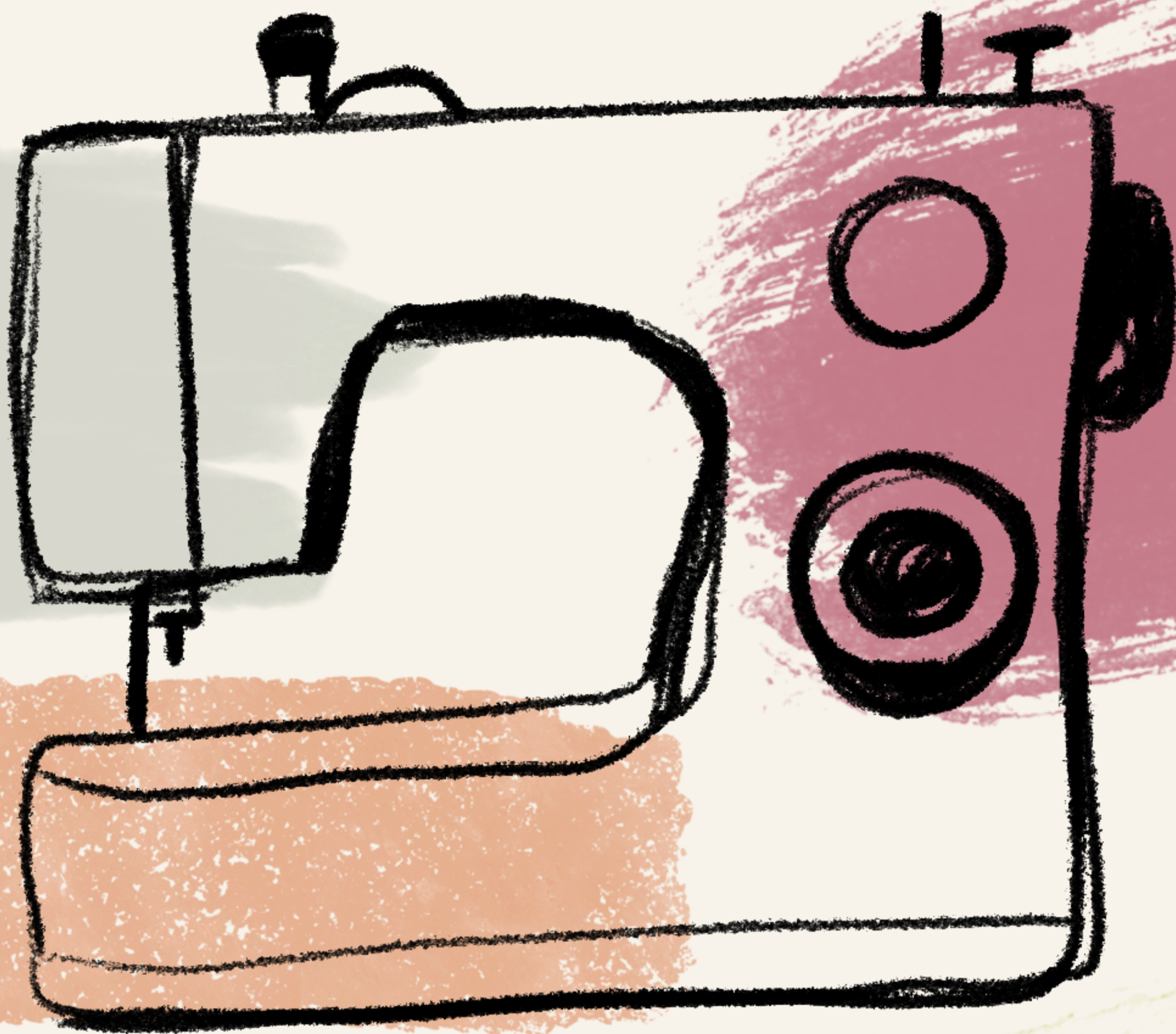


STYLE AND SUSTAIN

ISSUE 3

ETHIC THREADS
REVIEW



EDITORS NOTE

When I first conceptualized Ethic Threads Review, I had no idea where the idea would go; only that I wanted to spark conversation. Specifically, conversations about clothes and the stories they tell, because they can offer so much more besides practicality. I'm still so amazed by the support our magazine has received and can't wait to see what comes next!

