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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES

LABELS

**THE FUNCTIONS AND IMPORTANCE OF THE
LABELLING SYSTEM AND A LOOK INTO THE
EFFECTS OF LABEL DEVELOPMENT.**

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The world of fashion can be very glamorous imaginative and creative, but can also be pretentious. Designers can do almost anything they like in order to gain publicity. One of the main ways designers build up their name and the image of their company is through advertising. The main aim of their campaign is usually to establish their 'label'.

The label has become central to fashion marketing and consumption in the late Twentieth Century. The label is a tiny piece of graphic design on fabric which aims to embody the whole message that the designer projects through the advertising campaigns.

The designers label itself is simple. It usually bears a simple message in a simple typeface, however, what it stands for is far more complex.

The designers label is only one of several labels that will appear on clothes today. The designer label is an optional element of a garment. The other label however must appear by law. Those labels are the care label and the content label.

While studying fashion design, many areas of the whole fashion business are examined. However the complete area of labelling, which is becoming increasingly important, is overlooked.

I felt that writing a thesis was an opportunity to examine the subject of labelling behind the glitz and glamour of the world of fashion.

I began my research by looking at and reading books on labels. I found that the books written on this subject were mostly technical or visual, not analytical. My thesis to some extent reflects these sources.

To try and see today's labelling in some historical perspective, I looked at old clothing in *Jenny Vanders* Vintage clothing shop, and looked at Desire Smith's book on *Vintage Style* (1997).

To look at the business of the labels themselves and the technical aspects of their production, I visited *Philip Warwick & Co Ltd*, in Walkinstown and *Calmon Clare* in Ennis.

These are companies that specialise respectively in the making of printed and woven labels. Their labels will be examined in Chapter One in terms of variety, function and structure.

Chapter two illustrates the importance and functions of the care and content labels. For this chapter, I have consulted with the Irish trade boards such as *Forbairt*, *IBEC* (Irish Business and Employers Confederation) and the *Irish Garment Technology Centre* to obtain information on the legislation relating to labelling. In this chapter, I have also looked at the idea of the physical comfort or discomfort of the wearing of labels.

Chapter three examines the appearance and the development of logo design throughout designer diffusion ranges. It examines some case studies under the headings of types, colour and quality.

Chapter four attempts to examine consumer buying behaviour and the importance of wearing designer labels as an expression of status.

The aim of this thesis is to show the complexity of issues behind the apparently simple phenomenon of a label.

CHAPTER ONE

Certainly labels are known to have been used as far back as the 1860's by Charles Frederick Worth, but it was not until the 1920's when the mainstream history of the label began. Labels such as *Mariano Fortuny*, *Paul Poiret*, *Madeline Vionnet* and *Modele Molyneux* (Fig.1) can only be found through dealers who specialise in the highest level couture. These labels tend to be beautifully designed and made.

In Dublin, however, shops like *Jenny Vander* deal in much more ordinary old clothes. The labels on these old garments, like their more expensive couture counterparts, are also discreet labels attached unassumingly to the inside of the garments.

Many of the earlier labels in *Jenny Vanders* were woven (Fig.2), while later they are often more simply printed on satin ribbon (Fig. 3).

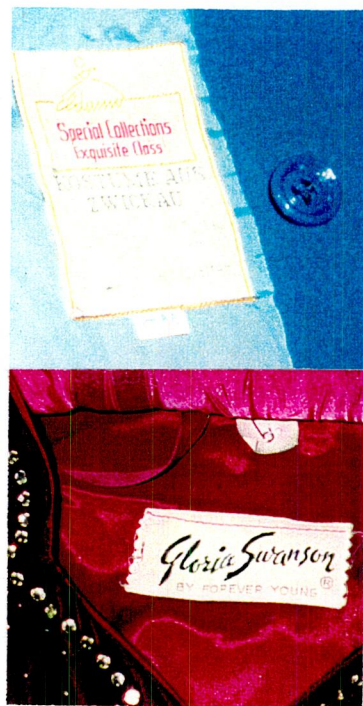


Fig 2.

