

**COUTURE THE JUMPER**

MADE TO MEASURE FOR THE SUPER-RICH

**NYLON**

THE REVOLUTIONARY WONDER-FIBRE

**THE WHITE WEDDING DRESS**

THE ONLY COLOUR FOR A BRIDE

**THE NEW LOOK**

DECADENT DRESSES IN AN IMPOVERISHED WORLD

**DECONSTRUCTION AND ANTWERP**

NEW DOWNBEAT BELGIAN DESIGN



**BOLD THE STILETTO**

A PAIR OF KILLER HEELS

**PRINTS**

FROM POIRET TO PUCCI

**CELEBRITIES**

THE LURE OF THE FAME GAME

**TATTOOS**

BODY ART GOES MAINSTREAM

**BRAND CULTURE AND**

**THE WRISTWATCH**

THE TIMEKEEPING ESSENTIAL



**HOT PANTS**

WEAR THEM IF YOU DARE

**PROTEST DRESS**

SAYING IT LOUD AND SAYING IT PROUD

**THE SUPERMODEL**

MODELS MAKE THE A-LIST

THE CELEBRATION OF SIMPLICITY

**THE DELPHOS GOWN**

THE FEMALE FORM UNFOLDS



**COSTUME JEWELLERY**

FLAUNTING GREAT FAKES

**HIP HOP**

FLYGIRLS AND B-BOYS  
TAKE CENTRE STAGE

**FUNK**

FASHION GETS INTO  
THE GROOVE

100 IDEAS  
THAT CHANGED  
**FASHION**

HARRIET WORSLEY

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**100 IDEAS THAT  
CHANGED FASHION**

*Harriet Worsley*





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**100 IDEAS THAT  
CHANGED FASHION**

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# Introduction

Life's formative moments often come when one least expects them. As an unworldly 12-year-old, I was offered the chance to explore my grandmother's wardrobe, and an entirely new and dazzling world opened up before me: silks and furs and velvet, and, so it seemed to me, numerous excuses for dressing up. There were boxy 1960s silk shift dresses in every imaginable colour, neat tweed suits and long velvet evening gowns. I was utterly captivated – and have remained so ever since. Vintage clothes have a history, and stories. There is something magical about holding a 1920s beaded silk flapper dress and imagining who wore it and what secrets it has within its folds: forgotten dances at wild parties? Secret love affairs?

My grandmother's clothes not only opened my eyes to the richness and variety of women's clothing, but, importantly, to the enormous distance that fashion itself had travelled. Like human evolution, women's fashions had adapted through countless stages to become the clothing that she wore. It was evident, looking at the well-crafted but simple luxury of those clothes from the 1950s and 1960s, so far removed from the fusty Victoriana of just 50 years before, that something dramatic happened to fashion in the first half of the twentieth century; and the remaining years proved no less exciting.

The twentieth century was one rich in innovation. It gave life to hundreds of new ideas and inventions, many of which had an impact on women's clothing. The sartorial contrast between the beginning and the end of the century is extreme. From the corsets, sweeping dresses and chaperoned women of 1900 to nude sunbathing, miniskirts, air travel and Internet shopping just 100 years later, it hardly seems possible that so much changed, and so fast.

The aim of *100 Ideas That Changed Fashion* is to highlight and explain these revolutionary changes in womenswear from 1900 to 2010. The ideas are presented chronologically, and are positioned in the book's fashion timeline to mark a point of change. For example, the T-shirt was worn in the early

twentieth century as men's underwear, and was a mainstream fashion item during the second half of the century, so it appears in the book at the point that it became worn as outerwear – during the 1950s. The book sets out to encourage the reader to look at everyday clothes with a more informed eye: knowing that the first bikini was deemed so outrageous that only a stripper would model it, that T-shirts were initially men's underwear and that the rivets on jeans were developed to strengthen workmen's trousers during the gold-rush era.

The book's objective, at its inception, rested on what would constitute an 'idea', about which there was much debate. We concluded that each idea had to be something that rerouted the course of fashion and without which womenswear would not be what it is today.

The most obvious ideas were the new inventions. These ranged from relatively small fashion-specific entities such as the zip or nylon to more far-reaching inventions such as the computer and air travel. Such inventions could not be ignored, but the book's focus is squarely on how fashion changed as a result of these brilliant leaps forward, rather than on the inventions themselves.

Fashion's reaction to major political or economic world events also had to be included, for the effect they had on the course of fashion was irrefutable. The Great Depression of the 1930s led women to copy costume trends from Hollywood movies as a means of escapism from those dark days, while the restriction of materials during World War II led to the evolution of new fashion ideas such as streamlined suits and wooden- and cork-soled shoes.

