

# Techniques of Formal Aesthetic Sense of Women's Clothing Styling Design\*

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**Abstract**—Today, women's ready-to-wear styling design techniques rely on the formal aesthetic sense of the art design plane composition and the three-dimensional composition theory. There is no visual causal deduction between the case of styling design technique and theoretical source. From the perspective of the formation law and application mode of styling design formal aesthetic sense, this paper takes a set of lines without design consciousness as an example. Through various design techniques, these lines will be transformed into styling lines or the styling combination with special design purposes. The visual logic of styling formal aesthetic sense is applied to the case of women's styling design. Through the comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the women's design case, the rationality and operability of the application of design techniques are analyzed.

**Keywords**—women's clothing; styling; line; formal aesthetic sense; design technique

## I. INTRODUCTION

The visual logic of styling formal aesthetic sense refers to the visual causal derivation between the styling result and the formal aesthetic law. Today, women's ready-to-wear styling design techniques rely on the formal aesthetic sense of the art design plane composition and the three-dimensional composition theory. There is no visual causal deduction between the case of styling design technique and theoretical source. That is, the formal aesthetic law of art design has not been completely refined into the study of clothing design techniques. Karl Lagerfeld, who has been in charge of the top French fashion brand Chanel for more than 30 years and is known as the "Julius Caesar" in the fashion world, has a famous discussion on women's styling design in the documentary "Lagerfeld Confidential". "Lack of inspiration has become an excuse for many designers to stagnate. In fact, most of the apparel styling design is not from inspiration, but design formal aesthetic techniques that require designers to master." Unfortunately, these techniques have not been refined, and the success of the design depends on the designer's personal talent. Therefore, the systematic combing work of researchers of clothing design theory is urgent.

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## II. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICAL THEORETICAL RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S READY-TO-WEAR DESIGN

### A. Practical Theory Category of Women's Ready-to-wear Design

The practical theory of women's ready-to-wear styling design is a systematic theory and specific practice method for the styling design of women's ready-to-wear product development. It mainly includes the formal aesthetic law of women's styling, styling design techniques, styling design rules of the series and overall styling planning and design of brand women's products. The visual logic in the formal aesthetic sense of styling design is a part of the practical theory of women's ready-to-wear design. It is mainly aimed at the design and development of women's ready-to-wear products. The goal is to make it more concrete, improving its applicability and easy transferability.

### B. The Impact of Practical Design Techniques on the Success Rate of Professional Designers

Anne Smith, a famous professor of art design theory in the United Kingdom, pointed out: "The success rate of cultivating national creative design talents is closely related to the level of updating and refinement of practical design theory" [2]. Giorgio Armani, a famous Italian fashion designer, once put forward his own opinion on the status quo of fashion design education: "The timeliness of fashion design education requires a large number of designers with practical experience to conduct design theory research, providing reality case support for practical design theory." [3]

In 2016 annual survey report, the British Senior Ready-to-wear Federation pointed out: "The success rate of cultivating professional designers in higher education institutions depends on the sense of the times and effectiveness of practical design techniques. According to the tracking data of success rate of cultivating professional designers from 2008 to 2016, it is 75% in France, 71.4% in the UK, 68.6% in Italy, 70.2% in Spain, and 78.4% in the US. The success rate of cultivating professional designers in China increases from 21% in 2009 to 35% today (five-year employment tracking statistics for 12 colleges and universities). The average statistics for clothing colleges

nationwide in 2015 was only 12%." Therefore, research on practical design techniques is very important.

