be informative? etc. (Miller, 1998, 29) Art being a way of expression and communication through visual creation, same as fashion, can not be classified as only one thing with one certain message, because it depends on each individual expressing themselves through either art, fashion or both. Art is defined in terms of it’s historical and theoretical framework — that is it’s institutionalization is accomplished at an abstract level. When looking at the Brillo Box by Andy Warhol and how it relates to art, it is a certain theory of art that’s related. The theory and background of the object connects it to the world of art, and keeps it from falling into the “ object” category which in actual fact it is, It is a box for soap pads, but the argument of it being a unique form of creation and design, is what keeps it in the “ art world”. Without the theoretical knowledge, it is unlikely that the viewer will classify it as an artwork. “ Something is an artwork if it is intended to support some well precedented art regard. ” (Carroll 1999: 241) “ it connects candidates to the history of art. (Carroll 1999: 241) “ sometimes the mere fact that an artifact can be used to serve a historically acknowledged function suffices to call an object art, irrespective of the original creator’s intention” (Carroll 1999: 249) According to Miller, both the “ Institutional Theory of art” and the “ Historical Definition of Art” are proved <https://assignbuster.com/literature-review-literature-review-samples-3/>

inconclusive. An alternative definition is called on, because of failure to identify art and separate it from something like “readymades” by Duchamp. Art created was dedicated to addressing the question of the nature of art. (Carroll : 253) The question went around “What makes art work different from real things?”, because confusion created by Andy Warhol caused a stir in society. Tomato Soup cans were suddenly on paintings when at the same time served for dinner. Then avant-garde innovations took the spotlight from arguing what is and isn’t art, to identifying a clear visual image as to how fashion and art are united, wrecking and destroying any set theories of art. Examples of these theories are: representational theory of art, the expression theory, formalism and aesthetic theories of art. “The method of historic approaches has nothing to fear from the avant-garde, as a procedure for identifying art is well tailored and incorporating the mutations of the avant-garde into the continuous evolution of fashion.” (Carroll 1999: 264) Acquiring the appropriate methodology in consideration to historical narration, because it is a preferred classificatory tool, and method for dealing with modern and contemporary developments, is necessary. This is in fact not a sufficient condition and definite clarification for success and supporting the statement is the nature of histories of art and fashion. When a history of art is provided, a clear and distinct idea is formulated of what kind of things this is a history of and even though it is argued that its subject matter is as old as the human endeavor to create art, it differs to what is seen as art history as an academic discipline. “The study of clothes is an even more recent endeavor and, therefore, it has not yet acquired a status equal to that of fine arts; this may well have something to do with the perceived lower status of craft.” (Miller 1999: 30) Clothing and historical fashion is used to

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trace and identify previous issues of class, gender, social status etc. in different eras. Because clothing was worn by the human beings experiencing certain social happenings during specific time frames in history, single garments from decades back have a story to tell and because history is likely to repeat itself, it is worthwhile to listen. IS FASHION ART Symbolic invention in clothing is slightly illuminated by the economic or political history, history of technology or even social customs. Hereby fashion and clothing is only known as an “elevated craft” when in fact it is a combination of skill and architecture, worn on the body. Attempts for fashion to be deserving of academic research is completely dominated by lighthearted and time-wasting connotations. Fashion is described by Kant as a law of imitation to appear not of lower status than other, but to be worthy and accepted within society. Kant states that fashion belongs under the heading “vanity”, because it has no inner value or contribution to humankind. (Kant 1963: 71) The imitation of those who are seen as socially superior is described as “mindless imitation” and vanity replacing “pleasure and displeasure”. Edmund Burke developed the relational nature of taste in his published book “A Philosophical Enquiry Into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful” (1757) “For pomp is meant for the great mass of people, which contains much rabble, and the rabble’s taste is dull and depends more on sensation than on judgement.” (Kant 1963: 72) Burke, argues that the human desire to imitate is crucial as this is what forms our manners, our opinions and our lives. In contrast to the argument by Burke, Kant argues that imitation through fashion and clothing is a matter of vanity. Taste however is what enables us to evaluate aesthetic qualities such as the beautiful and the sublime. The British Empiricists have paid specific attention

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to the notion of taste. ( Third Earl of Shaftsbury) Shaftsbury's inward eye was replaced by taste. The natural reaction or response to something of great taste and of less taste. (feeling of pleasure or displeasure) In Humes' argument he refers to beauty as being " not a quality in objects, but a psychological response triggered by interacting with them" " Time based arts" such as photography, film and cinema is an interesting comparison to fashion, because of the time related to clothing and the symbolic role fashion or lack of clothes play in all the mentioned art forms. (clothing garments being a type, to illustrate a specific time or meaning) Visual arts, like fashion were not originally considered as art, because they were seen as subjects for aesthetics. Clothing, belonging to the body, created and created for the body can be related to dance within " the world of art" because of the lack in recognition and seriousness. "...to be attractive to others, then, is something of great moment of practically to all of us" (Ducasse 1992: 620). This statement supports the fact that human beings seek happiness through the eyes of others and the critique of society. Fashion is a form of human fascination and a personal expression, yet again to enforce acceptance within social groups and society. The Freudian notion of the " gaze" is a precise concept for being recognized within the sight of others, looked at and appearance can be discussed by society. Each individual is an object to others, clearly. The " visual loveliness" of clothes are fact and can not be ignored. The logical definition of beauty by Kant consist of four definitions : quality, quantity, relation and modality. When discussing clothing and fashion, quality and aesthetic must be free of interest. Clothes being something desirable is a form of earthly and man-made expression, up to each individual to define a specific way of reacting to the " gaze" and each

