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Life imitates art

Screen fashions hit the streets

By Tammy Kaup
Senior Editor

"There's no business like show business" — it even affects fashion trends, Lincoln clothing retailers and New York fashion editors say.

"People are more aware of what fashions are around (through movies) and feel more comfortable wearing something more bold if they see Miss Movie Star wearing it," said Mary Cuddy, manager of The Limited at Gateway.

"'Out of Africa' has had a great affect," said Carolyn Ziz, fashion assistant for New Woman magazine. All the merchants and editors interviewed agreed that "Out of Africa" has influenced fashion.

Jay Murray, salesperson at the Brass Buckle at the East Park Plaza said the movie has helped make earth tone

colors and big gold jewelry fashionable. The English colonial look shown in the movie is popular, said Lisa Gabor, editorial assistant in the fashion department of Harper's Bazaar.

Jungle prints, particularly on scarves, are also a trend in the look of Africa, said Jane Harmon, assistant fashion editor at Redbook magazine.

The Australian look of "Crocodile Dundee" may also be influencing the khakis and chambrays popular now, Harmon said.

The Limited's "Outback Red" line has styles similar to the ones portrayed in these movies, although it has been out for more than a year, said Cuddy.

Ruffled, victorian blouses may have been influenced by "Room with a View," Ziz said. And "Amadeus" helped bring softness and femininity to fashion for a while, said Loretta Loibl, manager

at Brauns in the Centrum Plaza.

Singer and actress Madonna has helped make jean-washed material popular, said Desa Fosbinder, assistant manager at Brooks in the Gateway Shopping Center.

"Pretty in Pink" may have influenced a "cutesy" look in prints and petticoats, said Maura McCurdy, associate fashion editor at Cosmopolitan.

"Top Gun" may have helped make leather jackets popular, said Tracie Simpson, assistant manager of Maurices in the East Park Plaza.

Movies that have influenced fashion in the past include "Flashdance" and "Annie Hall," said several merchants and editors. The "Flashdance" look included torn up sweatshirts and a "not neat look," Murray said. "Annie Hall" brought long skirts, lots of layers, oversized and relaxed clothing, several said.

Style takes self-knowledge

By Johanna Beem
Senior Editor

Dressing is an art. And like any other art form, it takes time, knowing the basics, and knowing yourself.

"Like playing the piano or skating, you have to start with the basics, said Margaret Curtis, a former model who now works with textiles and design. "You learn to play a scale or do a figure eight before you go on to something more creative."

Creating an individual style can start with something small like wearing a child's "Winnie the Pooh" watch, or it can evolve into having an entire black wardrobe.

Whatever statement a personal style makes, fashion consultants agree that a person needs to be comfortable in the clothes he wears and the statement he makes with those clothes. Not everyone can accessorize a basic black tuxedo with a hot pink bow tie and matching high-top sneakers.

Gerdi Heath, a fashion consultant in Lincoln since 1981, said that people need to decide what their physical images are. People should look at the shapes of their faces, their skin and hair color, their bone structure and their physical features that should be minimized or emphasized.

Curtis said that people need to realize that they are unique, both in their physical appearances and personalities.

"Clothes can tell other people how we view ourselves," Curtis said. "With them we can project a professional image, dramatic image, witty image, sporty image or elegant image."

Both Curtis and Heath said that people, especially women, place too much emphasis on looking like someone else.

Women will see something that looks wonderful on someone else, Heath said, and think that if they wear the same thing they'll look just as nice. But most of the time a copied outfit will look inappropriate, she said.

Heath said people also have a hard time liking what they wear when they copy fashions from a magazine.

Curtis considers the basics of dressing to be color, texture and balance.

"Color has the most immediate impact," Curtis said.

Most people have a sense of what colors look good on them, she said, but can learn more about the play of colors from art classes or viewing art at museums.

Each person has colors that work best with his or her hair and skin color. Redheads usually look best in vibrant colors like lime green or gold, dark brown and other colors with warm undertones, Heath said. Dark skin and dark haired people tend to look better in dark, rich colors or sharply contrasting colors like deep blue, black, white or red, she said. Blondes, or lighter-skinned people look better in the "cool, ice-cream colors."

More goes into picking colors than just what plays up skin tones. Color also projects an image. Heath said that black and navy are power colors. They evoke a sense of authority, she said, but also make someone seem unapproachable. Softer colors make a person seem more approachable.

Fabric textures also project an image, Curtis said. Satin and velvet evoke a sensuous feeling, while tweed makes people look firm and practical. Denim is so standard in America, she said, that it evokes different feelings depending on how it's used.

The last basic to consider is balance. Curtis said that the key here is simplicity. An outfit should have one

main point of interest. It makes the outfit more effective and dramatic, she said.

Once a person knows about the basics, he or she can expand and make an outfit unique. Curtis said, however, that this is a gradual process. People always should feel comfortable with how they look, otherwise the effect of the outfit is lost, she said.

Heath said people can know if an outfit is right for them by other people's responses.

"If someone compliments something you're wearing, it isn't right for you," Heath said. "That's because it is a contrast against you that the person notices the sweater or blouse or whatever, more than you."

"If someone tells you that you look nice, then everything balances and doesn't draw attention away from the person inside the clothes," she said.

Curtis said that nothing in fashion is new; items are adaptations of past generations or other cultures. Because of this, she said, people shouldn't be afraid to update former fashions or go to second hand shops and buy a belt or sweater to make a current fashion unique.

"Nothing is so far past that it can't be used again," she said.

To slightly change the look of an outfit, she said, someone could buy interesting buttons from second hand shops to add more drama or charm. The same can be done with belt buckles, old jewelry, ribbons and scarves.

Curtis also said that someone's sense of style can come through in the way they wear a piece of clothing: rolling up sleeves, letting a lace petticoat show under a skirt, letting lace show at the top of a blouse, or even wearing a flower in the lapel of a jacket.

"People don't have to be led around by fashion magazines," Curtis said.

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