### III. RESEARCH STATUS OF PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES FOR CHINESE WOMEN'S READY-TO-WEAR STYLING DESIGN

#### A. *The Styling Design Method Centered on the Morphology of Human Body*

At present, the domestic research on the practical techniques of women's ready-to-wear styling design is mainly divided into two aspects. One is the styling design method centered on the morphology of human body [4]. When the morphology of human body is used as the reference, the styling design of the clothing has the characteristics of figuration and rationality. The research results mainly focus on the clothing profile design techniques of the morphology of human body, the partial styling design of different parts of the human body, and the research on the planar structure transformation and the stereoscopic tailoring techniques. This styling design method has been accepted by most of the wearers. Also, it is more in line with the general aesthetic concept. For the designers, it is also easier to master such design methods. The formal aesthetic laws are relatively regular and have high operability. Therefore, the theoretical research on apparel styling design has laid certain foundation for the large-scale development of the ready-to-wear industry. However, the human-centered design method creates the limitations of "form obeying the function", which solidifies the design concept and simplifies the thinking. For example, the design range of apparel styling is limited to the space corresponding to the human body area, emphasizing the changing rules of various types of silhouettes: the partial styling design of collar, sleeve, threshold, cutting line, pocket shape, etc. The overly rational and figurative design thinking makes many designers have design collision under the premise of originality [5]. Therefore, flexible design techniques based on this theory is complemented.

#### B. *Inspiration Refinement Theory*

Another direction of the research on styling design theory mainly focuses on the extraction of the aesthetic form of things, namely the inspiration refinement theory [6]. The elements such as styling, color, patterns, textures and crafts of clothing design can be associated with inspiration. However, among all the design elements, it is the most difficult to integrate the styling and the inspiration. This requires the designer's high artistic perceptibility and the transformation of the clothing structure to maximize the combination of the form and function of the clothing [7]. At present, the researches related to apparel styling design theory and inspiration focus on the analysis of cases. We can find the combination law of formal aesthetic sense of things and apparel styling from the existing design works. Most of the research cases have high symbolicity, and the coverage of research results is not high. There is no general law that is easy to apply [8]. Therefore, this direction of research needs to be further improved and deepened.

#### C. *Refinement Theory of Formal Aesthetic Sense of Styling Design*

Based on the two directions of research above, this paper takes a set of lines without design consciousness as an example from the perspective of the formation law and application mode of styling design formal aesthetic sense. Through various design techniques, these lines will be transformed into styling combination with special design purposes. We can summarize the law, which can be applied to the case of women's styling design. Through the comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the women's design case, the rationality and operability of the application of design techniques are analyzed. This is the combination of the above two research methods and the supplement for of the above two research methods.

Jonathan KYLE Farmer, a well-known professor of fashion design and founder of the Creative Design and Development Program of the New York School of Fashion Design, conducted a special study on the author's research method of apparel styling design (more than ten papers published) and obtained art research fund in New York State in 2016 (Visual Logic of Fashion Design in China). The research result of published paper "Visual Logic and Creativity of Fashion Design Skill in China" highly praised the practicality and uniqueness of the author's research on apparel styling techniques.

### IV. REPETITIVE DECORATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR WOMEN'S CLOTHING STYLING DESIGN

The repetitive decorative technique of women's styling design refers to the method of repeating, emphasizing, symmetrizing and contrasting the partial styling of women's clothing. The original simple and independent stylings become the combination, which has a stronger design sense in the formal aesthetic sense of decorative technique. From the perspective of formal aesthetic sense, any unconscious styling line can be transformed into styling lines or styling combination with the consciousness through the application of repetitive decorative techniques.

#### A. *Combinatorial Repetition and Emphasis of Styling Lines*

In "Fig. 1", there are four random lines without the design consciousness in the first line, namely random simple curve, simple broken line, irregular broken line and irregular curve. In the second line, it is the simple superposition of their morphology. Obviously, after simple repetition, these four lines become a styling with a certain formal aesthetic sense, making the pattern have simple decorative characteristics. In the third line, it is the emphasized superposition of their morphology. Different from the simple superposition, the styling formal aesthetic sense conveys a stronger design consciousness, which involves the selective repetition and emphasis of the styling combination. Through the contrast of the thickness at different positions of the line transition, the source styling line has certain changes in the density and proportion, achieving the purpose of styling emphasis.

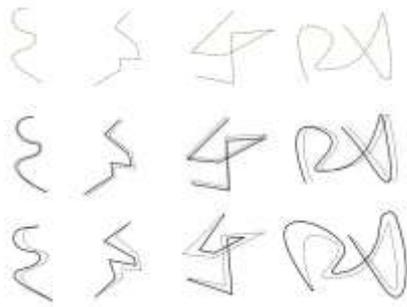


Fig. 1. Repetition of styling lines.

