

A Study on Fashion Illustration Reflecting the Minimalism

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Abstract

This study is to propose the minimalism, which swept the modern society of the 20th century, in fashion illustration with an asymmetric composition adding the globalized oriental taste in the 21st century. To do this, this study reviews various literatures and real materials reflecting the minimalism in art, architecture and fashion, defines aesthetic characteristics of the minimalism in each area, then based on the results, creates a basic unit of a fashion illustration and finally bring 6 works of the unit together to an integral fashion illustration while adding several oriental features.

Key words: minimalism, oriental, asymmetric composition, fashion illustration

I. Introduction

The modern concept of fashion illustration is not a simple descriptive painting for dress but the communications accompanied by designer's way of thinking, the current of culture and time. The rapid change of society has an effect on fashion illustration to do the researches after the expression of fashion image. It is extension out of conventional styling for the purpose of representation which gives a concrete description of cutting, crease, fabrics, subsidiary materials, accessories' positions and shapes for the purpose of representation. This study is to give an understanding of minimalism as a fashion illustration. It is done by studying documents and products reflecting minimalism on fine art, architecture, fashion and defining aesthetical characteristics of them. Based on the results, creates a basic unit of a fashion illustration and

finally bring 6 works of the unit together to an integral fashion illustration with expressing several oriental features.

As preceding studies on minimalism, there are studies by Richard Wolheim, Kenneth Arnheim¹⁾, Ha Min-Su²⁾, Jung Yeong-Hyuk³⁾, Han Yeong-Ho⁴⁾ and National Museum of Contemporary Art⁵⁾ in the field of fine arts, there are studies by Kwon Hee-Sun⁶⁾, Park Yeong-Sun⁷⁾, Kim Yoon-Hee⁸⁾, Hong Jae-Seong⁹⁾ and Bae Gyu-Won¹⁰⁾ in the field of architecture and there are studies by Jung Ho-Lim¹¹⁾, Kim Un-Deok, Kim Min-Ja¹²⁾, Byun Ji-Hyun & Lee Soon-Heung¹³⁾, Chun Hye-Jung & Na Hyun-Shin¹⁴⁾, Choi Bi-Sook¹⁵⁾, Cho Jung-Mi & Kim Ye-Hyung¹⁶⁾ and Kwon Gi-Yeong¹⁷⁾ in the field of fashion.

This study is aimed at examining esthetic characteristics of minimalism in the fields of fine arts, architect and fashion, and examining the esthetic development direction to fashion

illustration in such cultural connections.

Beginning 21th century, the expected combination of art and industry established minimalism with oriental taste which can communicate international image adding humanism elements to world historical recognition through minimalism.

II. Background and Characteristics of the Minimalism

1. Characteristics of the Minimalism in Fine Art

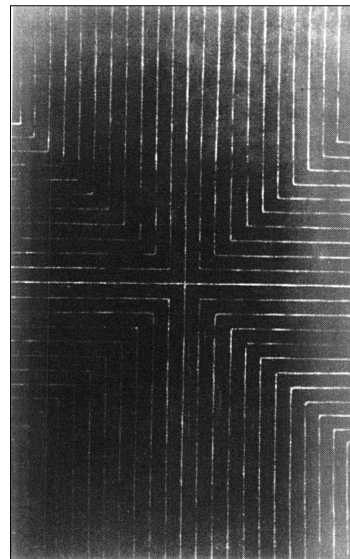
After World War II, as many European artists advanced to the America, Avant-garde Art in Russia and Germany was introduced in the America and prompted the growth of American modern art¹⁹⁾. Based on this cultural background, the minimalism was born. In those days, the Abstract Expressionism which took stands for expression of super-ego was a dominant trend drawing people's attention and also the Pop Art had a strong influence with its criticism and satire modernizing culture in American art. On the contrary, the Minimalism showed various scientific and experimental shapes, which had been impossible to be imagined before, by using the development of machinery culture and technology. The label 'minimal' came from British philosopher and critics Richard Wolheim's article <Minimal Art>²⁰⁾, which studied on Duchamp, Malevich, Reinhardt, Rauschenberg and others. Except this, it has various names such as <ABC Art>, <Primary Structure>, <Cool Art>, <Specific Object>, <The Art of the Real> and etc²¹⁾.

