



# COSTUME DRAMA

BY ALEXANDRA KOHUT-COLE

FASHION AND FILM HAVE BEEN INEXTRICABLY LINKED SINCE THE ERA OF THE SILENT MOVIE. WHILE QATAR IS STILL BASKING IN THE REFLECTED GLOW OF THE FOURTH EDITION OF DOHA TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL, **GLAM** EXPLORES THE LINKS BETWEEN MOVIES, CLOTHES AND THIS SEASON'S MOST PROMINENT TRENDS.



A MODEL PRESENTS A CREATION BY JAPANESE DESIGNER YOHJI YAMAMOTO DURING THE FALL/WINTER 2012-2013 READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION.



A MODEL PRESENTS A CREATION BY ITALIAN DESIGNER RICARDO TISCI FOR GIVENCHY DURING THE FALL/WINTER 2012-2013 READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION.



A MODEL PRESENTS A CREATION BY DESIGNERS HUMBERTO LEON AND CAROL LIM FOR KENZO DURING THE FALL/WINTER 2012-2013 READY-TO-WEAR COLLECTION.

# Fashion

and film have enjoyed a symbiotic relationship since the golden age of Hollywood, when the leading costume designers of major studios developed close associations with the movie stars of the day who often became their muses. Film has continuously exerted an iron fist influence over fashion and style, reciprocating with an equal fascination for fashion. The film-going public likes to see its film stars wearing beautiful clothes on screen and off, providing the perfect springboard for fashion and film collaborations.

Italian avant-garde designer, Elsa Schiaparelli, one of the most prominent through the 20's and 30's was famous for her working relationship with surrealist artist Salvador Dali resulting in the lobster dress of 1937. Her name became synonymous with shocking pink (named after the packaging of her perfume Shocking) and the hue was dubbed Schiap pink. However, she also designed costumes for a whopping 27 films, including Mae West's *Every Day's a Holiday*, 1937 for Paramount.

In 1943 Helen Rose joined MGM, eventually becoming chief designer. She was responsible for Grace Kelly's iconic 1956 *High Society* wardrobe, as well as her wedding dress for her marriage to Prince Rainier of Monaco in the same year; Elizabeth Taylor's wardrobe in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, 1958, and Taylor's wedding dress

for her marriage to Nicky Hiltonin, 1950.

However, Edith Head was the most legendary Hollywood costume designer (at Paramount for 44 years and Universal for 14) winning eight Oscars and, in 1974, her own star on Hollywood Boulevard (she never deviated from her own look of severe fringe, suits and dark glasses). Head also created personal wardrobes for Olivia de Havilland and Joan Crawford. In 1957, she produced the costumes for the ultimate fashion movie, *Funny Face*, starring Audrey Hepburn.

Yet, it was Hubert de Givenchy who was responsible for Hepburn's Parisian wardrobe in this film. The longevity and perfection of the partnership of Hepburn (who became his muse) and Givenchy surely helped to create Hepburn as the most iconic screen and fashion goddess of the twentieth century with the most famous little black dress—favorite of all time—the long satin sheath in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* in 1961.

Patricia Field is the modern day equivalent award-winning Hollywood costume designer with such hits under her belt as the *Devil Wears Prada*, 2008, starring Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway. Field's collaboration with the actress Sarah Jessica Parker on the 1995 *Miami Rhapsody*, led to her designing the costumes for the cult *Sex and the City* movies of 2008 and 2010 respectively and the 2009 *Confessions*

*of a Shopaholic*, starring Isla Fisher.

Fashion designers return the compliment, often basing entire collections on movies: Jean-Paul Gaultier's S08 on the 2003 *Pirates of the Caribbean*; Mulberry creative director, Emma Hill's AW12 on Vogue fashion photographer Tim Walker's 2010 short film *The Lost Explorer*, and Marius Schwab's AW12 on femme fatale Marlene Dietrich.

This season, the AW12-13 runways have paid their own homage to Hollywood, satiating the ongoing appetite for movie star glamour in some of this season's most prominent trends.

#### *Power Red*

Valentino's Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pier Paolo Picciolo showed some stunningly detailed laser-cut bright red leather. Victoria Beckham used red to strong effect, accenting her dresses with bold black graphic stripes softened only by a little collar, the look artfully accented with a glimpse of colour-coordinated cheeky Louboutin heel. Film equivalent: *The Red Shoes*, 1948, starring the great ballerina Moira Shearer. Her costumes were created by one of the greatest French couturiers of the 20th Century, Jacques Fath who became a massive star following the movie.