The emancipation of women was one of the greatest changes of the twentieth century, and its effect on fashion was immense and far-reaching. As society allowed women to do more for themselves – to go out to work, to vote, and, in the case of society women, to ditch their chaperones – clothing had to adapt. An independent unaccompanied woman clearly needed a handbag to carry her valuables.



More importantly, war work could hardly be done efficiently in a rib-compressing whalebone corset. Later, in the 1920s, competing against men in the workplace did not call for frilled dresses but, rather, for a plain skirt suit. The bias cut, the influence of sportswear and the introduction of synthetics all allowed women to dress with more comfort and ease, and to enjoy clothes suited to their increasingly dynamic lifestyles. Interestingly, many of these key innovations appropriated elements from menswear; being traditionally more casual, comfortable and practical, it was an obvious shift. Chanel was a great pioneer in this respect, adapting men's yachting trousers, jumpers and pea coats for women, while Yves Saint Laurent gave women the trouser suit, making it a respectable option for formal occasions.

Just as emancipated woman changed the course of fashion, so the arrival of the 'teenager' in the 1950s – a new, dynamic social force with spending power – created a different target market for designers and spawned numerous trends that feature as ideas in this book. Aside from mainstream teenage fashion, many youth-driven subcultural groups, with their own sartorial codes, blossomed from the middle of the century, ranging from 1960s mods and hippies to the skaters and indie kids of the 1990s. These in turn began to feed the creativity of designers, starting with Yves Saint Laurent in the 1960s, to Tom Ford, Anna Sui and many more in the 2000s, who were all creating luxury collections, and looking for new inspiration and energy.

The twentieth century saw a breaking down of the notion that dress codes demarcate social status, and this also threw up some interesting ideas for the book. Coco Chanel introduced the wealthy to the black dress and the suntan (which had formerly only been seen on working-class women), and persuaded society women that costume jewellery could be as acceptable as wearing real jewels. Meanwhile, the advent of mass-manufacturing, and an increase in social mobility, means that today the same trends can be enjoyed and worn by all, as the high-street

stores knock out smart, affordable copies of the catwalk looks.

Fashion went truly global during the twentieth century, and this introduced a number of ideas to the book such as fashion's increasing use of motifs and silhouettes influenced by cultures outside the West; the emergence of Japanese designers on Western catwalks and the eclipse of Paris as the only credible centre of fashion. Today, fashion media, design, manufacturing and business operate internationally rather than nationally. The Internet spreads the fashion gospel worldwide, with the live streaming of fashion shows, as well as blogs, magazines and shopping sites.

Fashion designers themselves are included in this book only in relation to their best innovations. The very greatest designers and business giants, the arbiters of change, all merit a mention for their contribution to fashion – Coco Chanel, Elsa Schiaparelli, Yves Saint Laurent, Vivienne Westwood, Calvin Klein, John Galiano, Tom Ford and more.

While working on this book I gave birth to my daughter, Jessie. At the time, newspaper reports were claiming that this new generation, hers, could easily live for 100 years. What changes will she see in her lifetime? If the developments in the last 110 years have been extreme, then imagine the year 2110. The final idea in this book hints at the futuristic surprises that are just beginning now – computers integrated into clothing, and prints that change on a skirt with the push of a button. But what's coming next? If the last century is anything to go by, it is certainly destined to be challenging, dramatic and unlike anything we can possibly imagine today.



# Made to measure for the super-rich

IDEA Nº 1

## COUTURE



Lady Curzon in the Peacock Dress of 1909 by Charles Frederick Worth, the first couturier. He designed show-stopping gowns for royalty, actresses and the nouveaux riches.

Couture clothes are made to measure for a specific woman's body size, as opposed to ready-to-wear clothes that are made in standard sizes. We would not have haute couture without Charles Frederick Worth, its founding father.

Until the 1960s, the Paris couturiers led European fashion trends, largely defining the way in which women dressed. While the relevance of haute couture today is debatable, owing to its vast expense and limited client-base, before the 1960s couture designers played an essential role as trend-makers and -breakers.

Worth was the first designer to make his name as a fashion star. Born in Lincolnshire, England, in 1825, he moved to Paris at the age of 20, where he set up his own fashion house in 1858. It was the first designer atelier. The fashionable Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III, took him under her wing, and thereafter Worth quickly became the darling of society. He made his name designing ostentatious gowns for royalty and the nobility, actresses and the nouveaux riches, and his business flourished. Worth had no time for shawls, bonnets and other such frippery – he focused on flattering the female figure, swathing it in luxurious fabric. He was especially fêted for his white tulle evening dresses.

The haute couture industry of today is Worth's abiding legacy. He was a great innovator, becoming the first to show clothes on live models, and the first to present a new collection every year. His garments were customized to each client and patiently adapted to her whims. In the manner of an artist, Worth even signed his dresses by hand.

