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The End Of Fashion: How Marketing Changed The Clothing Business Forever



Synopsis

The time when "fashion" was defined by French designers whose clothes could be afforded only by elite has ended. Now designers take their cues from mainstream consumers and creativity is channeled more into mass-marketing clothes than into designing them. Indeed, one need look no further than the Gap to see proof of this. In *The End of Fashion*, Wall Street Journal, reporter Teri Agins astutely explores this seminal change, laying bare all aspects of the fashion industry from manufacturing, retailing, and licensing to image making and financing. Here as well are fascinating insider vignettes that show Donna Karan fighting with financiers, the rivalry between Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger, and the commitment to haute couture that sent Isaac Mizrahi's business spiraling.

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Customer Reviews

I'm glad that I finally got the book after seeing Teri on the Oprah show and the Metro Channel. Her reporting genius and years of experience show as she single-handedly unveils this industry which too often tends to believe its own hype. It was especially interesting to read her accounts of the ways in which the homogenization of large American retail stores has bolstered designers' marketing and branding efforts and subsequently, and ironically, led to the death of fashion. This read was especially timely as I watch my hip trendy New Yorker friends spending \$200 on banal denim pants in assorted hues. My only regret is that Teri never once conceded that designers are artists; her approach was strictly business and on those terms this book is brilliant.

If you ever wondered why so many department stores closed in the 80s, and why they all look alike now, or if you wondered why runway shows display such a serious disconnect from real life, this book will tell you all. The author did thorough research to come to her conclusions. I was glad for this information.

Teri Agins did a terrific job with her book "The End of Fashion". The title sounds a bit fatalistic, but the content and tone is fantastic. I've always wanted to know the history, business practices, personality and profiles of accomplished designers and Teri Agins delivers all this beautifully. No malice is detected and Ms. Agins' professionalism is evident throughout. No catty swipes are made, even when she discusses Donna's exorbitant overhead and sample process or when she discusses Tommy's obsession with everything Ralph Lauren. Remember Ralph: imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. I'm so glad to know what really happened to Mossimo and Zoran. This book about fashion designers and the fashion industry is a great read. I highly recommend it to fashion and garment industry types as well as for the informed or curious customer.

Fashion books fall into a few categories: designer biographies, coffee table books and encyclopedic guides. The End of Fashion is a stunning exception--a hybrid that shows just how the business of fashion works and fails. I bought this book after seeing Teri as a guest judge on Project Runway, and after hearing Tim Gunn's podcast about how important a journalist she is. He didn't exaggerate. This book breaks through the hype and for once I was able to fully understand, to connect the dots about how the fashion business really works. This book came out a few years ago, but the case studies are so thorough that it seems even more current and relevant than most of the drivel about fashion we always read about. Check it out.

The fashion community is too often blindsided by its own perceived image. This book, which is reader friendly and packed with real information (as opposed to gossip), strips away some of the self serving myths created by the fashion houses and their own sycophantic press. The book shows how houses such as Donna Karan, Ungaro and above all the once mighty French fashion companies have ignored the consumer's needs to their detriment, and how these miscalculations have come back to haunt them. It also explains the wild yet differing success stories of those brands that have become household names such as Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilffiger. The End of Fashion is entertaining and riveting, certainly to anyone involved in the business of Fashion, but

also to the fashion neophyte. Teri Agins' style is that of a real reporter who does not pull her punches, but stays away from gossip and provides the facts. A lot of these facts are not common knowledge, and the "behind the scenes" information will delight and fascinate. The book is an easy read and highly entertaining as well as insightful. Lifting the corporate veil from success stories and failures, the author provides a compelling A to Z (from Armani to Zoran) look at the business of fashion on the eve of the new millennium. It's worth every penny and probably also tax deductible.

I have always felt that the comparison of the fashion industry to the "Emperor's New Clothes" was exactly what the consumer wanted and what the industry presented. But what so intrigued me about Ms. Agin's book is that she exposed the "Emperor" without clothes and the clothes makers without sarcasm or snide attacks. This made it possible for us aspiring designers to observe a realistic view and grounded attitude as we waded into this evolving dance of dressing. It is no wonder that the author holds such an esteemed position at the Wall Street Journal. I am so hopeful that this is but a beginning of more books from Ms. Agin that deal with other mysteries and facets of a very exciting and dynamic industry.

This book will be a great read for anyone interested in fashion, and frankly it's a good read for any consumer who spends more than a few hundred dollars a year on clothes. It explains not only the rise and fall of the Paris couture houses, but also the impact of licensing and retail giants such as Tommy Hilfiger and the Gap. If you're at all interested in the fashion industry, this provides fabulous insight. Agins did a good job of organizing a lot of information, and then writing it in a way that remains engaging and meaningful. I bought this to do some research on a story, but then I found it so interesting that I finished this book in a couple of days!

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