We hope you enjoy our third issue: Style and Sustain! You'll find all kinds of stories regarding sustainable consumerism, and the efforts people are taking to develop conscious wardrobes.

A special thank you to everyone on the Ethic Threads Review team that contributed to our work this year. This would not be possible without you.

I truly hope the articles and stories you find in here bring as much creativity and joy to you as those who wrote them.

Bisous,

Diya Thennarasu
Editor-in-Chief



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SUMMER FASHION TRENDS

Op-ed

Xariyah Walker, California

The definition of popularity is constantly changing; in other words, what's popular today isn't guaranteed to maintain its status tomorrow. This phenomenon is especially present in summer fashion trends, where over the course of two months, hyper-specific fashion trends take the world by storm. These trends are predetermined in the months leading up to summer, but are quickly disposed of come fall. With this in mind, it's important to consider whether these trends are truly fashionable and timeless. While some summer trends have certainly left their mark on the fashion world, others have fallen short. Below are a few of this summer's biggest trends that, in my opinion, were not worth the hype.

Sea Shells and Lobsters

This summer, I've had one too many bedazzled cans of sardines shoved in my face. Shells, lobsters, and other crustaceans have been no strangers to this year's summer wardrobe. Whether gilded onto the handles of Bottega bags or embroidered onto the polyester shirts at Target's storefront, the fashion world's fascination with nautical life has evidently wandered off its plates.

We can assume that part of the appeal comes from pre-existing coastal town aesthetics. However, the trend, in my opinion, is anything but original. Fashion designers have been well-versed in ocean-inspired looks for years. Think Jean Paul Gaultier sailor men. But what we're seeing now is nothing more than a cheap, concentrated version of these looks. Fashion companies are taking the nuance out of fashion and lazily slapping on mass-produced motifs to an article of clothing.

These images are gaudy interpretations of sea creatures that make outfits seem more like costumes than couture. Repackaging marine life as a new luxury isn't an inspired revelation at all.

Yes, summer is all about beach and coastal vibes, but there's no need to be so literal with its messaging. I mean, how would you feel if a perfectly good winter skirt was embossed by a giant glittery snowman?

Butter Yellow

From Instagram feeds to red carpets, this pastel color has been spotted everywhere this summer. However, its rise to fame has been on the come-up for a while now. Take, for example, the 2025 Oscars, where Timothée Chalamet was spotted wearing a solid butter yellow suit that had several critics foaming at the mouth. While I can't guarantee it was his chiseled jawline that caused the color to spike in Google Search popularity that month, I'm sure it was a significant contributing factor.

But what is so special about this color specifically?

Generally, pastel shades are considered calming and approachable. Butter yellow in particular borders a thin line between cheeriness and subtlety, making it all the more appealing.

In an interview for Forbes magazine, personal stylist Dacy Gillespie, not liking the color herself, admitted: "It's a soft and soothing color, it's almost a baby color—like a nursery color—maybe that's what those of us in the United States are craving right now."

It's clearly a nostalgic color that manages to bring out the soft side of a person, and consequently, sends others the message that they are just as warm and welcoming on the inside.

However, despite its charm, the color can easily feel "immature". I guess I automatically associate the color with baby blankets, nurseries,

nd the Easter Bunny, which makes it hard for me to appreciate the color outside of such contexts. Even if this problem is something only I experience, there are more general issues with the color as well. Layering the color or relying on it for statement pieces can also come off as unoriginal, since it's a color bandwagon that so many people are jumping on. Even more so, butter yellow is a color heavily tied to spring and summer aesthetics, which limits its versatility. As opposed to jewel tones or neutrals, I think it'll struggle to transition into fall or winter wardrobes, making it a color that feels obsolete and seasonal rather than "timeless".

Silk

Perhaps the most romantic and timeless trend of the year has been the resurgence of silk. But you may be asking, "If silk is such a coveted fabric, why are you putting it on your worst trends list?" Well, to that, I say it's a fabric that definitely deserves a time and place in a person's wardrobe, but maybe not for the summer.

