

# Stylistics of Russian and European Art Nouveau in Costume Design, Decorative and Applied Arts

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## ABSTRACT

The founder of the "haute couture" (high sewing) field, the Englishman Charles Frederick Worth, put the costume of the late 19th – early 20th century on a new stage of development in the scale of decorative and applied arts. This high idea was picked up by famous couturiers, interpreting it in their creative manner. Among them, there are the following bright names: Poiret, Duse, Paquin. Fans of their talent were very wealthy and demanding, so the masters of the costume had to invent new styles every week. It should be emphasized that the art of high-quality sewing was perfectly manifested in Russia. A genetic sense of beauty and a sense of proportion gave rise to exquisite samples of evening dresses, which were worthy of competing with the costumes designed for the oldest royal families in Europe. Domestic workshops, or, as they were then called, brands (firms) managed to establish themselves in the Russian textile market. Some of the Russian fashion houses of the 1890s and 1910s received international recognition, for example, the workshops of N. P. Lamanova.

**Keywords:** Fashion, Modern, Beauty, Costumes, Couturier, Silver age, Style, Art, Sewing, Workshops, Images, Textiles, World, Europe, Russia.

*...fashion is a means of artistic expression, which, for all its fragility, with an obvious difference in scale, can be equated with architecture or painting. Without proper foundations, there can be no fashion.*

*Christian Dior.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Each collection has its own story, explaining why the fashion designer took this or that theme. This is preceded by a long analysis of both fashion trends and the definition of the image of the wearer, his lifestyle. A designer working on the creation of a new form of costume acts simultaneously in several qualities: he is an artist-sculptor, painter, applied artist, giving birth to a new aesthetic; he is a designer-technologist who can bring his ideas to realization in the material; he is a psychologist who helps people reflect their inner qualities through clothes and gain self-confidence; and even, to some extent, a director who offers a person wearing a suit a new image every time, and with it a new behavioral role.

Each fashion is in one way or another a mirror of its time, reflecting the socio-political life of

people, the level and nature of the development of productive forces, the most striking events of the era, the most important cultural and scientific achievements, habits, and psychology of modern man, his ideas about the aesthetic ideal. The forms of costume always develop in parallel with the development of the general style in art and architecture of a certain historical epoch, experiencing together the stages of its evolution: the origin, public acceptance, dawn, and extinction, and from the moment of the "dying" of the old, already obsolete costume form, the process of forming a new one begins.

The problem of style remained in the memory of the twentieth century, not because of epistolary interests, but because style, in a way, is a tool itself that will help you to understand and "read" the history of art, including costume design. Fashion and micro-style are often confused by our

contemporaries who study these concepts, believing that they are not the same subject. The concepts of "style" and "fashion" are certainly related, but each has its laws of formation and time interval. Numerous definitions of "style" and "fashion" have completely erased the boundaries of these concepts, making the work difficult not only for historians, theorists, art historians but also for costume design practitioners. Identifying the features of style or fashion allows you to work competently, professionally, and therefore more effectively. Style is something that is evolving and changing through the times and the lifestyle of the people who are working on its development. Style can be seen "linearly" as consistent phases of changing shapes, colors, and patterns, or it can be seen as a three-dimensional, spatial concept, as a closed system characterized by its "norm" and laws of construction. The traditional scheme of style development, published in several works on the history of art and costume, is widely spread in the history of art. The elements of the costume are described in length there, but there is practically no in-depth analysis of the causes and patterns of fundamental changes that have occurred in the art of costume. Fashion, for its part, is the concept of the temporary dominance of a particular style in a certain sphere of human life or culture. The pursuit of novelty can be considered an integral attribute of fashion; at the same time, the degree of novelty of an object depends not so much on its objective time of creation, as on the moment it begins to gain popularity and public recognition. There are two motives driving fashion. The first is imitation in order to adopt the experience of good taste, the second is the fear of being out of society.

## **2. AN IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE COLOR, RHYTHM, ORNAMENT, AND MATERIAL IN THE COSTUME DESIGN OF THE STUDIED PERIOD**

Initially, the tastes of the wealthy classes were dictated by royalty or other representatives of the elite. The tradition was dictated by rules, and its deviation easily became the subject of mockery and ridicule. The idea of modernism as a rejection of old, conservative, traditional ways of expression and the creation of a modern way of expression became the basis of design, fashion, and art of the 20th century. The rise of the production of costumes in the Art Nouveau style accounts for the beginning of this period. This was facilitated by the

nature of the fabric, which was ideally suited for expressing various ideas about the decorative principle, the opulence, the abundance of decoration, the complexity of the ornaments. Thanks to these features, the costume was perceived as the most expressive object of decorative and applied art, as close as possible to humans.

