Fashion Stylists: Past and Present.

Fashion stylists have always been an important part of the world of fashion. They have an important role in the fashion industry. In this article, lets take a deeper dive into their role, and the history behind them.

A fashion stylist (also known as a wardrobe stylist, or just stylist) is someone who advises clients on jaw dropping looks that can make any crowd stare in awe. They help to keep track of current, developing, and regional trends in fashion and design, and they adapt to the clients interest in colour, style and shape. They need to know how to manipulate various fashion techniques such as mixing different fabrics together to create a look, and they need to be creative (obviously).

The job of a fashion stylist is quite well paying. GreatSampleResume.com tells us that it can vary in the range of $17,000 to $80,000. The pay depends on the client, and their ability to pay. The median income of a fashion stylist is around $41,000. Employment is hourly, and can pay up to $1000 an hour!

Milan Fashion Style Academy knows first hand how hard it is to become a fashion stylist. They tell us that fashion stylists are usually a part of a larger team that is assembled by the client. This team usually consists of a hair stylist, photographer, make up artist, and of course, the fashion stylist. They usually borrow the clothing and return it later, but some celebrities who can afford it keep their clothing that is bought.

A stylist can play different roles depending on their knowledge and skills. There can be editorial styling which is where a stylist chooses the clothing, accessories and general look for the model of the shoot. After this has been settled on, the stylist will consult PR teams for companies, flick through look-books, and contact showrooms all to gather the items for the outfit. During the photoshoot, the stylist needs to ensure that the garments are photograph ready.

Some brands involve stylists throughout the whole process, meaning design meetings, asking for ideas, research and finding interesting garments. This approach is much more team based, rather than the independent approach of the last method. Most of the time, the stylist will get involved close to the end of the process to tie all the designed garments together.

Celebrities will usually ask for a fashion stylist to have some sort of relevant degree or qualification. It isn’t necessary to get into the industry, however a degree shows that the stylist is competent and is capable of creating an amazing look. Usually, these celebrities will look for someone who has earned a diploma as a fashion stylist.

There is usually a misconception of the term “fashion stylist” and it is usually mistaken as a “fashion editor”. A fashion editor will make the look and mood of the shoot and they are the ones who choose a photographer, the clothing, the location, and the model. A stylist will usually do all of the same, but the term can also apply to someone who is choosing the clothing for a shoot or public appearance.

There is a bit of controversy around some stylists. Some of the fashion stylists that are employed are usually freelancers who have to lug clothing all around the town they are going to, will have little security (which is a problem if they are working with a famous celebrity or public figure), and be in physical pain because of all the carrying they have to do for their time as a stylist.

There are some chances to take courses to become a fashion stylist. For example, The University of Arts in London allows for students to take a course on how to become a fashion stylist. They teach about the three key areas that stylists work across, which is editorial, commercial, and personal. The course also teaches students that “the end goal is not to get free clothes. It’s not a job about chopping. It is to work hard.”

The history of a fashion stylist’s job has varied quite a lot since it’s origins around 1600, although the main premise has stayed the same. People didn’t really know much about it until around the 1960 and ‘70s. It became known in the 1970’s as “image consulting”. This image consulting made its way into the mainstream culture. In the late ‘70s, the public began to gain a fascination with high fashion and obtainable style. Everyday people were looking to have their favourite public figures’ looks.

The business of fashion styling really blew up in the 1980’s. Image consulting firms popped up offering the average joe to have the opportunity to have a star like image. Since image consulting/fashion styling was not a well known topic back then, these firms would be in scarce quantities, however because of the scarcity they were able to monopolize on this fairly new market.

Fashion styling was very behind the scenes until fashion stylists like Rachel Zoe emerged and started to become stars for their work. Fashion stylist Alex Longmore explains that “pre social media, the culture was very different. It was about the stars and the designers they wore.”

The traditional role of a fashion stylist was much more simplistic than we know it to be today, where movie studios would provide large budgets for their stylists to provide the characters with outfits that would suit them. Their work would help for these films to win awards, yet the stylist behind the scenes would have little to no credit.

Through this article, we have taken a look at how fashion stylists have always had an important role in the world, and how they came to light with the public. You may know someone who wants to start a career in styling, and to them, you should tell them to go for it! Yes, it is quite expensive, however the return that can be made is amazing!

### Sources

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