Most of the silk clothes circulating in stores this summer objectively look beautiful, but aren't practical in most day-to-day situations. Silk doesn't breathe well when layered with certain materials and tends to trap heat against the skin. It can even perform worse in more humid conditions, where the moisture from your skin sits on top of the fabric instead of evaporating. On top of that, what most people think is silk tends to be satin or silk blends, which fare even worse under hot conditions. These synthetic fibers don't last long-term in closets and are more prone to damage after just a few washes.

Silk has an undeniable reputation in the fashion industry and can certainly elevate an outfit—just maybe not in our 80-90° summers.

Last Thoughts

In general, take my advice with a complete grain of salt because, FYI, most of these judgments were made in sweats and chocolate-stained

sleep shirts. I'm not here to tell anyone what they should or shouldn't wear, because ultimately, the choice is completely yours! Fashion is a personal journey, and what feels right for one person might feel completely wrong for another. Trends exist to inspire, entertain, and even challenge our styles, but they should never make us feel like we need to conform.

Even if a thousand and one people are sporting a trend, that doesn't automatically make it overrated. Part of the joy of fashion is being able to share it with others. At the same time, fashion is about self-expression, not following the crowd. If you choose to participate in a trend, you should do it because you genuinely love it, not because the hive mind does. After all, the best outfits are the ones that feel authentic, honest, and make you feel most like yourself.



ROGAN ART

ARTICLE

Nita Ashoka, Texas

Across South Asia, painters who specialize in Rogan art are clamoring to preserve the historic art form. Rogan painting is a form of cloth painting originating from Persia, which later spread to India 400 years ago. The art involves boiling castor oil for multiple days until it develops a honey-like viscosity. Castor oil is the base of the paint, and gives rogan art its name, with rogan meaning oil in Farsi. Then, vegetable dyes are dried and ground into powders that are mixed in with the oil to create paint. Rather than a paintbrush, artists warm up the thick substance in their palms with a metal stylus to create various motifs onto fabrics. To do this, the paste is pulled into thin threads and draped over the canvas of choice, while another hand guides the flow of the paint from underneath the cloth. The fabric is then folded over itself to produce a mirror copy on the opposite side. These designs are often free-handed, leaving the end result entirely up to the artist's inhibitions.

However, this process is anything but simple. The castor oil acts almost like lava, often catching on fire over hot coal; as a result, the amount of people who can maneuver this part of production is reserved. Furthermore, the practice of Rogan art is often inherited through generations, meaning most full-time artists have to be born into a family or company practicing Rogan art. Because of the arts' physically demanding and strenuous properties, there are very few painters skilled enough to keep the practice alive.

The rise of industrial textiles throughout India forced many artisans to leave the craft for more lucrative work. Although Rogan art was popularized through bedding or ceremonial attire, businesses were

The cultural and racial significance of denim became particularly important during the 20th century, as it became associated with working-class culture, rebellion, and, eventually, youth counterculture.

Today, indigo-dyed denim is pervasive in fashion, and it's almost impossible to think of jeans and denim without associating them with both comfort and style. Yet, the history of denim is defined by incomprehensible patterns of racial and cultural oppression. Its entry as a commodity to a mass-produced market also says a lot about the relationship between exploitation and commercialization. The accessibility we have to dirt-cheap clothing exists because of the bridges between colonization, race, and global capitalism.



unable to keep up with the supply and demand of mass-produced goods, causing locals to lose interest. This issue was further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which drove away tourists who once filled the industry. A lack of tourism halted sales and commissions, leaving residual Rogan artists with little to no sources of income. In response to these challenges, there's been a growing movement to preserve and revive Rogan's art. Many organizations and local governments have taken steps to support the few remaining Rogan artists by providing grants, training programs, and marketing assistance. These initiatives hope to increase awareness of Rogan painting both within India and internationally. One of the key strategies has been to focus on the cultural and historical value of Rogan art, highlighting its centuries-old heritage and its significance as an intangible cultural asset. For example, initiatives have been launched to help artisans showcase their work at global cultural festivals and art exhibitions, or through social media to reach global audiences by a more accessible means.

