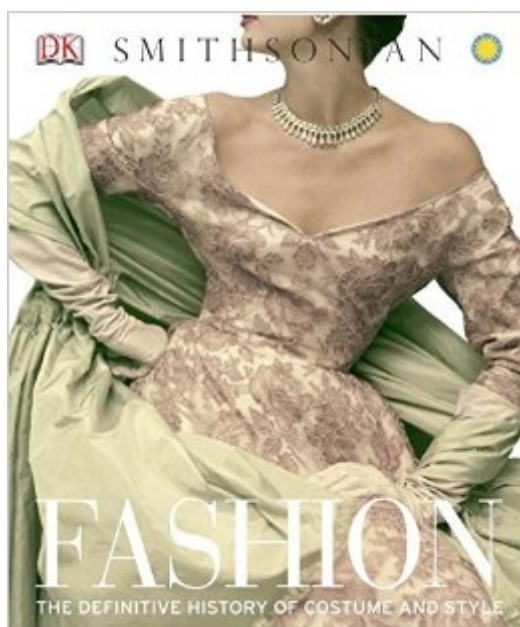


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Fashion: The Definitive History Of Costume And Style



Synopsis

Tracing the evolution of fashion from the early draped fabrics of ancient times to the catwalk couture of today Fashion: The Definitive History of Costume and Style is a stunningly illustrated guide to more than three thousand years of shifting trends and innovative developments in the world of clothing. Containing everything you need to know about changing fashion and style from ancient Egyptian dress to Space Age Fashion and Grunge and information on icons like Marie Antoinette, Clara Bow, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Alexander McQueen, Fashion catalogs the history of what people wear, revealing how Western fashion has been influenced by design from around the world and celebrating costume and haute couture. Fashion will captivate anyone interested in style whether it's the fashion-mad teen in Tokyo, the wannabe designer in college, or the fashionista intrigued by the violent origins of the stiletto and the birth of bling.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I own multiple DK books and multiple volumes about the history of fashion. This book follows DK's tradition of gorgeous, informative coffee table books, as well as offering new information to someone with an amateur interest in historical dress. (For some context, here are some of the fashion books I already own: Taschen's Fashion, John Peacock's The Chronicle of Western Costume, and John Peacock's 20th Century Fashion.) The chapters focus on eras, and within those, the individual page spreads focus on specific topics (suits, sportswear, silhouettes, etc.) with multiple pictures of outfits on each page in a timeline format. DK uses this format to trace different trends, so sometimes there are several spreads that cover the same decade. The book differs from

Taschen's and Peacock's books in that it has much more explanatory text and a greater variety of pictures: full costume photos, detail photos, period illustrations from advertisements and fashion plates, and examples from fine art. This tome covers men's and women's fashion from King Tut to Kate Middleton, and mostly focuses on Western costume. If you're an expert on the history of fashion, this may end up being little more than a book of pretty pictures for you (and pretty pictures they are!). If you have a hobbyist's interest, then this book has a lot to offer. Either way this book definitely lays out information in a way that cannot be found anywhere else.

Okay; I am a professor of costume history, so I admit I came to this book with something of a finicky eye. That understood, I was a bit shocked at how sort of 'lazy' (for want of a better word) the writing was here. For example, Medieval hennins (those high headdresses) were not described as such, but instead, simply pointed out as 'tall headdresses'. 'Gigot sleeves' of the 1830s are described as 'puffed sleeves', and only one Egyptian headdress is given its correct name (the 'nemis'); everything else is just described as 'a headdress' (when each headdress had its own name and symbolism). Further to this, there is absolutely no analysis as to the 'why' of anything. WHY did Neo-Classicism happen? WHY did silhouette change between the 1400s and 1500s. Basically, it's just a book with pictures of clothing that is grouped together intelligently, yet seems to exhibit no real research or academic knowledge of Costume History. HOWEVER... Out of all of the Costume History books I own (and I own them all, lemme tell ya!) this is by far away the most gorgeous in terms of presentation; costumes appear clearly and are arranged in a manner that makes sense to the eye. And it really does cover (almost) everything, although I was surprised that it only kicks off Ancient Egypt, ignoring Sumeria, Galettian culture of the Paleolithic Era (and all that shell beading), etc. I use it as a required text for the images, as it really does give students an instant 'visual read' on, say, what men wore in the 1770s, etc. Yet this isn't an academic text. It offers no real 'discussion' as to any of the costume periods in hand; instead, what we are left with is pretty light cocktail banter. A lovely coffee table book and general overview of the subject, but not really worth of Smithsonian publications in terms of academic or historical depth.

When I saw the book at A local bookstore while shopping with some friends, I grabbed it immediately, and purchased it without question, as DK books are lavishly illustrated with clear color photos as a general rule. The illustrations are worth the purchase price alone, as they are large enough for one to extrapolate from them the methods to make the garment yourself, and as an invaluable guide to the proper colors to use, as well as fabric choices to use. It is a very handy guide

to making one's own "garb" for renfaires, reenactments, etc. However, I DO have one problem with the book. It is decidedly uneven as to what periods are covered, with the weight of it(half)being devoted to the last two hundred years or so, and weighted towards the 20th century. Lopsided is one word to describe it. For a more balanced coverage, you still can't beat 20,000 years of Fashion, or the recent History of World Fashion. But if you are craving color photos as a vital guide to making your own clothing-this book would make an excellent addition to one's fashion history library. The price is right, and worth grabbing asap. You'll drool over the large color photos!

I purchased this book for my work, at a musical theatre arts school. It is the most comprehensive, easy to read fashion history I have ever seen.

After viewing a preview of this glorious book in Edelweiss and through iBooks, I purchased 3 copies in November. I gave two of them as Christmas gifts to my mother and mother-in-law, who both expressed "oohs" and "ahhs" over the fabulous content, scope and coverage, and authority of the text and pictures. I purchased the third copy of my school library, where the book is garnering a lot of interest from middle and high school girls who love to study fashion as an extension of their personal interests or art classes. The chronological presentation of fashion as an integral expression of culture and thought throughout history is outstanding. I particularly like the fact that the book not only focuses on haute couture, but also menswear, work wear, and everyday clothes through the eras. The details that show, for example, a man's highly embroidered coat in 18th century France are spectacular. I highly recommend this book for ages 10 to adult. I have read that the iBook (and possibly the Kindle version if an enhanced version is available there) is considered one of the top Art books of 2012, and from my brief preview of the enhanced features of the iBook, I can see that it is a unique and special volume that illustrates all the potential for great ebooks, with videos, close-ups, and extra content. This book in print or digital will provide endless hours of interesting browsing but is also scholarly enough to suit research needs for high school and undergraduate students.

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