

ANDROGYNY



FASHION'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECT

Be timeless, channel Androgyny. Lust Have talks to fashionista Caryn Franklin and fashion event organiser Wynter Heayes and gets their view on the ever growing fashion statement.

Androgyny, the fashion statement that has been around for centuries. The term, which refers to the combination of both masculine and feminine characteristics, for a long time was not publically displayed or as socially acceptable as it today. Speaking to Caryn Franklin, former fashion editor and co-editor of *i-D* magazine and co-founder of award winning organisation *All Walks Beyond the Catwalk*, she has said that 'it allows us not to be gender specific' and therefore androgyny keeps the social change of integrated sexuality in the spotlight. Designers and celebrity trendsetters have played a huge part in the development of androgyny, evolving the trend throughout the years keeping it a fresh, interesting and an intriguing ongoing movement in fashion. Wynter Heayes, founder of *East London Fashion Shows* stated that 'nobody likes the norm anymore' hence why androgyny today is so popular.

Reaching its peak in the modern age of fashion and appearing on every catwalk, advertisement, celebrity and each clothing collection, androgyny is at an all-time high.

Androgyny in fashion first began to have an impact on society a long time ago. Renowned fashion designers including *Yves Saint Laurent* and *Coco Chanel* were one of the very first to cause a stir. 'Coco Chanel, she made it mainstream, she was one of the first people to introduce the trouser suit for women, which once upon a time was prohibited' Caryn Franklin explained, and continued with 'Women have had to fight, since years ago to gain the power of being able to dress how they want, against a status of masculinity'. These designers in particular introduced the likes of the tuxedo and trouser pants for women in a pledge to break the norm, rebel against the restriction of women's fashion and to dress in a way that may



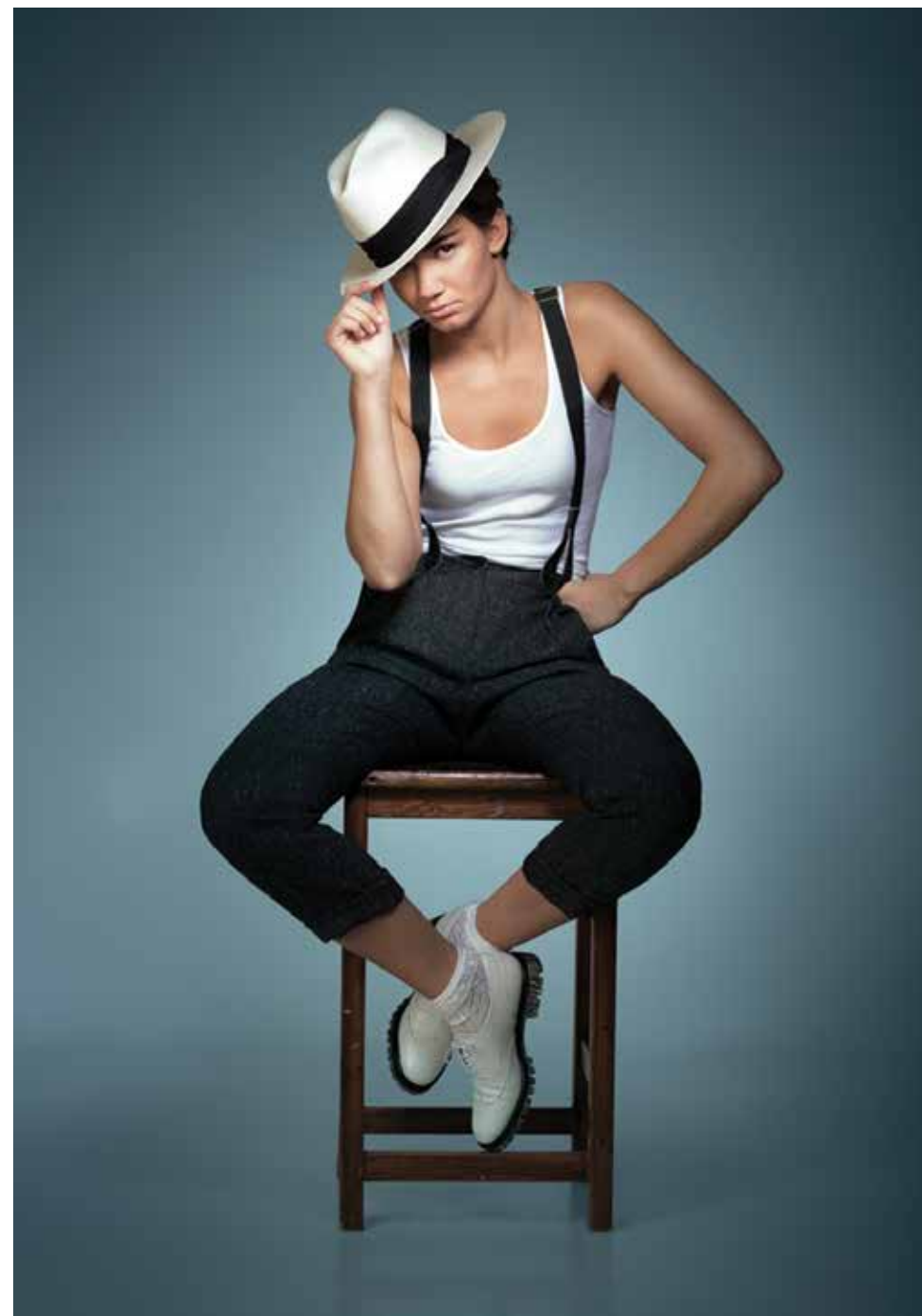
Caryn Franklin - Former fashion editor and co-editor of *i-D* magazine and co-founder of *All Walks Beyond the Catwalk*: allwalks.org