#### *Monochrome*

Kenzo played brilliantly with black and white prints, mixing up seemingly clashing patterns with stripes that worked, whether with his houndstooth blouse, paired with modest striped-above knee skirt or his outsize pyjama stripes.

Just Cavalli sent out black and white striped georgette creations playfully mixing up all stripes in one outfit. Film equivalent: Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, 1954, starring Grace Kelly, whose stunning wardrobe was designed by Edith Head.

#### *Mixed Plaids*

Michael Kors added black leather detailing to a gray plaid dress infusing it with modern day edge, cinching in waists, adding leather and marabou gloves to the elbow.

Ralph Lauren's brownish grey plaid fitted skirt suit and matching take on a modern cloche hat were vamped up with fuchsia neckline and gloves. Tory Burch offered witty plaid trousers in jaunty reds upping the fun factor. Film equivalent: *Clueless*, 1995, starring Alicia Silverstone, with costumes by Mona May.

#### *Bottle Green*

Alber Elbaz for Lanvin sent out an above-the-knee pencil skirt and up-to-the-neck long sleeved tunic top accentuating the figure rather than hugging it by draping. At Saint Laurent, Stefano Pilati, in his last women's collection for the label, produced an exquisite raw silk-tightly belted tunic juxtaposed with fur thrown over one shoulder, paired with snappy leather gloves to the wrists.

Hussein Chalayan chose a simply draped cut out dress slashed to the thigh, the navel and leaving one arm bare. Film equivalent: *Atonement*, 1997, starring Keira Knightley, with costumes by Jaqueline Durran.

#### *Velvets, Brocades and Silks*

Zac Posen's silk brocade dress gently hugs the body's contours while lightly cut out shoulders make it appear to sit effortlessly on its frame. Vivienne Westwood showed typically stunning classical creations, particularly a delectable raw silk and heavy brocade long-sleeved bodice. At Kenzo, Humberto Leon and Carol Lim produced a lush burgundy winter velvet trouser suit with mandarin collar and matching riding hat, again cinching in the waist creating a womanly silhouette. Viktor & Rolf offered a fluid silhouette in sumptuous silk draped to the floor and up-to-the-neck in pussy bow tie. Fried Gianinni for Gucci offered a divine dark devore fur-trimmed collar jacket worn over black velvet trousers and a floor length velvet dress shrouding its wearer entirely except for totally bare shoulders. Olivier Rousteing's Balmain show was inspired by Faberge eggs and stamped his fabrics in these patterns giving a look of encrusted opulence. Film equivalent: *The Duchess*, 2008, starring Keira Knightley, Costume design, Michael O'Connor.

#### *Gothic*

Yohji Yamamoto's punk hairstyles set off his use of tough make-up and streetwise flat combat boots. Ricardo Tisci, for Givenchy's leather created trousers and long leather gloves with severe hair and make-up-a sophisticated, slightly less grubby looking Goth. However, Donatella Versace decided to go the whole hog and totally bought into the theme with her dark mini shift, stark, dark hair, crucifixes and studded leather. Alexander Wang sent out scary fishnet mask-like creations, half covering the face ready for combat. Film equivalent: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, 2011, starring Rooney Mara as the fiercely independent punkish Lisbeth Salander. The costume design was by Trish Somerville.

## Where fashion and film truly come together is once a year at the Oscars, the pinnacle of the calendar of both industries

Film's fascination with fashion is further entwined with a spate of fashion biopics and documentaries. *Valentino: The Last Emperor*, 2009; *The September Issue*, 2009 and *The Eye Has to Travel*, 2012, based on the Vogue and Harper's Bazaar fashion editor legend, Diana Vreeland. And further still with renowned designer Tom Ford, previously of Gucci, morphing into film director (he also co-wrote the screenplay) with his highly acclaimed *A Single Man*, 2009. Arianne Phillips designed the costumes but for star of the movie, Colin Firth, the suits were a collaboration between Phillips and Ford. A new online fashion medium, the fashion film promises to strengthen the link still further. SHOWstudio.com was launched in 2000, by the hugely successful Harper's Bazaar and Vogue fashion photographer, Nick Knight, and it broadcasts live catwalk shows and fashion shoots giving access to all rather than the select few of the high fashion elite.

But where fashion and film truly come together is once a year at the Oscars, the pinnacle of the calendar of both industries where stars of both can be made in a night, on the basis of a frock, and two multi billion dollar industries depend upon it.

Fashion and film, hold not a tenuous link, but one that has endured eight decades and counting surely an unbreakable bond.