

Frolicking in Fashion: Where the fashion industry is headed, and why the term ‘fashion forward’ is a little misleading

By: Russell Katz

On the verge of the creation of the high-end market, one must have considered the obvious and not so subtle economic divide between classes within their respective society. Designers set out a new journey to cater to the high society with bold and classical agendas to build their brands but more importantly their names. Commonly naming their brands after themselves. The urge of self-gratification and praise (upon success) was inevitable and thus a divide was born. Fashion now solely embodied the affluent and set aside the plebeians. The beginnings of this divide sparked an interest from the outsiders who looked up at those who wore the extravagant garments. As time, an inevitable variable advances the gap between the two sides gradually begins to get increasingly narrower, and eventually almost disappears completely to be replaced with a spectrum.

The contrast between the high end and the low-end market (chain retail stores) is that people are shocked by slight changes and don't yet understand the new direction. The change is more severe and drastic as opposed to runway styles. Both are essential for the survival of fashion and how us humans perceive our style. The runway produces new ideas and concepts on what a garment is, and how it can be used or worn. Although sometimes drastically abstract, this new energy or thought is introduced and manipulated or modified to create the everyday items and styles we know and see today in our everyday lives. What at first is seen to be innovative and fresh eventually trickles its way down into the mainstream fashion world. It is then mass produced and made readily available for purchase on the shelves of chain retail stores.

Although parallels can be drawn from the spectrum, virtually all brands there is still variety as to what each one of them contributes to fashion as a whole. Rather than the sole influence coming from designers of high status there are brands that lie directly in the middle (or slightly above or below). These dispersed (or middle ground) brands create and challenge the notion of sleek and chic as well as quality. Creative direction in some cases is derived from art or architecture. The role that these middle brands take on is one of great importance. The creators focus on alternative goals rather than strictly profits. There is a genuine motive or underlying message towards their namesake which makes their work stand out. Mainly focusing on their aesthetics rather than complying with conventional fashion norms, these middle brands make a statement. This is not solely about how the garments look, but what impact they have on the individuals wearing them.

Fashion forward is a term that is typically used to describe an individual who keeps up with the latest trends and styles within the fashion industry. However, the term itself (currently) is a little deprecated and misinforming and occasionally misused. It is most often uttered among common folk when slight changes are seen in one's clothing. Being progressive in the world of fashion means embodying new means of wearing clothing, as well as developing an aesthetic that is

individualistic. In a literal sense the term 'fashion forward' has a more drastic and creative meaning. It would imply that an individual has an epiphany pertaining to something that's not even a thought, prior to it hitting the runway. Hence it is a very unconventional concept. Essentially, this would be: custom made, very abstract, and never before seen, clothing. Thus, this creation gives birth to a new idea which (at times) makes it innovative and people may draw inspiration from it. The term 'fashion forward' has become a sort of cliché on account of it being made redundant.