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## Why Can't Women Be Intelligent And Love Fashion? Well, They Can.



BY LIBERTY IMHOFF · AUGUST 24, 2020



Anna Sui F/W 2020; photo c/o Anna Sui

We need to have a discussion about fashion. Specifically, we need to discuss why it is that women that have a love for fashion are not taken as seriously as women that do not show an outward interest in this liability of a subject (hint: fashion is not actually a liability; that's just what certain elements of society would have you believe).

We'll start with an example: let's say that one reads two separate stories about women that are starting companies of their own. The first story is about a woman that is building a tech company with the aim of revolutionizing the way that we...I don't know...grow our

food. The second story is about a woman that has decided to follow her lifelong dream of becoming a fashion designer by establishing her own brand. The reaction that the first story will get is likely to fall somewhere along these lines:

“Wow! How amazing. She’s going to start this great business that’ll change so many lives. I can’t wait to see how it turns out for her. What a boss! I want to be like her when I grow up, and she’s going to be a role model for my daughters.”

The second story will likely get a response somewhat similar to this:

“That’s cute. I wonder when she’s going to get a “real” job.”



Photos taken during New York Fashion Week F/W 2020; c/o Elle Magazine

There is a clear bias that is had toward the two women in this example, and the bias swings strongly in favor of the woman starting a tech business. She is seen as intelligent, ground-breaking, and using her mind to take on the patriarchy. Woman #2... I feel bad for her. She’s seen as a number of things – all of them a different shade of sexist:

- Dumb
- Airheaded
- Irresponsible
- Shallow
- Vain
- Foolish
- Just generally stupid

Why does our society – especially in the United States – believe that fashion is a field to not be taken seriously? It is my view that the underlying reason rhymes with gyso-miny.



Christopher John Rogers F/W 2020; photo c/o CFDA

The definition of misogyny is this: ***“dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.”*** Fashion is a discipline that is traditionally seen as being heavily followed by women. Never mind the fact that many of the designers that regularly receive high praise in this industry that women supposedly love are – wait for it – MEN (that’s a story for another day)!

Essentially, if you are in love with a career field that women love, then you are not strong. You are not smart. You’re probably irrational – no, you’re *definitely* irrational. And that’s not all. There are women that believe these same things! Some women have been so fixated on achieving success that they’re willing to do whatever it takes to obtain it. If that means eschewing beautiful clothing because it’s too ‘frou-frou’ and it couldn’t possibly matter when there are businessmen that have to be pleased, then so be it.



Professional women can love both fashion and work; photos c/o Pinterest

Now, if a woman comes along that is not willing to abide by society's mores that state strange things like 'Smart women don't busy themselves with fashion', those 'success-by-any-means-necessary' women are appalled. They believe that women that genuinely love fashion are setting the feminist movement back 100 years. These fashion-loving women become a perceived threat to the position of all women that have worked so hard to be taken seriously by men over the years.





Anna October S/S 2020 (photo c/o Anna October); Rami Kadi F/W 2020 Haute Couture (photo c/o Rami Kadi)

One thing that I'd like to make clear – it is okay if a woman does not actually like fashion. Not all women are the same. What is not okay, however, is when women that are devoted to a subject traditionally seen as a 'woman's subject' are shamed by members of both sexes. What I call that is a failure of feminism. Feminists should be working to protect the rights of ALL women to achieve their full potential in life – no matter what that potential may involve. I say to you, then, to take this message forward into your daily life and wear what you'd like. Chase whatever career excites you. And, know that you are as intelligent as any person that builds tech companies, designs structures, or runs countries.

You just happen to look good while doing it.

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