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## INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT FASHION HISTORY

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This thesis intends to unravel some facts about fashion history. The history of fashion is a history of people. Clothing was important and often passed on from one generation to the next upon death. Today fashion is synonymous with the latest and the trendy. However, there are some intriguing and surprising historical facts about fashion, less known to us. We love fashion industry but there are something about it that we are completely unaware of. Let's have a look at the past to see some interesting and shocking facts about fashion industry.

1. *High heels were actually worn by men.* For generations, high heels have signified femininity and glamour - but a pair of high heels was once an essential accessory for men. We can trace its origin back to Persia - the historical name for modern-day Iran. It was invented to stop men falling off their horses! It helped to keep a man's feet in the stirrups when he was shooting at his foes with a bow and arrow. When a wave of interest in all things Persian passed through Western Europe, Persian style shoes were enthusiastically adopted by aristocrats, who sought to give their appearance a virile, masculine edge that, it suddenly seemed, only heeled shoes could supply. Higher status was reflected by increase in the heel height. As usually happens, high fashion is adapted into more affordable versions and filters down to the less fortunate. The lower classes started to wear high heels. The elite responded by making their heels increasingly higher to maintain the distinction of being upper class - the higher the heel, the more expensive the shoe typically was. They also began to differentiate heels into two kinds - fat heels for men and skinny for women.

2. *How white became the colour of the Wedding Gowns.* You can blame Queen Victoria for the white wedding dress. She wore plain white to marry Prince Albert in 1840, and sparked a trend that's lasted to this day — but, surprisingly, she didn't wear it to symbolise purity or virginity. She just wore it because, well, she liked white. The connotations of virginity we know so well today only really appeared later in her reign, as the sentimental Victorians idolised innocent brides and their pure white gowns. Surely white is so symbolic of peace and purity. Before this time, European brides were known to wear dresses in a variety of colours and embroidered with elaborate patterns. However, the white wedding dress was quickly adopted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by brides on both sides of the Atlantic.

3. *Napoleon Bonaparte made a major contribution to fashion.* Napoleon Bonaparte isn't who people would probably pin point as a huge fashion icon, but what few know is that he played a huge role in rising of France to be the Fashion empire it is today. Have you ever wondered why you have buttons on the sleeves of your jackets that don't appear to have any practical purpose whatsoever? Napoleon wasn't just about war. He contributed to fashion in many ways too. The reason we have buttons on the sleeves of our jackets is because Napoleon got tired of his soldiers wiping their noses on their sleeves.

4. *Tutankhamun made eyeliner popular.* Eyeliner wasn't very popular at all until around the 1920s. It only became popular after King Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered in 1922, which sparked a renewed interest in Ancient Egypt, and people saw images of the young king wearing eyeliner. Ancient Egyptian men and women had make-up of black and green colours and considered it healing. Initially, the makeup was designed to protect from the scorching sun.



5. *How the automobile changed fashion.* Since the automobile revolution happened in 1908 with Ford's Model T, cars have changed the way we live, revved up our imaginations, and driven fashion forward — literally. From dust coats and fur coats to gloves, scarves, and shoes, over the years, the automobile has become synonymous with style. You might have thought that skirts became shorter because of changing attitudes to morality and to the showing of bare legs, but it was for a far more practical reason than that. The first short skirts are thought to have been designed to make it easier for girls to get in and out of automobiles.

6. *The First official Fashion Week.* The first official Fashion Week was created in 1943 by Eleanor Lambert, press director of the American fashion industry's first promotional organization, the New York Dress Institute. The event, the world's first organized fashion week, was called "Press Week", and was created to attract attention away from French fashion during World War II, when fashion industry insiders were unable to travel to Paris to see French fashion shows. It was also meant to showcase American designers for fashion journalists, who had neglected U.S. fashion innovations. Press Week was a success, and fashion magazines like Vogue, which were normally filled with French designs, increasingly featured American fashion. By the mid-1950s, the event was known as "Press Week of New York". Spring 1951 (held February 1951) was the 16th Annual Press Week of New York.

7. *Fashion is still controlled by men!* Even today, the control of most of the big fashion houses and fashion magazines is still in the hands of the men. Of all the industries you'd have thought that fashion is one place that women would have redressed the balance, but most fashion houses, stores, and magazines, still have a man at the helm. Paris and Milan, often considered the most traditional fashion weeks, where many of the oldest and most prestigious brands show, have the lowest proportion of female designers. At Paris Fashion Week, 37 percent of designers are female, while Milan is the least gender diverse city, with women accounting for just 31 percent of designers.

8. *Valentino Red.* Continuing on with men who run the industry. Valentino stands for craftsmanship, luxury and feminine beauty. Ever since his debut in 1959, Valentino Garavani created handmade garments with luxury materials, great focus, and a keen eye for detail and timeless beauty. Dressing Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren, Audrey Hepburn and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Valentino gained the support of some of the most important style icons in the 60s and 70s. His unique fashion reflects the spirit of his Italian roots and the elegance of Parisian women. Valentino Garavani, Italian fashion designer, made red dresses just as famous as Coco Chanel's Little Black Dress. His red dress has gained so much popularity that it has earned the nickname "Valentino Red".

To sum up, who says fashion is trendy and latest only. It is all about drawing from the past. Fashion goes in cycles what was once popular might be popular again one day. Never say never! You never know when you might be wearing clothes like your grandparents used to wear just to be "hip" today!

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