As shown in "Fig. 2", it is a simple repetition case of the women's clothing styling line. Through the simple repetition of the outline line of the collar, it becomes the decorative edge, which makes the styling of the collar more decorative and more prominent in the overall styling. This method is the simplest styling design technique, and does not have the creative point of design. If this technique is applied to assorted repetition, the awareness of design needs to go further. As shown in the case of "Fig. 3", with the assorted combination of cutting lines, it becomes a combination of several decorative stylings, and plays the role of the main styling elements in the series of clothing, which has a unified role in the series.



Fig. 2. Simple repetition of women's clothing styling lines.



Fig. 3. Assorted repetition of women's clothing styling lines.

Using the above-mentioned design method that emphasizes superposition, the clothing styling can be further developed. As shown in "Fig. 4", the inverted pleat lines are emphasized and superimposed, forming an obvious dense contrast relationship with the inverted triangular styling. The

simpler styling has become more varied and rhythmic in both contour and local decoration, and highlights the primary and secondary relationships in the styling.



Fig. 4. Emphasis superposition of women's clothing styling lines.

The above is the three design methods of the styling "repetition". In the eyes of different designers, the parts, forms or combinations that need to be repeated are different. Of course, "repetition" is the simplest and easiest design technique to operate in styling, and is widely used in the field of large art design theory. However, in the theory of fashion design, most of them are only applied to the simple repetitive design of the pattern or texture, which lacks the flexibility. In the clothing styling design, it is more effective to apply the selective repetition and emphasis superposition of the styling combination to enhance the creative sense of simple styling.

*B. Symmetry and Proportion of Women's Clothing Styling*

Most of the clothing styles have symmetrical attributes, which are determined by the basic structure of the clothing. They do not have the meaning of decoration [9], but they are separated from the symmetrical properties of the human body. Symmetrical design of some parts of the clothing will have formal aesthetic sense. The pattern in the first line of "Fig. 5" is the result of symmetrically copying the lines in "Fig. 1". It can be seen that each styling line forms a special styling combination, and all the turns in the original line seem to have a purposeful design. Among the clothing design cases in the second line, the first three styles are symmetrical reproduction of the collar shape, reflecting the superposition of the cutting line or the piece of the clothing body. And it forms a styling combination with the collar contour. The overall styling has more visible visual center, emphasizing the formal beauty of the style. Absolute symmetry inevitably produces a more mechanical and blunt pattern. The premise must be to select a suitable source styling line, and the position and proportion of the styling line after the symmetric replication conform to the rationality of the structure and process. The fourth style in this case is a balanced design that uses partial styling. "Balance" has a relatively symmetrical attribute, and its collar is copied downwards. The styling combination created by this design method can avoid the rigid feeling, and has design flexibility.

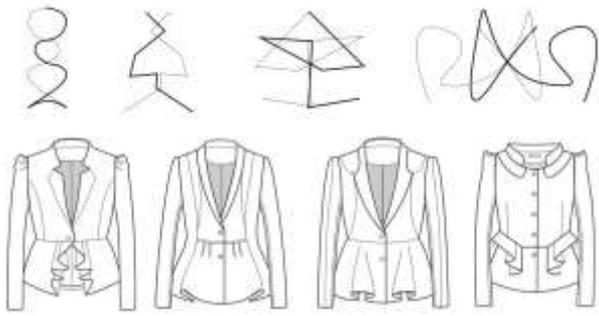


Fig. 5. Figurative symmetry of women's clothing styling lines.