Worth's successors, the couturiers of the early twentieth century, united

in 1910 to form the *Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne*. This group actively promoted its clothes to overseas markets, and paved the way for the biannual couture shows that are staged in Paris today.

Until the 1990s the *Chambre Syndicale* had very strict rules of admission, but these rules have been relaxed recently to allow younger designers in. With members including John Galliano for Christian Dior, and such mavericks as Jean Paul Gaultier and Viktor & Rolf, couture today is anything but dull. It is a quirky mix of fantastical and wearable pieces, and showcases the meticulous work of some of fashion's most expert craftspeople. The relevance of haute couture in the modern world may still be a subject of heated debate, but its drama and creativity are undeniable. ■





A John Galliano design  
for Christian Dior couture,  
Spring/Summer 2007.



# The lure of the fame game

IDEA Nº 2

## CELEBRITIES

We unquestionably live in a celebrity-obsessed society. Television cameras and paparazzi lenses ensure that the lives of the rich and famous are thrust upon us in almost every medium, whether it be television, newspapers, magazines or the World Wide Web.

And we can watch celebrities' fashion triumphs and disasters as they happen, the Internet enabling information to be streamed to our homes at lightning speed. Throughout history, prominent people have always exerted tremendous sway in fashion. Royalty, actresses and royal mistresses have all been trend-setters. The first couturier, Charles Frederick Worth, benefited from the high-profile patronage of fashion icon Empress Eugénie, the wife of Napoleon III of France. During the 1900s society beauties and actresses were pictured on postcards and cigarette cards in order to show off new fashions. From the beginning of the twentieth century, celebrities started to play a crucially important role in fashion – by patronizing designers and, in wearing their clothes, giving prominence to their designs. Rather than on television or the Internet, reports appeared in newspapers and magazines.

By the 1930s women were flocking to the movies and copying the influential looks of Hollywood stars – Greta Garbo's trench coats, Joan Crawford's full painted lips, Marlene Dietrich's smouldering glamour. And the film studios' costume designers, such as Travis Banton and Gilbert Adrian, ensured that the stars looked as impeccable off-screen as they did on it.

Prominent actresses and fashion designers have often formed highly successful mutually beneficial relation-

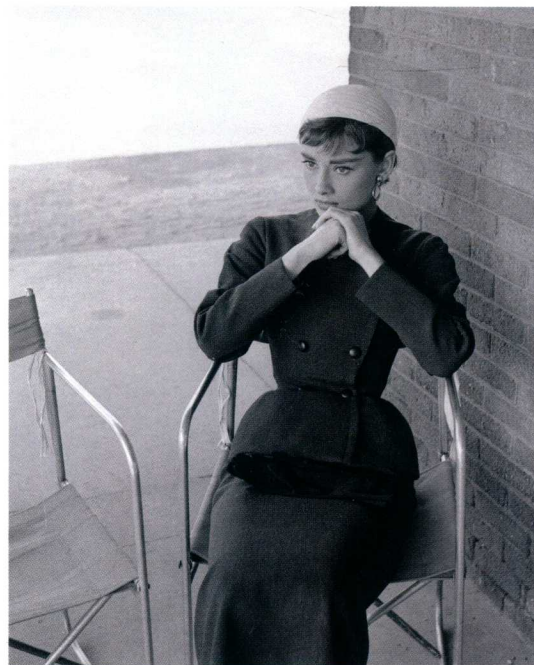
ships, with the success of each raising the other's profile. A perfect example was the long-standing pairing of actress Audrey Hepburn and designer Hubert de Givenchy, notably for her clothes for the 1954 movie *Sabrina*, but just as importantly for the neat black trousers and bateau-necked tops that Hepburn wore off-screen.

Giorgio Armani's designs for Richard Gere in *American Gigolo* (1980) raised his profile, and popularized the loose, wide-shouldered jacket. Today Keira Knightley has teamed up with Chanel, and Scarlett Johansson with Louis Vuitton, with the stars featuring in the brands' advertising campaigns and wearing their clothes off-screen.

More than ever, designers are clamouring to dress movie stars for red-carpet events such as the Oscars. And with an increasingly media-hungry public, and the currency of celebrity being somewhat cheapened, the fashion houses are busier than ever trying to seduce the major stars of the moment with their designs. ■

BELOW: Model, celebrity and fashion icon Kate Moss in New York City, 2009. Her modelling career, influential sense of style and her clothing ranges for Topshop have made her a household name.

BOTTOM: Audrey Hepburn wears a costume by Hubert de Givenchy on the set of *Sabrina*, 1953.







1930s film star Marlene Dietrich poses with a cigarette. Her tailored suits and languid beauty were legendary.





‘It is tidy, flattering and neat,  
without looking provocative’