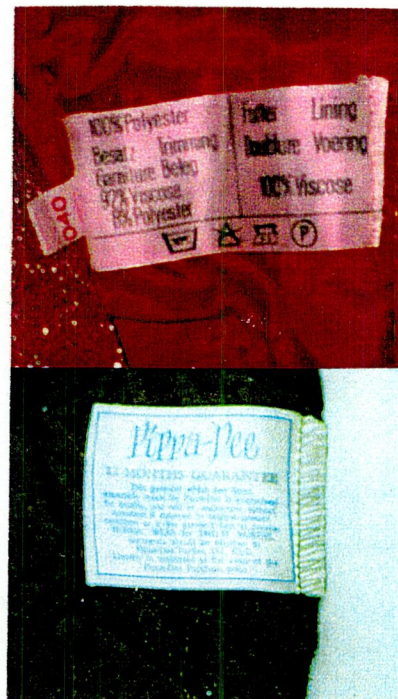
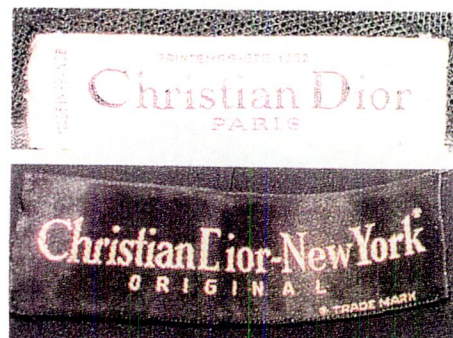
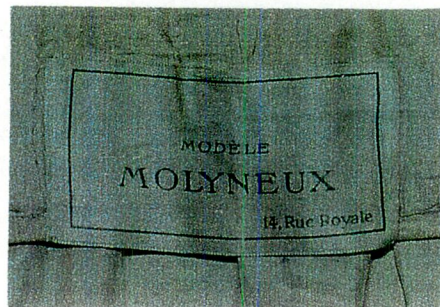


Fig 3.



**Fig.1. Early Labels of Mariano Fortuny, 1920, Modele Molyneux, 1930
and Christian Dior 1950.**

Most of the clothes in *Jenny Vander* had no care or content label.

From the end of the World War Two, throughout the labels glorious thirty years' rise to fame, the tiny piece of jacquard embroidery was used primarily by fancy shirtmakers who put a little bit of advertising on their customers' backs, usually just the name of the designer and the place where it was made.

In the 1950's, advertising was still in its infancy, and so were labels. The two grew up together and soon both of these took over the whole issue of fashion and dressing.

Since the 1960's, designers like *Christian Dior* and young American designers such as *Ralph Lauren* and *Calvin Klein* in the 1970's, designed clothes for women who were interested in classic apparel. Many fashion designers realised that while most women cannot afford custom made apparel, many do want designer styling. In the 1980's, designer ready-to-wear^{WEAR}-lines was launched. These obviously cost appreciably less than their custom collections and could be far more widely sold.

Due to the increased popularity of these new cheaper lines, and a continued interest in designer and brand names, labels have taken off to an even higher level.

Labels from the 1940's onwards acted as a free bit of advertising, it pretty much serves the same purpose for today's trade, but on a much greater scale.

The label often identifies either the maker the maker of the garment, the outlet it was sold in or the designers name, but is that all to it?

No! Advertising and communicating is also the purpose of the label.

One may choose a particular garment because of the styling, cut, and comfort but one may also choose a garment because of its label. Some labels in themselves are desirable to wear. This is becoming more conscious of the power of dressing and are more familiar with brand names and labels.

Many women's wear manufacturers make clothes at all price levels and recognise that customers want merchandise they can trust, so the manufacturers try to distinguish their products from others and instil customer confidence, creating a perceived difference. *Levi Strauss* was one of the first apparel organisations to understand that by establishing a perceived difference, such as sturdy fabric riveted at stress points, and promoting that garment by name, customers will begin to ask for it.

The fashion industry is primarily about selling image, so the designer of a fashion label must be clear about exactly what image he or she wishes to present. The characteristic look of a designers' product is known as 'house image'.

House image is defined by styling, quality of materials and make, price and the way the product is marketed.

Once a label is well established in a particular market, it is usually impossible to move successfully into another area with the same name and product. To overcome this, a designer may introduce a diffusion range which is a new label aimed at different market, thereby allowing expansion into a different area without affecting the established label. Examples of this would be *John Rocha* jeans, a casual jeanswear label from the *John Rocha* label. Also many well known international names like, Emporio Armani, Armani jeans from *Giorgio Armani*, CK jeans from *Calvin Klein*, DKNY and D from *Donna Karen*, Sportmax from Maxmara and D & G from *Dolce and Gabbana*. Diffusion ranges will be looked at further in chapter three.

Labelling is the fashion industry's identification system and serves two primary functions.