An important role in the styles of the studied period was played by color, rhythm, ornament, and the material from which the costume was made. Objective color estimates were obtained at the beginning of the 20 century by M. Maxwell and G. Helmholtz, who discovered three primary colors in the spectrum and were able to reveal the laws of their mixing. However, the emotional perception of color and its scale have been studied and described since ancient times. Color always carries a symbolic and formative load, especially during the period of abstract art. "Color" is one of the most revealing and reliably described characteristics among the stylistic features of the costume. The abundance of shades and combinations of colors, characteristic of any style and fashion, does not allow you to avoid the individuality of their reading. Even the modern rich European vocabulary of color science cannot compete with the inaccuracy of descriptions with numerical estimates used, for example, in computer design (RGB, CMYK, etc.). The true "pleasure" that fashion analysts get from verbal characteristics is the degree of emotional impact on a person who, when choosing a suit, is informed that the colors of "morning sky", "ripe plum" or "pink tea" prevail. Associative thinking in this case increases motivation when choosing a particular costume, but does not ensure the accuracy of the description. It is more important to characterize the color palette than to get a list of colors used to convey the specifics of the collection that the designer wanted to create. The idea of a color scheme gives a more holistic view of the collection, increases the opportunity to define your style, to find its creative origins. Changes in fashion can also be evolutionary in nature, like any phenomenon that depends on objective changes in society, and revolutionary as a sphere of culture, the development of which is usually associated with scientific discoveries or historical cataclysms. Most theorists prefer to talk about the economic basis in changing the tastes of society or to call the social factor the cause of changes in them. All the revolutionary changes in the fashion of the twentieth century were associated either with the

creation of new materials (nylon, film materials, and fluorescent dyes due to the boom of vinyl and the heyday of pop art, lycra, and microfiber due to the cult of sportswear and elastic underwear, velcro fasteners in non-woven materials due to tourist clothing that becomes an integral attribute of suburban fashion) or with historically significant and scientific events in science (as so human space flight brought to life the collections of A. Courrèges and P. Cardin in the 1960s).

Russians in the 1900-1920 costume series are often accused of citing the Western costume base. This is a very peculiar opinion regarding the Russian costume in the first quarter of the twentieth century [1].

### **3. THE FORMATION OF THE STYLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

To understand the scale of changes in the formation of the style of the 20th century, it's necessary to identify the most striking, but important factors observed in the wearing of the costume of the last century: 1) the costume gradually lost its national features; it ceased to be Eurocentric. Not only Europeans have begun to develop, wear and produce fashionable suits; 2) the suit was divided not by classes, as in previous centuries, but by purpose and functionality (the division of the fashion industry into pret-a-porter and haute couture and new ways of planning sales in the fashion industry to create a style were of great importance); 3) widely developed areas: sports, business, classics; 4) new ways of promoting modern aesthetic ideals were invented; 5) new technologies of the textile, chemical and clothing industries developed, which allowed people to get a new color scheme; 6) new trends in fashion appeared, which had a noticeable impact on the modeling of costumes and it is reflected in the stylistics of images; 7) individual styles were formed (in the history of the costume, individual styles were practically unknown, the so-called fashionistas were the closest to this). The change of styles not only accelerated but also acquired methods of fashion distribution that were different from those used in previous centuries [2].

