

Japanese Fashion Illustration in Media

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Abstract: We define fashion illustration as a general term for pictures which express fashion. Fashion illustration is made public and circulated through media. In this paper, we start from tracing back to the origin of fashion illustration in Japan. We think it is in Edo period that the very first fashion illustration has started to be published especially through mass media. And we survey Japanese fashion illustration from the aspect of announced media and to clarify the meaning overall. As a result, we found that there is an intimate relation between fashion illustration and media. As we discussed above, fashion illustration is affected by media's progress, since fashion illustration is published and distributed through media.

Key words: *Fashion illustration, history, Design Methodology, culture.*

1. Introduction

We define the term "fashion illustration" as pictures which express fashion. In this thesis, we start from tracing the origins of Fashion illustration in Japan. We think it was in the Edo period that the very first fashion illustration started to be published, especially through mass media. Then we are going to look at Japanese fashion illustration from the viewpoint of released media and attempt to clarify its significance in a comprehensive manner.

2. The Various Kinds of Media

Media in which fashion illustration is published are as follows:

(1) Personal Media (2) Mass Media (3) Multi Media (4) Inter-active Media

In principle, an illustration is a picture that assumes its function in society through the mass media, and it is classified in the field of graphic design. Therefore, illustration works discussed within this theme of fashion illustration are mainly those presented through the mass media.

3. History of clothing fashion illustrations in Japan as published in the mass media

3.1 Ukiyo-e prints in the Edo period

The two subjects of Ukiyo-e are Bijin-ga and Yakusha-e, both showing the latest fashions at the time, such as the colors and patterns of Kimonos and how to wear them, hairstyles, make-up and mannerisms.

It can be said that Ukiyo-e was the fashion illustration of the Edo period, and the large-scale printing and circulation through woodblock printing was the mass media of the Edo period.



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Figure 1. Ukiyo-e print, “Toji Zensei Bijin Zoroi (A set of Great Beauties of the Present) / Echizenya uchi Morokoshi, Ayano Orino (Morokoshi of Echizenya, Ayano, Orino),” by Utamaro Kitagawa, around 1794.

Figure 2. Bijin-ga poster (a poster of beautiful woman) of Mitsukoshi Gofuku-ten by Hisui Sugiura, 1914

Figure 3. Jojou-ga (lyrical painting of a girl) by Yumeji Takehisa, 1915

3.2 Bijin-ga posters of beautiful women from the Meiji era to the Taisho era

The significance of Bijin-ga posters, from media point of view, is as follows:

- 1- Bijin-ga helped to improve technological progress in multicolored (polychrome) planography.
2. Bijin-ga presented new images, which were a mixture of Japanese and Western styles. And those images became widespread.

3.3 Jojou-ga – lyrical paintings during the Meiji, Taisho, and at the beginning of the Showa era

From a media point of view, Jojou-ga created an image of girls of this era as a visual art, and became a source of forward movements. In 1902 (the 35th year of Meiji) Japan’s first technical journal on girls, "Shoujo-kai", or *Girls’ World*, was first published. This was followed by the appearance of one girls’ magazine after another. At this time, many illustrators who produced Jojou-ga became prominent.

3.4 The binding of books and magazines from the Meiji era to the pre-World War II Showa era

The binding of books and magazines is also one form of media for which fashion illustration is often used. From the Meiji era to the pre-WW II period, we can find works by artists who also made Bijin-ga posters and Jojou-ga in many bindings.

3.5 Illustrations on stationary and daily goods from the Meiji era to the middle of the Showa era

It is thought that the significance of fashion illustration in the appendices of girls’ magazines, seen from the aspect of media, was the development a colorful world that resembled the flamboyant girl in an age before the fancy goods store, and to give girls dreams.

4. The history of fashion in the media and Japanese fashion illustration

4.1 The fashion plates of fashion magazines

Post-war revival – fashion illustration is also used by mass media fashion magazines in the 1950's. It is thought that the purpose of the fashion magazine's fashion plate was to present an introduction to new fashion designs and how to make the clothes, etc. in the form of visual information; to show it, and to circulate it.



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Figure 4. Cover of “Blouse Collection” by Junichi Nakahara in 1953

Figure 5. Fashion Illustration by Isao Yajima who was very active in the international fashion scene, in 1997

4.2 Stylebook production and fashion plates

Junichi Nakahara was a great artist who made a large contribution to the fashion culture of the Showa era though the use of mass media. A very active illustrator in the pre-war period, Junichi Nakahara established the Himawarisya Co. Ltd. and started the women's magazine Soleil (later Soreiyu) in 1946 (the 21st year of Showa). These magazines were created for his own original world and ideological fulfillment, and his aesthetics, which aimed to nurture beautiful, gentle and wise women who understood about beautiful living [1].

4.3 Fashion illustrations of fashion magazines and technical journals

In the 1960's the fashion illustration was also used by mass media, such as current fashion magazines and technical journals.

Upon entering the 1960's, the publishing of fashion plates that detail fashion decreased in Japan too, as fashion Photography developed. Fashion illustration dispensed with the explanation picture, and strengthened the element of image communication. Japanese illustrators active in overseas mass media such as overseas fashion magazines and fashion technical journals came to exist, too.

The fashion illustration is also used by technical journal in the fashion industry in Japan. There are a lot of examples in which the fashion illustration is used as an image of the next season, as well as an explanatory drawing of current trends.

4.4 Posters of fashion-related companies and fashion illustrations in pamphlets

The posters the fashion-related businesses, such as fashion illustration apparel manufacturers, the fashion buildings, and pamphlet from department stores, catalogues, pamphlets, fliers, etc. are all forms of mass media in which fashion illustrations are published. The fashion illustration plays an important role in sales promotions, in-store exhibitions, and assist presentations such as fashion shows.

4.5 Fashion illustrations of book and magazines

Fashion illustrations are also widely used by present-day mass media books, magazines, etc. Illustrations were given freedom as a result of the necessity for photographs to be used as informative illustrations, and thus became able to pursue the art of expression freely across the board. Therefore, the content of expression has diversified to illustrations in the field of the fashion, and the techniques have diversified from hand drawings to CG.

4.6 Fashion illustration of clothes

Clothes on which fashion illustrations are printed now exist. It is also a form of mass media by which these fashion illustrations are published. In some ways, fashion illustrations applied to clothes convey the design message more effectively than the clothing itself.

4.7 Fashion illustrations on stationery and goods

Stationery and miscellaneous goods on which fashion illustrations are printed exist even today. This is also another form of mass media by which fashion illustrations are released.

4.8 Fashion illustration on websites

In the 21stst century, a lot of fashion illustration is digitalized and then published on websites. In the content of works, the composition of images in addition to conventional still pictures and the release of animations, etc. are seen here and there. We can predict still further developments for the future.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, we took a general view of fashion illustrations from the aspect of media, and we considered their significance. As a result, we found that there is a close relationship between fashion illustration and the mass media, and fashion illustrations are affected by media's progress and features, since fashion illustrations are published and circulated through media. Therefore, the development and the transformation of new media in addition to past media will influence the means of expression and works of fashion illustrations in the future. Those who produce works need to acquire the fundamental techniques of fashion illustration, make an effort to acquire the latest technology corresponding to progress and the transformation of media, and produce attractive works.

This study is financially supported by the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) 20520136, (B) 21330101 of the Ministry for Education, Science, Sports, and Culture. We would like to express our gratitude for their support.

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