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judgement made considering taste, is opinionated and has no relation to a concept. The functional purpose of clothing is to cover the body, providing protection from weather, creating better self esteem and confidence, but their functional dimension can be ignored and a garment can be exhibited in a museum or gallery, purely because it is an item designed for specific needs, psychological and physical. The fact is that clothes are as much architecture as a building and requires as much skill and knowledge to be perfected.

FASHION & ART : Critical Crossovers - Adam Geczy and Vicki Karaminas At various times works of art, especially paintings were directly transformed and recreated into actual wearable garments. Examples of this is the Yves Saint Laurent's Mondrian dress, where a painting of the De Stijl artist, Piet Mondrian was directly created into a dress. Another more contemporary example is the Lady Gaga meat dress, which in actual fact was inspired by the Jana Sterbak (1987) meat dress. For celebrities fashion is the easiest way to make a statement, create reaction and a media storm, because society first sees the outfit, then the person wearing it and makes their own conclusion before knowing the concept and theory behind it. The meat dress by Gaga specifically, had the same protesting meaning as the one of Sterbak. In the twentieth century, the power of clothing and dress became a global awareness and artists used fashion as a link to expressing identity or meaning. Fashion reaches the masses, quicker than a painting, because more people relate to a garment as garments are worn everywhere by everyone. Equal status between fashion and art is becoming more clear, because the two go hand in hand, complimenting each other in various ways and both are aesthetic creations, with different modalities of presentation and reception. Both fashion and art originate from a social configuration of class, capital

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and communication. This period was in the late Middle ages and the Renaissance period. Society had searched for a break from rigid structures of religion and governance to gain self ownership. The question is : " Does fashion really want to be art? And does art really need fashion? " Fashion then might desire to become art, but knows that to do so might lead to it's ruin, like garments on display that are too valuable to be worn". The core creation for clothing is to sell the clothes to a wearer, for the wearer have own intentions as to why they bought a specific piece. It might be because they can express identity, feel comfortable, look gorgeous (the " gaze") or what ever the reason might be, even though garments are visually attractive, they are still to be worn out in public. Avante Garde garments are more likely to be seen as art, because there is no functionality to them, they are purely for display, what ever the reason might be behind the designs, lies within the fashion designer. It can be various things, either a message to be expressed or an exhibition of technical ability. The identifiable core of fashion (Like Levi's Strauss 501 jeans) is what causes lastingness, whereas fashion goes around to repeat itself, it in continuously recreated. A work of art is eternal, historical art is still appreciated, where your old bootleg jeans were easily replaced with skinnies. Both art and fashion is impossible without style, there can not be a work of art without style, just as n garment without style will be of no use at all. Psychological function is more clearly seem in art, because it serves no functional purpose, when looking at fashion as art, the body is purely a hanger, like a display cabinet for sculptures. Whereas the core purpose for fashion is decorative functionality. FASHIONABLE CAUSE \* Mary Corigall Clothing and fashion is a handy tool for artists to express various issues that can be well illustrated through the use of garments is a <https://assignbuster.com/literature-review-literature-review-samples-3/>



creative way that reach masses and can be related to and understood by many individuals. Identity and Gender being the main expressionistic topics for artists through fashion. In South Africa, black artists have turned to fashion as expression to “shrink the ideological baggage” that was created by past happenings and political related suppression. Examples of artists following this route are Schor, *Steel Wool Peignor* (Mimi Smith 1966) and *Purge and stepping into Self* (2005). Using fashion as form of artistic expression, the benefit of having a live “statue” (subject) of which the facial expression, make-up and hair can contribute to the message communicated, is complementing to the actual work of art created. More recently photography has taken on fashion as expression, specifically in South Africa — Artist Hlobo, *Chinta*(2006) and *Ndlyafuna*(2006). The artist creates the silhouette of a human form, shifting discourse away from representation and towards the internal and societal friction between maleness & femaleness. “The identity of Lemaona’s subjects in his recent exhibit, *Fortune Telling in Black, Red and White* at Brodie/Stevenson is obscured by the clothing, positioning a racial and gender crises as a collective quandary as well as a demoralizing process that silences the individual voice in *Ruga’s Naivety of Beirut* (2008) and *Even I exist in Embo Jaundiced tales of Counterpenetration* (2007) the clothing and costume he wears conceals not only his identity, but his gender” (Corrigall, 2008) The clothing worn by the subjects in the art become their masks, a form of disguise. Disguise of identity, gender, race, etc. Clothing contributes to art in many ways, positive, negative or as pure decorative items. This is where art benefits from fashion.