With these basic facts, the characteristics of minimalism in Frank Stella<fig. 1>, Carl

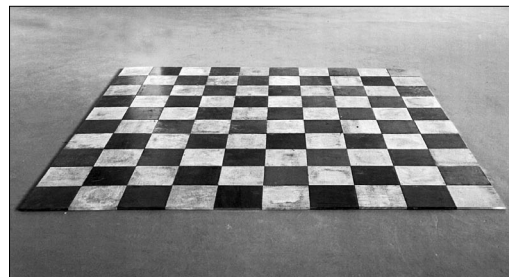
Andre<fig. 2>, Donald Judd<fig. 3>, Sol LeWitt<fig. 4> based on studies by Richard Wolheim, Kenneth Arnheim, Ha Min-Su, Jung Yeong-Hyuk, Han Yeong-Ho and National Museum of Contemporary Art in fine art are as follows.

1) Simplicity

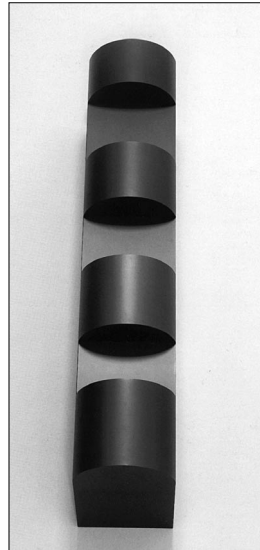
Minimizing images and formative elements, and simplifying into geometric forms could give viewers much more chances to experience the



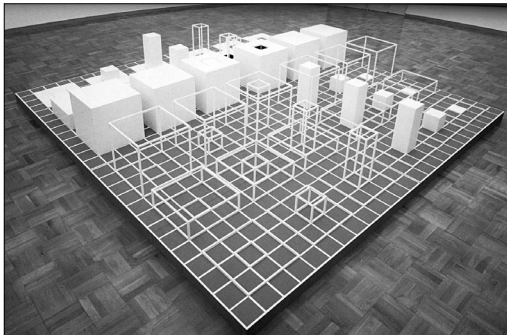
<fig. 1> Frank Stella, 1958, Black Painting



<fig. 2> Carl Andre, 1969, Copper-Magnesium Alloy Square



<fig. 3> Donald Judd, 1973, Blue Anodized Aluminum



<fig. 4> Sol LeWitt, 1966/1983, Serial Project# 1ABCD

natures of a shape. The minimalism focuses on the whole rather than on each part and expresses in the same size or monochrome of the same shape such as circles or cubes.

2) Clarity

The minimalism artists explicitly express edges with lines or others and also clearly show color contrast even adapting differentiating materials such as aluminium or steel.

3) Repetition

The minimalism does not allow any hierarchical relationship between objects, rather it only composes unrelational things by simple repetition and continuousness. This order in the minimalism is not intrinsic or rational but simple or repetitive.

4) Materiality

Instead of traditional paintings or sculptures, new paradigm of objects are introduced. Beyond the limit of plane, it tries to stand on a more objective and neutral position and presents objects themselves. This materiality provides fundamental solutions to plane paintings or any other art types that are created on the picture plain to make them approach the real 3-dimensional spaces.

5) Purity

The minimal art inherently does not pay attention to manipulation. Rather it is interested in seeking for basic and pure natures and longing for true nature.

2. Characteristics of the Minimalism in Architecture

The earlier trend of the minimalism in architecture was dominated by the homogeneous movement in 1950-1960's and the new space concept movement of Kahn. The real minimalism was formed from the late 1980's to the early 1990's. The minimalism in architecture became popular in the end of 1980's while the minimalism in art already had enjoyed its best days in 1970's. The reason why the minimalism in architecture followed after the trend in art is a kind of modern revival symptom appeared in

architecture²²⁾.

