

BY RONALD E. GOLDBEEM, DDS

What You Will Wear

Next Year... and WHY!

And Who Decides?

Follow a 2007 forecast that in the U.S., apparel is a \$172 billion retail market. The industry employs more than 4.6 million people, from small shops. And here's what: California and New Jersey retailers spend more on marketing than anywhere else in the US.

Carla Miller, author of *The Guide to Women's Fashion*, defines fashion as "the prevailing style or custom... something with a glamour that is in the current mode." Fashion permeates us through the media—in ads, on runways and on screen. With all aspects of fashion in our daily lives, we'd expect an abstract pair of shoes on the runway, an interesting handbag as a memento or a lovely belt worn by someone in the grocery store.

An economist who has long been professionally involved in luxury, I recently found myself intrigued by an aspect of the appearance Mr. E, very seriously contemplated before, "What do fashion trends come from? How are fashion decisions made? Is there a 'fashion police' that guides or regulates the industry? My industry/business conversations with some millennial women in the fashion industry, I think, will be quite interested in what they had to say.

FASHION MATTERS

Fashion writer Miller observes that, "To some, fashion is an art form. To others it is

descent's religion. But for most people it is a method of cultivating clothing, accessories and hair to show or hide something about yourself. Fashion statements can be made with clothes, accessories, shoes, hair, makeup, even your cell phone," she adds.

Halle's sister, Masha (aka, Miss Justice, Tom Ford and other top designers "divorced designers." They help us do more for the rest of us, she suggests.

But who decides what is and what

The ultimate fashion expert is the one you see in the mirror every day!

not? How does it all happen? Will there be the new look? Or will there be a return to the former new look?

WAS MARK TWAIN RIGHT, "CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN" . . . ??

It all starts a bit. It's not until we step on the red carpet that fashion can be. Then we look, and how we feel about how we look, can change significantly in our sense of personal confidence. For many people, looking good is the foundation of a positive

attitude that pervades all aspects of life.

Research shows that people who like the way they look often find it easier to create and keep friends, and they're even tapped for promotions over others. Projecting a positive image usually improves character long-term success overall. But that's giving credit to clothes.

The point is simple: The "Who? It's a matter of self-confidence, the need to compete with the rest of the world. It's how, people have always, and will always, pay attention to fashion. Who, then, will decide what to pay attention to?

TREND FORECASTERS

In my interview with fashion designer Tom Rowland, owner with her daughter of the Gianni line, she explained to me the role of "trend forecasters." These professional foreagers tell their concepts to designers who use them to create the lines we are wearing down the runway and in your wardrobe.

According to Rowland, her role happens about six to eight months ahead of the season, and forecasters have come consisted by agencies and home fashion designers, print buyers, textile designers and members of the fabric trade, who report on trends of interest to their markets.

My search for understanding also led me to April Wilton, fashion director for Nike, F&B America in Atlanta. She believes fabric shows evidence of the strongest influence on designers. Trend forecasting, then, work with trends forecast or anticipate seasons,

patterns and colors as long as three years before a given season.

Beyond the role of forecasters, designers are often influenced by current events, celebrities and social trends—global as well as local ones. Some trends occasionally reach us more readily in some parts of the country or the world than others. But ultimately everyone has nearly equal access to these trends on the Internet and the influence of mass-market retail, according to Wilton.

Rowland explains another way the big names, like Ralph Lauren, get their designs is by a team of designers working under them. "Many of the large design houses are run by large companies and when that happens the designers have creative control over their work. They choose how what will make money for the company are based on a designer's advice. Design. That is why so many fashion labels look alike."

Like Miller, Rowland agrees the celebrities play a role in determining fashion. Often, it's not their personal sense of style that's used and adopted by others. Rather, it's what the designer perceives them. "Celebrities are very nice and will wear garments just to have something new and exciting to wear. It is good for both the actor and the designer. These relationships can make a new designer or break them if the actor is not." The new look also makes their appearance on the small and large screens.

As for celebrities who launch their own fashion lines, Rowland says the trend can be a bit misleading. In fact, while most their success in clothing, jewelry, etc. has tremendous do may look beyond that. Many of us even have design teams that design the garments for their labels. As Rowland points out, "Many of these labels come and go with the popularity of the actor and/or singer (like the Gene label)."

