

Fashion: show and tell

by susan girolami

"Comfort along with pleasing appearance should be the goal of designers--unfortunately they are manipulating the mindless masses by introducing sexuality to feed low egos," exclaimed JoAnne M. Owens, salesperson at Anderson-Little, when asked if comfort should be the basis of fashion no matter what the item looks like on the buyer.

The manager of Foxmoor, East Mall, feels differently: "No. There's a fine line to walk between selling something that fits well and looks good on a customer and just selling. If something doesn't look good it is not fashion."

C.S. Denby, assistant manager at another retail clothing store stated, "Comfortable clothes should be what a buyer shops for and if they look good on the customer then they've made a good buy. Most people won't buy uncomfortable clothes regardless of how attractive they may appear."

Still another clothes store manager said, "I think all shoppers can find something both fashionable and comfortable, although it may take some people longer."

Many fashions are geared toward comfort; loose-fitting draw-string or elastic-waist pants, soft materials, loose shirts or blouses, flowing dresses, jeans and t-shirts.

And there are fashions which aren't comfortable: tightfitting pants, ties, and high-heeled shoes. Owens said, "Almost everything considered fashionable today is sleek and tremendously thin--people are all trying to weigh 90 pounds whether or not their bodies are designed for such low weight."

Fashion today is like taking a triangle and turning it upside down -- big and loose on the top to very tight and form-fitting on the bottom. Designers are telling people it is fashionable to be "chic" and "sexy." But is this what the people find comfortable and is it what they want? One clothes store manager said, "I think the style makers sometimes forget comfort in their designs."

All things considered, it can be said that fashion dictates to the buyer to a degree, whether the buyer likes it or not. It also can be questioned whether fashion designers are taking advantage of a society that cries out for someone to tell it what to do. Owens said, "The basic insecurities of people and their lack of self-esteem lead them to question their own taste and decision-making in what is "proper to wear."

Confining clothes and painful shoes--if it's fashionable, it's okay. Fashion is more "show and tell" than anything else.



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