While efforts to preserve Rogan art are occurring, it's still at risk of eradication. The craft still has to battle against industrialization, globalization, and the ongoing pressures of a rapidly changing economy. However, the resilience of the artists who continue to practice Rogan painting is a testament to the deep cultural significance and beauty of Rogan art.



FASHION AS A CULTURAL DILEMMA

PERSONAL NARRATIVE Anika Reddy, California

Intricate beadwork and fabrics adorned with various illustrations contort around me as I callowly roll around on the floor of dresses, while my mother ruthlessly negotiates prices with a seller. In my contented state, I hear nothing but the soft crunch of sequins and delicate gems under my weight as I continue my contemporary floorwork. I grasp at the fabrics and blouses wanting to model them all at once, realizing you could live without many things, but to live without such grand dresses was the very essence of privation. This is it. This is right. This is where I'm meant to be.

But first, let's rewind a bit. It was the summer of 2015 in Chennai, India, at a cluttered boutique that we'd stumbled upon among the various street shops. Beneath my saccharine, ice cream-coated fingers lay what appeared to be an endless supply of sarees, kurtas, salwars, and, well, any kind of dress you could imagine. The glittering colors and opulent designs of the clothes illuminated the tiny corner shop, making up for the broken, yellowing street lights. Every cubic inch of the shop seemed to be drowning in clothes, but I wouldn't have had it any other way. For most of my life, clothes, or classic Indian couture, were what I found most love and acceptance in. However, this reliance began to dissipate as I faced difficulty having to choose between Indian garments, and American ones living in the United States.

Growing up, I was never ashamed of my ethnic wardrobe in the States: in fact, I embraced it. For as long as I can remember, clothes have been an integral part of the way I represent myself. This obsession manifested over the infinite summers I spent across the globe. Despite the sweltering sun, I was always able to convince my cousins to take me to Chennai Silks and Pothys, even if I never made a purchase. Looking at the ethereal garments was satisfying enough. There wasn't a doubt in my mind that I loved clothes, especially Indian ones. Being Indian and telling the world through my clothes was something I never failed to embrace.

My perception of my cultural identity shifted dramatically as I faced cultural challenges in my American school. One of these moments occurred during my elementary school graduation. I had worn my favorite neon orange and royal blue churidar, with a bright red bindi to tie it all together. I distinctly remember excitedly jumping up and down, begging my mother to add the tiny dot to my forehead. As far as I knew, bindis were the epitome of grace and equalizers among chaotic cacophonies of color. As we waited in line, ready to walk up on the stage, the blue-eyed brown-haired boy in front of me kept turning around to look at me, as though he was trying to decipher my appearance. His captious eyes squinted in confusion and his judgment permeated the room. Finally, he decided to speak to me once he noticed my bindi. He started snickering, as he said, "Ew what's on your forehead?!" as though it was some infectious disease. The other girls and boys in their floral frocks and navy blue suit ties turned to me, processing the same thoughts as the boy in front of me: "What is wrong with this girl?" It took me a while to realize not everyone was looking at me with adoration, but disgust. This, along with the other disapproving stares from people I never knew as I walked up that stage made me angry: not so much at the people who did so, but at my culture. I resented my culture for making me feel out of place.

I wanted to experience this moment, this life, without being Indian—to share a side of me that everyone could look at and understand. I quickly became conscious of the way people perceived my external culture and formed this notion that all perceptions of it were malicious. Embarrassed, I began to hide this part of my culture, starting with shoving pounds of Indian dresses underneath my bed. In America, I didn't want to be that brown girl who dressed in imbecilic clothes. I wanted to feel normal. From that point on, I made an effort to venture into the journey of cultural separation, keeping my two worlds and wardrobes separate.

However, over the past few years, my two, never to cross paths with each other's wardrobes, have slowly made their way to each other. At the same time, so did my love for my Indian and American cultures. If you look into my closet now, you'll see lots of straight-legged and baggy pants, and various modern tops and jackets. You'll also see embroidered skirts and cotton blouses I inherited from my mother and grandmother. My culture isn't just a binary code of America or India. It's the refraction of metallic sequined shawls and pearl headbands. It's the juxtaposition of hand-me-down tulle dresses and thrifted leather jackets. It's the way half of my clothes are scattered on my bedroom floor while the others are neatly stacked in drawers for special occasions. My closet embodies my culture, which resides in its gaps, its unspoken words, and its physical characteristics. Essentially, my culture is intricately yet inexplicably woven into my wardrobe.