Rowland says some designers purchase designs and garments to copy and then give their own private label lines. "There are Justin Timberlake shirts that are in stores now. They are black jumps with a tie and might look like the original \$50. There are a dozen knockoffs of the same style. Like these that will be around \$100."

Justin Timberlake is an example of a celebrity who also has a fashion line. In fact, she has her own design team Justin Simpson, Frances H by Justice and Scott Klein by J. However, some celebrities come with a great deal of access. The answer, according to a *W Magazine* article by John Katsouridis, the producer of Target's clothing line, Target Apparel

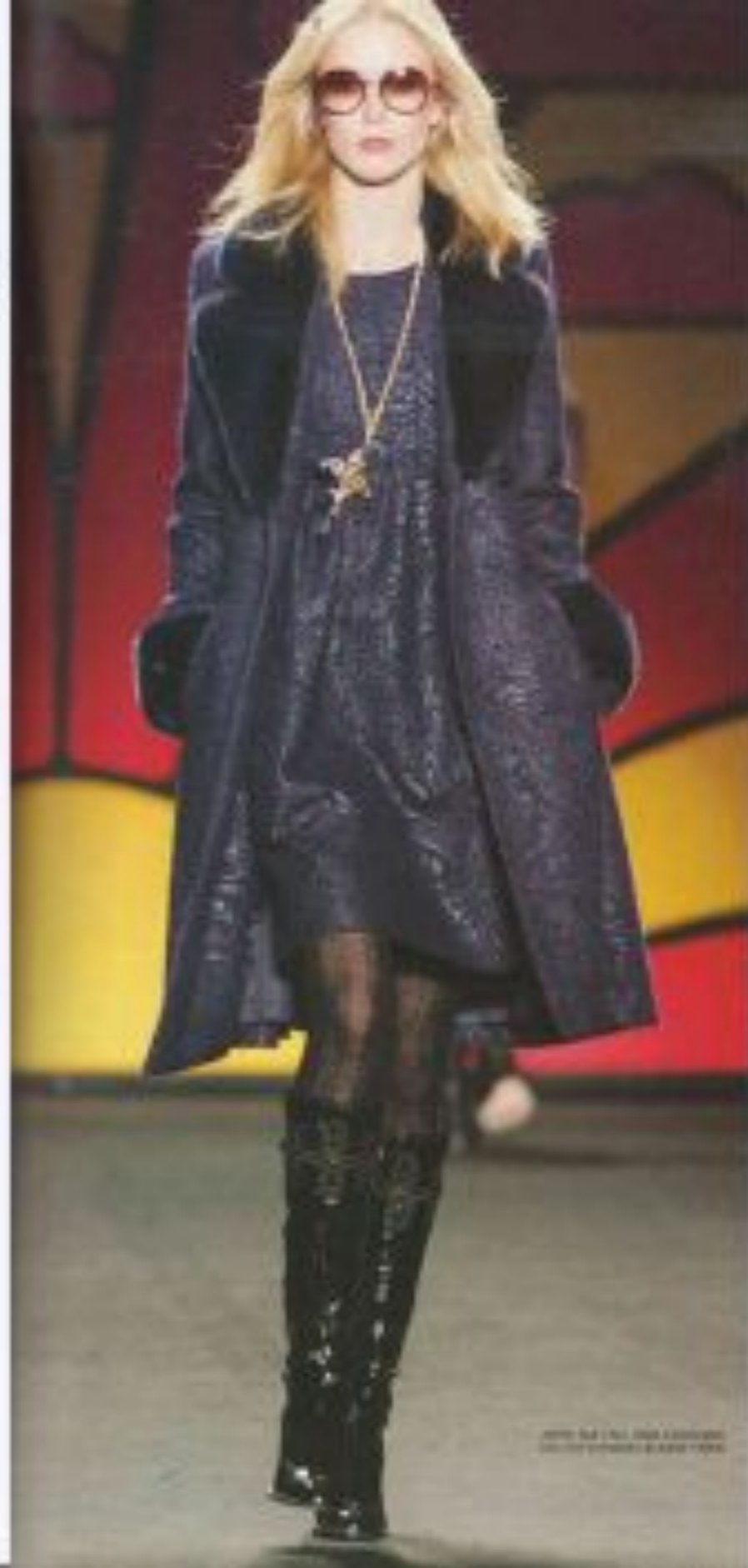


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