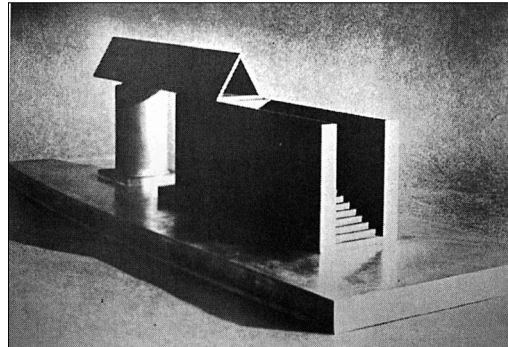
With these basic facts, the characteristics of minimalism architect Aldo Rossi, Joe Goode, Tadao Ando based on studies by Lim Seok-Jae, Kwon Hee-Sun, Park Yeong-Sun, Kim Yoon-Hee, Hong Jae-Seong and Bae Gyu-Won are as follows.

1) Minimized media and Modernistic Universality

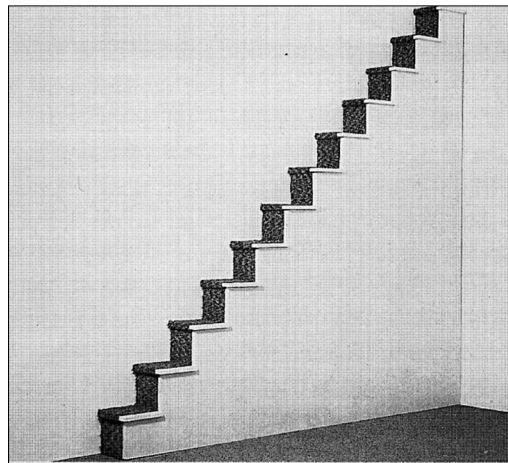
The minimalism simplifies architectural composition elements into the simplest status such as simple walls, geometric patterns, frames or grids extremely limiting expression elements-color, water and light to the composition- and then, constructs buildings by compounding in the least numbers. For example, in the monument *ai Partigiani Segrate* (1965), Aldo Rossi<fig. 5> minimized media with only three basic geometric patterns-cylinder, triangular prism and cube-and created neo-rationalism modernistic universality from the view of the minimalism toward forming.

2) Aesthetics of Emptiness (Oriental point of view toward space)

Joe Goode '*Untitled:Staircase*'(1971)<fig. 6> shows a sincere attitude to explore the least value that could make a thing proclaim its being by positioning on a single space through a 'stairway' on a four-edge white space, the most simplest pattern. The extremely simplified stairway attached to one plane of a white wall forming a sharp slope while all other details are omitted implies metaphysical meanings beyond trivial elements that consist of the real world. Simplifying and omitting are related to Japanese modern architecture attempting to interpret oriental space with the minimalism. This trend also seems to pose the nihilism of the end of the century.



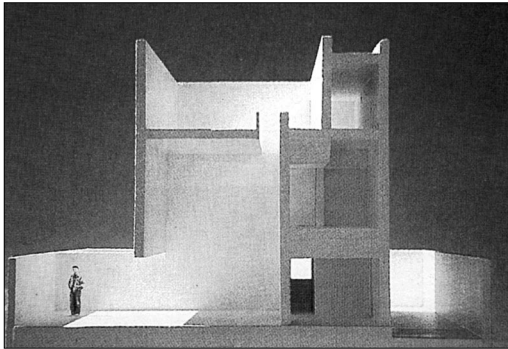
<fig. 5> Aldo Rossi, 1965the monument ai Partigiani Segrate



<fig. 6> Joe Goode, 1971, 'Untitled:Staircase'

3) Simplicity and Open Style <fig. 7>

The minimalism pursues diversity by adapting relational laws which will bring space tension between the minimized media. Explicit differences between inner and outer space, and artificial and natural world vanishes and expectation for various types of space generates. It means an open style that the final look is continuously changed as the location, size and reflection degree of a glass are expressed differently according to the change in the sun's movement, clear or cloudy weather, or season.