E. Cohn-Wiener believed: "...a constructive style is followed by a decorative, and then an ornamental style, which is again replaced by a constructive development in applied art, is, therefore, an undefined process fluctuating between constructive and decorative trends." H. Wölfflin discovered some allegory of the development of

style in a plant, "...which unfolds leaf by leaf until it becomes round, finished and unfinished on all sides," meaning its gradual development, acquisition of new features and change of the scale, shape, etc. O. Spengler presented this phenomenon as a kind of chain in which styles follow each other. A. Kroeber investigated the processes of style functioning not in the context of history, but from within the phenomenon, determining its origin, growth, and extinction in culture, and divided this process into five stages. He believed that the formation of style "can be impressively fast until the apogee of the culture is reached," but after that, the culture continues to move by inertia with a gradual weakening of the "stylistic quality". Formation of distinctive styles in different cultural tours, "...the growth of consistency between several entities and patterns," all this together makes up the style of culture. The general cultural style as a ratio of the predominance of qualities cannot be completed, cannot be achieved suddenly. "The idea of a cyclical appeal to several specific types of styles, based on which all subsequent historical material is based, is also interesting. The cycles of functioning of styles also depend on changes in the archetypes of thinking: idealization is rational and irrational. This spatial construction provides for the genesis of historical types. When describing the style, a set of the most characteristic elements of the costume for this period is usually taken into account. A suit of any style individually always bears the imprint of fashion" [3].

Of course, there have always been positive aspects of the changes characteristic of the costume of 1910-1925. For the first time in history, a woman named N.P. Lamanova declared herself as a great artist, capable of being an author and a great creative person in "style" processes.

When conducting a comparative analysis of Russian and foreign costumes, the following conclusions may be drawn regarding the modesty of the Russian costume, its inner dignity, the absence of pronounced sexuality characteristic of European models of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In the art of the 1900s and 1925s, the "principle of seasons" was established. This was the beginning of the special division of costumes for summer, autumn, spring, and winter collections. Clothing was regulated according to the age principle: for children, youth, young men and women, old and elderly women [4].

Fashion of the 1920s did not divide women by age, focusing only on the type of costume.

Following the Russian costume design, one can come to a logical conclusion: a costume is nothing but an organic part of decorative and applied art.

#### **4. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RUSSIAN AND FOREIGN COSTUMES**

The ideas of the Art Nouveau style reject the trends inherent in the costume of the 20s of the 20th century. It can be noted that, despite the abundance of content stored in the collections of Russian museums and archives, as well as in non-museum collections of private collections, there are very few works devoted to this topic, unlike cosmology in the heritage of Western Europe and America. The phenomenon of the home costume of the first quarter of the 20th century is practically unknown outside of Russia. Meanwhile, Russian costume development and transformation in the first quarter of the 20th century deserves the closest attention, since the art of Russian modern costume is an original phenomenon. The study of Russian costume, and, above all, samples of dresses from leading domestic museums and non-museum collections is becoming particularly relevant due to the emerging trend of reconstruction of old costumes. Close attention of the modern fashion industry to authentic samples of costumes of the first quarter of the 20th century is observed nowadays. The study of Russian costume art of the first quarter of the twentieth century is also becoming increasingly important due to the need for painstaking scientific processing of already created and emerging museum collections and private collections in Russia and abroad [5].

The period of 1900s -1925s was defined by the unity of the stylistic directions of the costume. These years are associated with active socio-cultural changes in Russia. They cover three important periods in the art of costume: the Art Nouveau style (1900 -1910), the transitional stage (1910-1919), and the twenties of the 20th century (1919 -1925).

In 1900-1910, the citizen's clothing includes the following samples: a home dress, an urban dress, a dress for a ball, a business dress, and much more. The Art Nouveau style in Russia is endowed with several distinctive features associated with the peculiarities of the national worldview. The main centers of fashion distribution in Russia were Moscow and St. Petersburg; they were the centers of the embodiment of artistic ideas and images of their time [6].

Europe, since 1860, has automated sewing production. Handmade suits were considered extremely expensive. Only extremely wealthy people could afford them. In Russia, the high technology of sewing was in demand from the Russian Imperial Court, whose members were considered trendsetters. Luxury gowns for high society were prepared by famous suit companies: "The Lady Olga", "Brissac" (Brizac), "Gindus", "N. Lamanova". Sometimes the suits with the stamps of these masters were actual handmade masterpieces. The workshop of Nadezhda Petrovna Lamanova is still considered an example of an enterprise of this level. The master's work connected three different stylistic epochs: Art Nouveau, transitional, and the twenties [7].

#### **5. COSTUME PERFORMING AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN FASHION**

The aesthetics of the 1900s -1925s consists not only of the external decoration but also of the most imaginative structure of the object, the beauty of its forms, and the expressiveness of plastics. The objects of decorative and applied art, including the costume, had a general expressive pattern, proportions, details, and a certain floral/geometric ornament. Therefore, objects of decorative and applied art made of metal, ceramics, glass, wood, and fabric and, despite the peculiarities of manufacture, have a single principle of shaping. It forms the basis for the organization of aesthetic understanding of the subject environment affecting positively the personality [8].