The design case in "Fig. 6" uses a balanced design approach that seeks relatively symmetrical design techniques in asymmetrical clothing styling. In the ambiguous styling of the clothing structure, the silhouette will produce two extremes. First, if the more symmetrical and loose silhouette is copied symmetrically, it is easy to make the overall styling cumbersome; Secondly, if the unilateral large-area vertical pleat styling is retained, it is easy to cause visual imbalance in the overall styling. This will broke the sensation of the ready-to-wear, and also affect the wearing comfort. However, using similar formal aesthetic sense, the inverted pleat styling and vertical pleat styling are relatively symmetrically replicated. In this way, the overall styling can achieve the effect of visual balance, and can also produce a jumping sense of vision, making the overall styling of the clothing more flexible and enhancing the creative degree of the design.

In the basic theory of art design, the concepts of repetition, symmetry and balance are widely used in many fields. However, there is no corresponding detailed research in the design techniques of clothing. In the above cases, the unconscious line design is used to illustrate the universality and handleability of such techniques in the styling design. The technique is applied in a simple style and pattern as a thinking transition of the overall design. The final clothing styling design effect is the purpose of this technique. Therefore, in the process of clothing design, the conscious

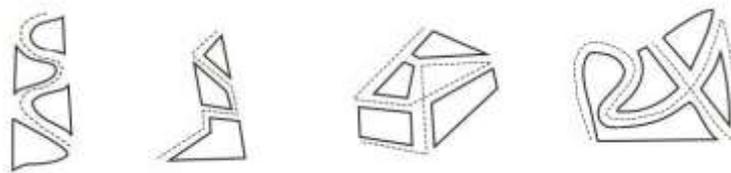


Fig. 7. Filling decoration of styling lines.

"Fig. 8" is a case of the clothing design which is filled with styling lines. In the figure, the three clothing have diagonal styling lines. The two sets of shoulder lines of a style intersect with the sleeve pleats, forming an inverted trapezoidal styling at the top. The collar styling is designed for this shape to form a tight styling combination from the collar to the sleeve. The collar and the sleeve are mutually visually assisted and complement each other. B waistline contour line intersects with the pleat line, forming an approximately "X" shape. The waistband and the sleeve pleat

decomposition, analysis and reorganization of many lines in the styling design can make the simple design technique have a creative possibility.



Fig. 6. Aesthetic balance of women's clothing styling lines.

## V. THE EXTENDED TECHNIQUE OF WOMEN'S CLOTHING STYLING DESIGN

The extended technique of women's clothing styling design refers to various extensional decorations of the original single and non-design-conscious styling lines, which is transformed into a design technique with a special combination of formal aesthetic sense. This technique makes the overall styling design of the clothing more creative and flexible [10].

### A. The Filling of Formal Aesthetic Sense of Styling Lines

The styling in "Fig. 7" is the result of filling and decorating the unintentional lines in "Fig. 1". According to the orientation of the existing styling lines, the auxiliary styling similar to the source line with formal aesthetic sense is filled in the corresponding turning position. The route in the source line has visual design purpose.

are filled at the upper end of the shape, and the lower end is filled with the divergence pleat line, forming a surrounding "X" styling combination. The inner collar contour line of C style intersects with the cutting line of the chest width of the bodice, forming two reverse incline "Y" shapes. The two shapes are filled with a large collar in the middle of the styling. The sheet is filled with superimposed curved sleeves at both ends, resulting in a tight combination of neckline, shoulders and sleeves. With the application of the filling decoration technique, the combination of the above three

models has become the visual center in the overall shape. The design technique plays a good coordination role in the design of the dense relationship of the overall clothing styling.



Fig. 8. Aesthetic filling of women's clothing styling lines.

### B. Deformation Enhancement of Assist Styling Lines

"Fig. 9" is a design case of deformation enhancement of source styling using an assist styling line. The dotted line in the first line of "Fig. 9" is the unconscious line in "Fig. 1". After supplementing the assist styling line around it, the anti-"bow" shaped cutter, table lamp, walking duck and flying bird are formed from the left to the right. This design technique is very creative and interesting. Although the deformed styling has the pictographic features of some objects, they all retain the formal aesthetic sense of the source lines, and play a major visual guiding role in the overall styling. Using an assist styling line deformation technique, the second line is a women's clothing design case. The collar of a style is taken as the source styling. In the B style, the collar styling is shifted to the shoulder. Through the auxiliary enhancement of v-shaped collar and lower cutting line of chest, the original collar styling will produce the illusion effect of small shawl. In the C style, the collar styling is shifted to the upper part of the chest. Through the auxiliary styling below the chest, the collar and the chest form a fun combination similar to facial expression. In the D style, the collar styling is superimposed at the V-neck part.