<fig. 7> Campo Baeza, 1991, Gracia Marcos House

4) Materiality and Non-materiality

This is a concept that defines the minimalism not from the point of view of forming but from the point of view of purity. For example, in Tadao Ando's '*Chapel on Mount Rokko*' (1985-86), the concrete was replaced by other types of materials such as floor sheet or mat. This expression defines non-materiality by implying the existence of another materials through depriving the original materiality from the concrete.

3. Characteristics of the Minimalism in Fashion

In 1960s, the increased educational opportunity and industrial development gave freedom of imagination, expression, and escaping from the existing suppressed systems and its symbol, the cultural phenomena. With full of youth and freedom around the World, new fibers were invented, the Apollo spaceship landed on the Moon, the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States of America remained and the Vietnam War began. In those social backgrounds, the minimalism appeared on the stage.

there are studies by Jung Ho-Lim, Kim Un-Deok, Kim Min-Ja, Byun Ji-Hyun & Lee Soon-Heung,

Chun Hye-Jung & Na Hyun-Shin, Choi Bi-Sook, Cho Jung-Mi & Kim Ye-Hyung and Kwon Gi-Yeong in the field of fashion. The results of the analysis in the Fashion in 1960's & 1990's are as follows.

1) Characteristics of the Minimalism in 1960's Fashion

First, like the trends in art, more active and simple styles were preferred and Chanel suit, flapper style, and Garconne look, which had been dominant fashion trends in 1920's²³⁾, were revived in the fashion world again.

Second, the Jacqueline Kennedy style, simple and young outlook, became an icon among American women in the early 60's to encourage them to break out the exaggerated woman image in 1950's.

Third, miniskirts introduced by Mary Quant in 1965 brought out a new fashion of super mini along with the design of Rudi Gernreich, Andre Courrèges, and Paco Rabanne.

Fourth, in 1965, the Mondrian look of Yve Saint Laurent and the simple and constructional geometric lines of Pierre Cardin led widespread popularity of the mini style not only among few²⁴⁾ high-class people but also among ordinary people especially, the youth.

Fifth, along with appearance of new materials, the range of materials was significantly extended as illustrated in Paco Rabanne's design expressing the spirit of the aerospace era with a plastic disc with little holes on it and in Rudi Gernreich's see-through design with synthetic fiber, glass, steel, artificial leather, and other various materials.

Especially, designers sought for the purity of human body through closely attached clothing to body with light and elastic materials such as Lycra.

2) Characteristics of the Minimalism in 1990's fashion

In the end of 1990's, with an effort to draw uncertain future more hopefully, 'Retro', which had enjoyed its best time in the earlier period of the 20th century, was refocused in 60's and new trends emphasizing on rationality and practical use appeared. These trends smoothly associated with the minimalism in 60's. This means that a new functionalism, which adapted and highlighted on the simple, least and minimal elements of 60's, had been created.

The results of the analysis in the Fashion in 1990's are as follows

First, simple lines of silhouette and petite size trends in 90's are similar to those in 60', but attachment to the body became more flexible and post-modern decoration features were added. Those changes, represented by Prada, Gucci, Jilsander's designs, are contrast to the 60's trends which pursued simple designs to show the texture of materials naturally.

Second, high-tech materials were actively introduced. The invention of ultra thin thread made it possible to create smoothness close to natural fiber and also recycled fiber began to be used responding to newly raised environmental issues. Antibiotic, odor-proof and silver fiber blocking electromagnetic wave, chitosan-contained fiber for underwears which can blocking hazardous materials were developed. And rubber, latex and synthetic resin were also actively used. Transparent, translucent materials to expose body line, silk crape emphasizing beautiful curve, lycra, and spandex were regularly used. Regarding to woven fabrics pattern, plain pattern or simple pattern were used to stress on simple and pure image.

Third, to complement the urban emotion of black and white color with natural colors, simple, strict and hard image of 60's became lightened while accepting strong original color and solid color in 1960's.

