

## Design Characteristics on Charles James' Work

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The creations of couturiers are generally highly valued when compared with the works of sculptures and architects consisted of harmonized three-dimensional lines and proportion. Charles James is recognized as an 'Architect of Design' with his works which are better in constructive lines and ways of expanding than the others. His brilliant talent in the way of cutting and construction developed the fundamental design and theme, and expanded its constructive lines. He is also famous as a designer who spared lots of time in aiming at perfection. These efforts reflected to his various works like couture clothing, evening dress, ball gown and ready-to-wear. From 1940 to 1950, as an American designer, he achieved fame with his creative ways of cutting, and design compared with the designers in Paris. Also, James became the first Couturier in the U.S.A. around early 1950's who has succeeded in the ready-to-wear collection, which made a great contribution towards the activity of public market by adopting elegance and femininity not like other functional or practical based fashion of the U.S.A.

### 1. Silhouette

The most important factor Charles James considered in design was the 'Shape'. In order to express suitable silhouette, innerwear of bonning and layering are developed, and James' unique feminine and erotic mood were exposed with various applied details like shirring, pleats and layering. It also contributed to the construction of sculptural image with various ways of cutting.

### 2. Color

To be shown at its best advantage of his shaping lines, he rarely did use print but focused on black and solid color, and to emphasize on his sensational harmony and elegance of vivid colors on evening dress and ball gown. He also used the iridescent effect as seen in satin or through harmonizing with unusual colors, he stressed the shape and cutting line.

### 3. Fabric

James preferably used to design with refined fabric such as satin, silk, organza, taffeta and

etc. To certainly expand constructive lines, he rather used various layers and details of design than dull and tough fabric for the suitable silhouette. However, as to suits and ready-to-wear collection, he used stiff fabric such as brotchcloth to give shape of sculptural image.

Charles James considered the originality as the most important factor in fashion among other various targets many designers aim. His artistic sense and skill of construction helped to display his talent in making peculiar lines. In order to perfectly express his own silhouette he developed the dress form, and to emphasize on the three-dimensional silhouette, he expanded methods of bust darts and waist lines. The background of design concept is, as shown in the development process, the image of 'The Second Emperor' and cutting methods based on the concept of feminine sensibility. His idea of basic sloper was practically manipulated as different image in each era. His passion in fashion and various design inspired later contemporary designers, and he is evaluated as one of finest craftsmanship in the American fashion history.