Combined with the auxiliary styling below the waist, a soft combination similar to the "butterfly" is formed. Therefore, through the reinforced decorative technique of assist styling line, it adds a lot of fun to the overall styling of the series of clothing on the basis of retaining the aesthetic sense of the source styling.

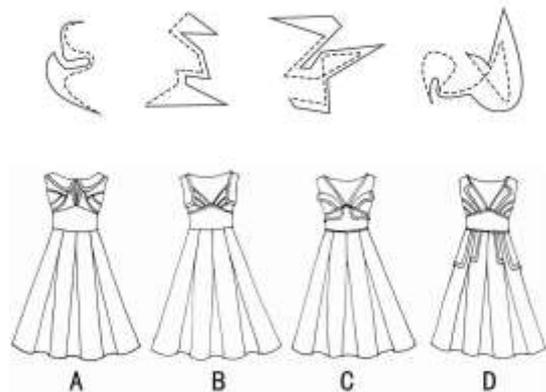


Fig. 9. Deformation strengthening design of assist styling lines.

### C. Extension of Assist Styling Lines

"Fig. 10" is a design case for expanding and deforming the source styling using an assist styling line. The dotted line in "Fig. 10" is the unconscious line in "Fig. 1". Through the assist styling line, the formal aesthetic sense of the source styling is changed to a greater extent. The dynamic condition of human body, the axe, the cutter and the iron are formed from the left to the right. In the above cases, the reinforcement of the assist styling line is based on the deformation design of the source styling. The expansion of the assist styling line is to integrate the external space of the source styling into a weakened part of the new styling by adding the styling of the external space of the source styling. In the overall styling, the old and new formal aesthetic senses coexist. The styling presented by this design technique depends on the designer. The guiding and expanding effect of design thinking can make the design have unlimited possibilities.

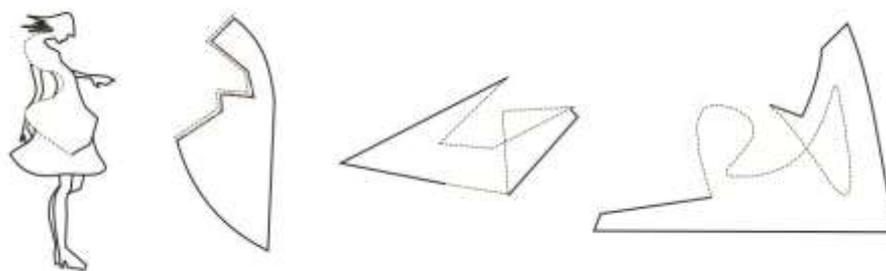


Fig. 10. Extended design of assist styling lines.

"Fig. 11" is an extension design case of the clothing application assist styling line. Around the large shoulder

silhouette, different scapular sleeve splicing methods, regional structure division and three-dimensional decoration

degree are produced through the expansion and deformation of the assist styling line. The shoulders are preserved, the visual center of each style changes from the perspective of overall styling effect. The visual effect of the shoulder silhouette is replaced by the sleeve styling. Through the

extended design of the assist styling line, all the sleeve styling has different structural features. This technique is especially suitable for the creative design of the clothing, which makes the overall styling of the clothing creative and marketable.

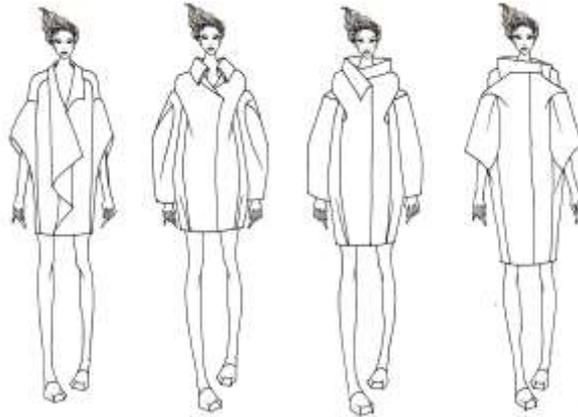


Fig. 11. Extended design of women's clothing styling lines.