ON SANDY LIANG

ANALYSIS

Ava Hayes, New York

Sandy Liang is an Asian American fashion designer who created space for the AAPI community in a traditional exclusive space. Through her unique yet thoroughly popular design choices, she's been part of the revival of nostalgia and culture in fashion. Liang's first collection included a multitude of coats that became incredibly popular at New York Fashion Week in 2014. The jackets were said to be an homage to Liang's upbringing in Chinatown. Today, her style is best defined as hyper-femininity in its simplest form.

During Chinese New Year, Liang released a special collection of jewelry, even converting her father's Congee Dim Sum House restaurant as a place to host her Lunar New Year's party. The party "was a sea of signature Sandy Liang silk bows—as bags, in hair, on dresses, on shoes" (Vogue). It's clear that Liang does not shy away from celebrating her Chinese-American identity, and is ingenious when it comes to finding creative ways to communicate this aspect of herself through her designs. However, this wasn't a choice intended to leverage or navigate her career. When asked about her heritage's influence on her creative process in an interview with TeenVouge, Liang claimed "I've never tried to let it guide my career or identify me as just that, I'm so much more!"

Throughout history, Asian American artists and POC in general have often been forced into the spotlight solely based on their race, even when they are so much more than that. Liang's adamance to

intertwine her culture into her work rather than let her culture conform to her is an example of how many artists today are defining themselves before letting society define them. Here is an example of how many artists today are defining themselves before letting society define them.

Liang's recent collections heavily utilize bows, silk fabrics, and oversized silhouettes to create a unique interpretation of softness and effeminateness—terms, that under her control, feel modern and accessible rather than restrictive or stereotypical. In many ways, Sandy Liang has reclaimed elements of femininity that were once considered either too soft or too domestic and turned them into signature statements that feel empowered and deliberate. Her designs elevate traditionally "girly" elements, like bows and frills, by placing them in unexpected contexts, making them feel contemporary.

Liang's entire image defies the tokenization of Asian artists and offers an elegant and refreshing outlook on Gen-Z fashion short. Liang's hand in the fashion scene should undoubtably be respected and looked out for in the coming years.



THE NICHEIFICATION OF FASHION

ARTICLE

Emily Wang, California

With the growing popularity of various “aesthetics” rising, especially following the most recent decade, individuality seems to be hanging on by a thread, so to speak. Such buzzwords have created a jarring presence for fashion in the modern world. Regardless of their popularity, these trends come across as disingenuous. There is no connecting thread between aesthetics, besides social media virality. Consequently, we’re seeing clothing production occurring at an alarming rate, since their existence is rooted in consumerism, not an actual subculture.

So what does this mean for the organic subcultures that seemed to have faded into obscurity? Subcultures have existed long before the 2020s, cultivating as a result of people who often use fashion to express themselves in similar ways. Though this like-mindedness often extends because these facades die down so quickly, there isn't enough consumer demand to sell out these clothes, giving companies less reason to create quality, sustainable items. Moreover, these create unorganized styles that look mismatched, rather than an attempt at dressing eclectically. If certain subcultures have become irrelevant, perhaps that is the result of the internet, not a lack of engagement.

But why exactly is this a problem? We can look at the growth of “core aesthetics” as a weaker version of earlier subcultures; they are more like short-lived trends as opposed to a lifestyle. People

are focused on individual pieces not styles. It would be easier to buy a single hair bow than completely uproot your wardrobe to be “coquette.” However, the cost of this is fast fashion. If one clothing item gains recognition, even if only momentarily, it is not surprising to see multiple iterations of it pop up in Zara or Shein. Because these facades die down so quickly, there isn't enough consumer demand to sell these clothes, giving companies less reason to create quality, sustainable items. Moreover, these create unorganized styles that look mismatched, rather than an attempt at dressing eclectically.

If certain subcultures have become irrelevant, perhaps that is the result of the internet, not a lack of engagement. Sure, experimenting with different styles can be fun, but what's the point if there is no intent behind it?