Fourth, Prada<fig. 8>, Fendi<fig. 9>, Donna Karan and Cavin Klein design added briefly historical handicraft decoration with slightly different contents. This effect had a great influence on domestic designers such as Jung Gu-ho<fig. 10>, Time, Michaa, SJ, etc..

However, above all, the characteristic of 90s is also the promotion of minimal interior as background in fashionable image.

III. A Study of Fashion Illustration Reflecting the Minimalism

Through the trend of minimalism in two dimensional art, three dimensional construction and fashion that is accompanying movement with three dimensional elements, the characteristics of minimalism in 2000s are temperance given by transcendently recognized universal simplicity in the recognition of globalization and achromatic color of city, the application of handcraft skill by orientalism, general recognition about graphical structure by computer in information era, simple but asymmetric Avant-garde, awareness of space through seeking absolute nihilism because of too much information, general seeking of absolute purity, proper combination of correctness of straight line and flexibility of curve line. Based on these, a fashion illustration that presents an asymmetric composition method while emphasizing the minimalism in the orientalism is presented as followings;



<fig. 8> PRADA, S/S, 1999



<fig. 9> FENDI, ELLE (K), 9. 2001



<fig. 10> Jung Gu-ho, ELLE (K), 3. 2000

1. Theme : Mechano-Faktura <fig. 11>

Geometrical things interpreted only with basic vertical and horizontal elements are most minimal and simplest but, the time and space that those things represent is non-material and fundamentally open space. Design in achromatic color and the sense of asymmetric color formation as felt in the combination of red and yellow color describe the machinery aesthetics in

which typographical simplicity and clearness is added to handicraft image.

2. Theme : Desert Eye <fig. 12>

Floating in space given by color piece of sun and moon shows the realization of functionalism of blank and open space. Blank combing the oriental image of emptiness and the image of desert performs image language communicating universality as globalized minimalism rather than conflicting principle.

3. Theme : Egyptian Eye <fig. 13>

The asymmetric and basic type of pleats, sun and moon obtains universality beyond individualism and nationalism surpassing the image of Egypt based on anonymity of sight. The asymmetric composition of motive 'Eye' has consistency and universality and emphasizes surrealistic image while communicating functional design with every asymmetric element such as

line, symbol, circle and rectangular.

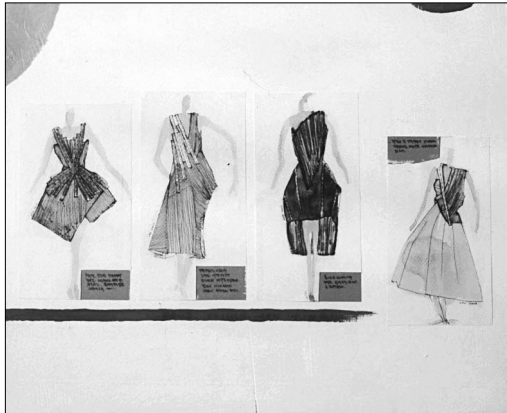
4. Theme : Avant-garde in Pleats <fig. 14>

Firmness from vertical line gives an effect to moderate compositional variety of each pleat. Figurativeness and variety from geometrical asymmetry composition shows modern flexibility. Red animation regards space as equal elements of shape, adapts shape and space concept of absolutism painting style in practical way, and finally shows new unification, in other words, new

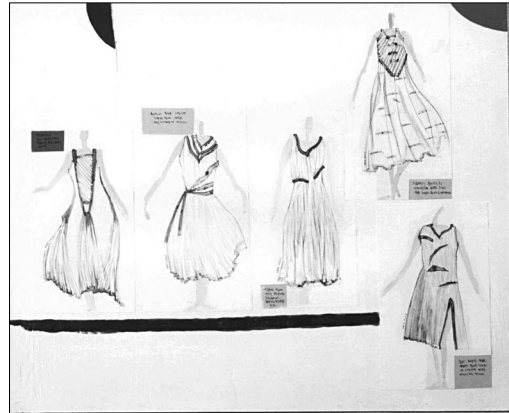
attempt of handicraft which is appropriate to humanism rather than machinery era.