#### D. Partial Replacement of the Styling Line

"Fig. 12" is a partial replacement design case of the styling line. By partial erasure, it can be replaced with the new styling line. The unconscious line in "Fig. 1" becomes a new figure completely out of the formal aesthetic sense of the source styling. From each individual styling, it only erases a small part of the source styling line. The broken partial lines respectively become a part of the new styling. The overall visual guidance depends on the formal aesthetic

sense of alternative line. Comparing the four new models, they are similar to the dynamic state of human body. It can be seen that when the formal aesthetic sense of the source styling is changed to a large extent, completely different styling lines can also form a uniform or similar style. According to the degree of change in the formal aesthetic sense of the source styling, the partial replacement technique of the styling line can be applied to the partial styling of a single garment and the serial design of the ready-to-wear.



Fig. 12. Local substitution design of styling lines.

"Fig. 13" is an alternative design case of partial styling lines for the clothing application. Taking A style as the source styling, the three styles B, C and D have replaced the styling of the collar, shoulder and sleeve, respectively, which has caused a great degree of change in the visual center and formal aesthetic sense of the clothing style. However, the partial replacement does not have great influence on the overall contour. It remains the combination of the clothing styling curve, the overall formal aesthetic sense of the source styling still retains a strong sense of symbol. Therefore, this partial replacement technique is more suitable for the partial design applied to the overall clothing styling.

the source style. B and C styles are the result of partial replacement of the collar styling and the contour ladder styling. In addition to the different collar styling, B and C styles replace the position and folding method of the contour ladder styling on the basis of retaining the basic formal aesthetic sense of the silhouette. Comparing the three partial styles, they all achieve significant differentiation. However, their overall styling has obvious serialization symbols, that is, the four completely different styles in "Fig. 12" can be unified into one style. Before using the partial replacement design technique, it is necessary to select the reserved way of the formal aesthetic sense of the partial and subject in the source styling. And it can find unified series of symbols in the differentiation. Also, it can find the differences in the uniform formal aesthetic sense.

"Fig. 14" is a case of applying the partial replacement technique of the styling line to the serial design. A style is

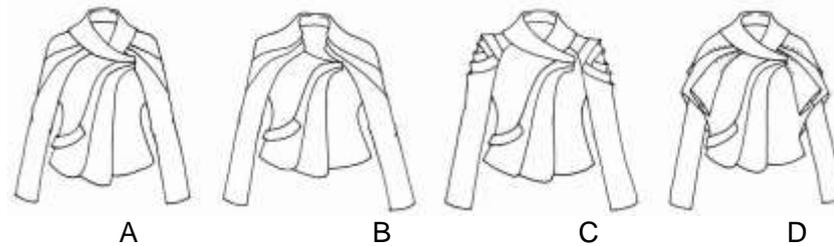


Fig. 13. Local substitution design of women's clothing styling lines.



Fig. 14. Aesthetic substitution design of women's clothing styling lines.

## VI. CONCLUSION

When the designer treats the design with pure clothing functions and structural attributes, the design thinking is extremely rigid. The design of women's clothing styling is only an extension of structural design. When designers need to use inspiration, the design of women's clothing styling is easy to become impromptu, abstract and difficult work that is difficult to control. Based on summarizing its own design techniques and analyzing the top women's clothing design cases at home and abroad, this paper takes a set of design-free lines as an example and transforms them into design-oriented styling lines or styling combinations through various design techniques. The law of visual aesthetics is rationally analyzed and summarized, and the design techniques are formed and applied to women's clothing design. Due to the limitation of the length of the article, the author hopes to provide reference for the future research of women's clothing techniques through this kind of research ideas. It is hoped that more researchers will verify the efficiency, operability and transferability of such techniques, and correct the deficiencies.

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