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COCO CHANEL: THE WOMEN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD OF FASHION

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Purpose and objectives. The purpose of the paper is to investigate the activities of an outstanding French fashion designer Coco Chanel, who founded *Chanel* Fashion House and made a significant impact on European fashion of XX-XXI centuries.

Objectives are:

- to analyze the preconditions that caused huge changes and the appearance of new ideas in the world of high fashion;
- to learn about discoveries and innovations implemented by the renowned fashion designer;
- to describe the main features which distinguish the style of Coco Chanel and make it unique;
- to consider some modern interpretations of Chanel's style.

Study subject. The activity of a French fashion designer, who founded *Chanel* Fashion House and made a significant impact on European fashion of XX - XXI centuries.

Methods and tools for research. The method of analysis was used for the study. Analysis is the process of breaking a complex topic or substance into smaller parts in order to gain a better understanding of it. Therefore, we singled out and studied in detail certain aspects of the designer's life and activity.

Scientific novelty and practical significance of the results. During the study it was systematized information on the designer's activities; learned about the characteristics of the historical period the designer lived in; about her experiments that have a useful practical application for future professionals, including design school graduates; for the first time investigated the modern interpretation of the style of Chanel.

Coco Chanel (1883 – 1971) is an outstanding French fashion designer who founded the fashion house Chanel and made a significant impact on European fashion of upcoming centuries. For Chanel style that led to simplicity of women's dress, elements of traditional male wardrobe and the principle of "luxurious simplicity" were immanent.

Coco was born in the eventful epoch. One of the main historical event was the World War II. New challenges encouraged designers to the creation of new silhouettes and the use of unusual fabrics and materials that corresponded to the spirit of the age.

Chanel was the first designer to use jersey, which at the time was reserved for men's underwear. Simple, practical and comfortable, the fabric was the complete antithesis of what women's clothing had previously been: flashy, excessive and based upon an uncomfortable corset. This choice of material was also one of necessity because of beginning of the World War I.

A couple of years later, Coco presented new demands for clothing and generated new ideas: the first female skinny suit from Chanel. She created an understated waist, dress shirt, pants for women and beach pajamas.

In summer of the 1920s, Coco Chanel opened a big fashion house in Biarritz. Later on, she met a Russian émigré, the Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich, who introduced Coco to a Russian perfumer, Ernest Beaux. The meeting was fruitful for both of them. After a year of hard work and long-term experiments, Ernest placed in front of Coco ten samples. Coco chose the sample No. 5 and when Beaux asked her why, Coco Chanel replied: "I always launch my



collection on the 5th day of the 5th months, so the number 5 seems to bring me luck – therefore, I will name it No. 5”.

Beyond that she invented the famous “little black dress”, which seemed, at first, a glance, artless, rustic and impersonal garb. This decisive step brought worldwide fame to the 44-year designer and made her finding a symbol of elegance, luxury, and a good taste. An incredibly accurate, adjusted and revolutionary cutting length of skirts distinguished them from other ones.

While exploring Coco Chanel biography, the idea to mix crystals and natural stones in a single product came not only to her. However, she was the first who gave life to this idea.

The designer was one of the first that borrowed from menswear for women’s attire when she created her iconic suits. The outfit was the perfect choice for the post-war woman who was trying to build a career in the male-dominated workplace.

Chanel’s style means that a suit should be functional and comfortable. If a Chanel suit has buttons, they certainly should be buttoned. A Chanel suit is usually worn with low-heeled toe cross strap shoes. Chanel designed skirt below the knee with pockets where a businesswoman could put a cigarette case. By the way, the idea of wearing a bag over shoulder also belongs to Mademoiselle Coco.

Coco Chanel has her contemporary followers. Her passion for black and white inspires both fashion and modern interior designers. The iconic Parisian fashion designer had a passion for black-and-white homeware. She loved interiors as much as fashion.

It’s enough to tempt anyone to imitate her style at home. Even today’s lighting capitalises on contrasting black and white. An Italian industrial designer Vico Magistretti designed Apollo table lamps in Murano glass in white and black. They are available for customers in large and small sizes.

Today monochrome inspires lines at designer homewares and accessories which you may find in the shop Darkroom in Bloomsbury (an area of the London Borough, UK). Its Eighties-style pieces include the Tiler table, coated in black-and-white Murano glass tiles.

Art Deco styling with Christopher Guy Harrison’s lacquered geometric Menton screen is very surprising. This is a part of his Chanel-inspired Mademoiselle furniture collection. It nods to the fact that the fashion icon adored screens.

Black and white on interior walls can be striking. Farrow and Ball’s Lotus wallpaper can adore any interior.

As a result of the research we proceeded as follows:

- analyzed the preconditions that caused huge changes and the appearance of new ideas in the world of high fashion;
- learned about discoveries and innovations implemented by the renowned fashion designer;
- described the main features which distinguish the style of Coco Chanel and make it unique;
- considered some modern interpretations of Chanel’s style.

Conclusion. The world has recognized Coco Chanel as the only trendsetter of the most refined elegance. The secret of success of this fantastic brand lies in its roots. From the very beginning, the House of Chanel sold the art of living but not only clothes for women. She made a real revolution in fashion. Moreover, her achievements are popular nowadays. They live in outfit and interior of modern designers.

Keywords. Coco Chanel, haute couture, a French designer, trend-setter, *Coco Chanel* Fashion House.