The transitional costume (1910-1919) includes some features of the Art Nouveau style and a costume that originated from the twenties of the 20th century. There are some contradictory points. The main type of costume of this era is the type of the so-called "reformed dress". The first "reform" dress appeared in the 1900s. However, the garment industry has become more automated, dressmaking has become easier, its forms included more freedom, which was facilitated by the spirit of change, not only in Europe but also in Russia. In America in the 1880s, women began to fight for equal rights with men for the first time. They were the ones who advocated the democratization of the costume. Skirts and blouses could be considered the most popular clothing of that period. Their options were different, depending on the social role of the woman [9].

The art of costume in the twenties of the 20th century in the USSR worked a uniquely creative

way up. While Art Deco style dominated the West, the main style of Russian costume included the fashion influences of minimalism, avant-garde, constructivism, and active NEP fashion trends. The figurative system of the costume of the 1920s was characterized by its democracy, geometricity, and constructiveness. It fully met the requirements of that era: shirt-like dresses, spacious blouses, cropped skirts, complemented with scarves, women's thin ties, as well as berets or hats; completely justified the new system of utilitarianism in a suit. The national spirit of the Russian folk costume of the 20th century was celebrated at the exhibition of decorative and applied art in 1925 in Paris. The collaboration of Soviet artists under the leadership of Nadezhda Lamanova was not accidental. A group of high-class artists received the Grand Prix for the number of lectures given on the history of costume [10].

The antique costume of that period plays an essential role in fashion. The original costume of 1900-1925 contains social, cultural, and artistic information. Today, such a socio-cultural object as a costume of the first quarter of the 20th century "lives" a fairly active life. It has become the pride of many museums and private collections, regularly participates in antique salons, Russian and foreign exhibitions, advertising campaigns, and even public events. The most famous museum collections in Russia, whose costumes date back to the first quarter of the 20th century, are the collections of the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Private collections of antique costumes from the 1890s -1920s also deserve attention. The most impressive are the St. Petersburg collection of Natalia Kostrogina and the Moscow collection of Svetlana Antonova. Today, fashion designers from Russia and Europe draw inspiration from vintage costumes of the first quarter of the 20th century. Fashion industry observers noted that the designers who created the collection of lectures in the late 1990s showed the greatest interest in the costume heritage of modernity. At the beginning of the 21st century, fashion designers are increasingly resorting to the laws of costume modeling from the twenties of the twentieth century, although the aesthetics of modernity has not been forgotten.

Fashion for costume art is formed cyclically, so it is quite logical to assume that in the future fashion designers will pay attention more than once to the creations of their gifted colleagues of 1900 - 1925, drawing their inspiration there.

## 6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be noted that despite the fact that the "Russian style" was formed in the suit much later than in other areas of design, it is still possible to distinguish important stages of the manifestation of the "Russian style" in the suit. Also, the levels of introducing the "Russian style" into a modern costume developed by us are the result of the synthesis of psychology and methodology in costume design. These levels will allow in the future, in a new way, to take an even more integral look at the whole process of modern costume design, will contribute to the search for new and interesting readings of the "Russian style" in the costume.

The article considers the significance of the costume in stylistics of Russian and European Art Nouveau in costume design and decorative and applied arts as an important part of the composition of a modern portrait. The role and place of the model's clothing are revealed from the position of creating an image and its psychological component. The author studied the problem of costume as an important detail that reveals its character and performs text-forming, pictorial and semantic functions in the artistic system. It is indicated that the costume programs the relationship of the external and internal world between the artist, model, and viewer. As a result of the research, the author concludes that it would be quite logical to assume that it is the semantic modality of the costume that forms the fashion of each historical period, and, accordingly, largely (if not primarily) determines consumer demand. The key to the successful functioning of an enterprise associated with the creation, production, and sale of fashion products can be the correct definition of the dominant semantic concept of a modern costume. Thus, Art Nouveau should be considered as an aesthetic phenomenon, presenting itself as a worldview, direction, and artistic style that has performed a leading role in the formation of such concepts as fashion and style.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper is independently completed by Kira K Kazanskaya.

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