Wynter Heayes - Founder of *East London Fashion Shows*: eastlondonfashionshows.tumblr.com

Words: Emma Roberts

Photographer: Mark Paul Andrews Model: Elizabeth Parsina





have been seen as masculine but was a hell of a lot more comfortable. Caryn went on to say 'it allows the individual to bring that element of boldness, it's not fixed or bound, it's creative'; women went to town with androgyny embracing the once dominant masculine clothing pieces such as brogues, suspenders, blazers and the necktie.

Celebrities such as Katharine Hepburn and Twiggy were particular fans of androgyny and were brave enough to break the boundaries and embrace the new fashion. James Dean was another who was notably embracing his feminine side with his clean-cut appearance and unhidden use of various beauty products. As time went on, androgyny became more acceptable and appeared more in fashion, the hippie era and the disco era developed it to unimaginable lengths and all that was left to do now was wait for what the next era would bring.

Designers, models and the fashion industry as a whole are who we should be thanking for the social change of heart when it comes to androgyny. Designers and the fashion industry whether we like to think it or not, set trends. Sub-consciously most of us are buying the latest thing because the fashion industry had a great idea, developed it and we ended up wearing it.

Just like Meryl Streep tells Anne Hathaway in *The Devil wears Prada*, 'you're wearing a sweater that was hand chosen for you by the people in this room, from a pile of stuff'.

Models like Coco Rocha and Erika Linder fully embrace an

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Wynter Heayes

androgynous look and use it to their advantage. Erika Linder, who starred in Katy Perry's music video *Unconditionally*, has been modelling as both a female and a male, giving her total control of her body image and the way she is perceived.

Being this versatile is becoming more and more appealing in the industry. Of course androgyny is different for men and different for women. Men who are androgynous are usually seen as acting out or rebelling and using it as a way of expression. However for women the case is different and they are hugely more accepted in society and in most cases androgyny in a women's wardrobe isn't terribly obvious because we've become so accustomed to it.

'When women dress androgynous it's so much more attractive, as I think in today's society sexiness comes to backwards,

from the unknown and non-conformist approach to human attraction', says Wynter Heayes on the way androgyny differs from each gender. Notable designers that have helped to boost the androgynous fashion include YSL, JW Anderson, Jean Paul Gautier and of course Coco Chanel herself.

'Men are publicising a loud message with androgyny'. Caryn could apply these thoughts to the likes of celebrity trend setters that have been more than happy to be loud and proud when it comes to androgynous fashion. Prince, David Bowie, Michael Jackson, Boy George and Adam Lambert to name a few have not hid a way of expressing themselves for all to see.

Heavy eyeliner, a face full of make-up, frills, florals and an overall feminine approach to fashion, especially whilst

performing, have kept these stars in the public eye and under ongoing critique, good and bad for their androgynous ways. Of course it's not just the men, them famous female celebrities are at it too. Lady Gaga, Madonna, La Roux and Annie Lennox are all partial to a nice suit, some even a whole other male alter ego.

Male or Female, androgyny is embraced by both. In fashion we use it to combat the norm and express our individuality. 'People are always looking for something new, different and shocking' finishes Wynter Heayes as a final anecdote.