5. Theme : Cosmopolitan Nomad <fig. 15>

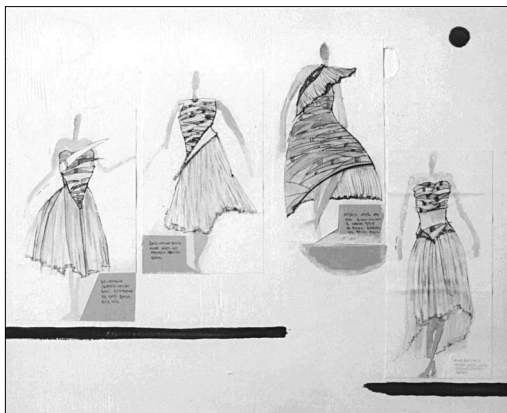
The tradition and modernism of the gold color embrace globalized viewpoint. Floating in space represents orientalism that surpasses time and space. Those floating in space like a transparent light crosses non-material phenomenon such as tacit sound and movement by analog and digital way. Minimalized human body with flexible curve



<fig.11> Mechano-Faktura



<fig.12> Desert Eye



<fig.13> Egyptian Eye



<fig.14> Avant-garde in Pleats

and straight line expands the birth of imageable language to the artistic information and meaningful information.

6. Theme : Urban Pleats <fig. 16>

Winding road in the city was expressed by pleats and button holes technique. Avant-garde one piece with asymmetric composition adjusts the balance of space sense from sun and moon. Minimalistic elements by compactness and simplicity were manifested more through monotonous colors.

IV. Conclusion

Beginning 20th century, the expected combination of art and industry established minimalism with orientalism which can communicate international image adding humanism elements to world historical recognition through minimalism.

According to these analyses, background and characteristics of the minimalism in art are Simplicity, Clarity, Repetition, Materiality, Purity.

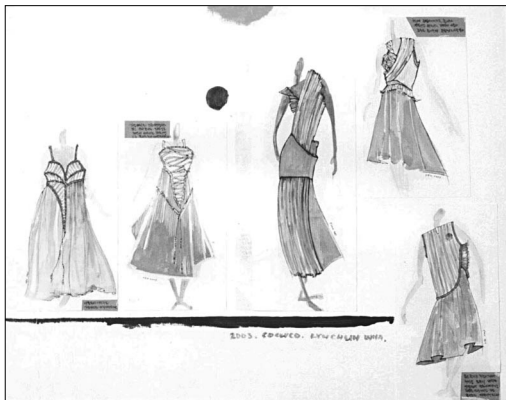
Characteristics of the minimalism in architecture are Minimized media and modernistic universality, Aesthetics of emptiness, Simplicity and Open Style, Materiality and Non-materiality. Background and characteristics of the minimalism in 1990's fashion are simple lines of silhouette and petite size trends, high-tech materials, natural colors with urban emotion, historical handcraft decoration.

Based on these, the fashion illustrations that present an asymmetric composition method while emphasizing the minimalism in the orientalism are presented with 6 works according to the themes of Mechano-Faktura, Desert Eye, Egyptian Eye, Avant-garde in Pleats, Cosmopolitan Nomad, Urban Pleats.

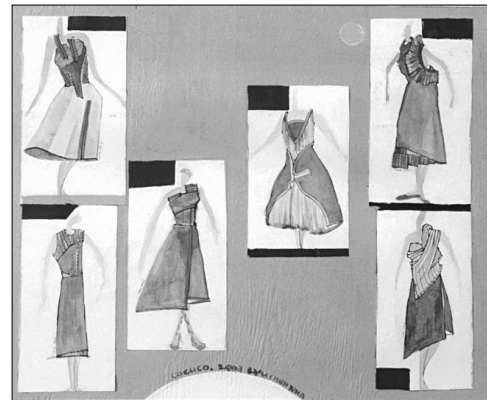
Through flexibility given by asymmetric constitution, more diversified minimalistic point of view should be discussed to analyze fashion illustration.

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<fig.15> Cosmopolitan Nomad



<fig. 16> Urban Pleats

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