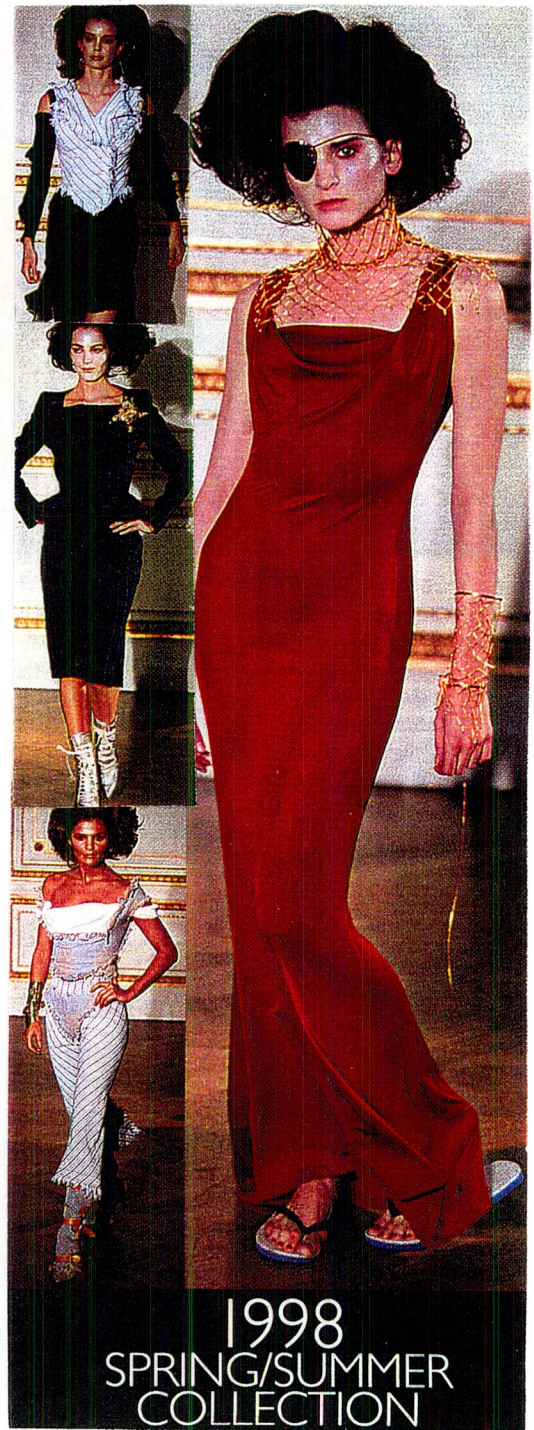
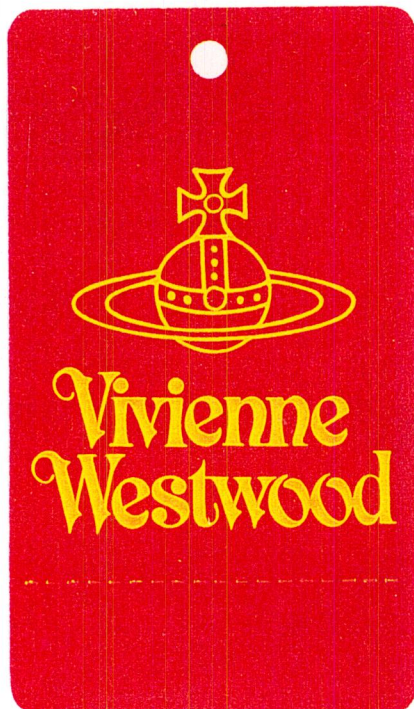
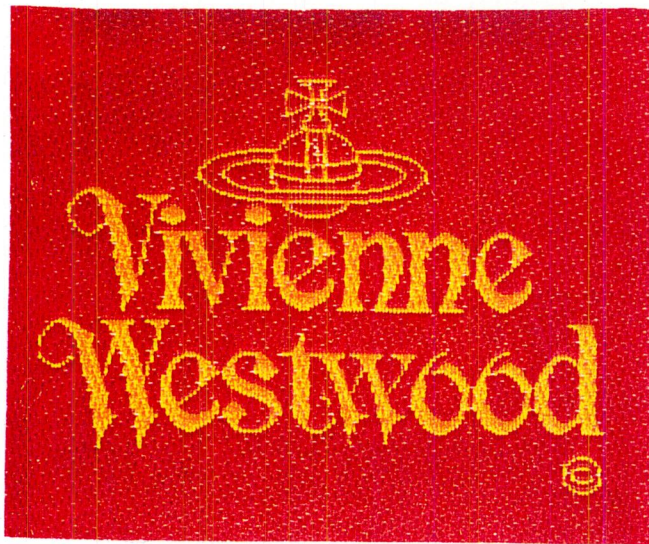
The label brands a garment as the product of a particular manufacturer, designer or store. Consumer loyalty can be built up through label familiarity and customers may purchase a garment because of status, fit, quality or styling they associate with a

particular label. The identification label reflects the company's or designer's image-
e.g. *Vivienne Westwood's* Red Label (Fig.4).

“Sleek suits with jackets which, through the tricks of tailoring, compress the hips
and tightly nipped at the waist, neat pencil skirts and body hugging skirts.....”

This is a description of the product bearing the *Vivienne Westwood* label. Her label
reflects the image of styling as well as wittiness and fun. The clothes make you feel
immensely stylish and feminine.

Originally, labels were and mostly still are attached to the centre back neck, side seam,
waistband or inside jacket facing depending on the item of clothing. Some labels are
attached to the outside of the piece of clothing and become a design feature and status
symbol as in the case of *Levi Strauss* and other jeanswear labels.



**Fig.4. Vivienne Westwood's Red Label Reflects Her Styles
of Drama.**

The Physical Nature of Labels

There are two main types of labels, printed labels and woven labels. Printed labels are cheaper to produce and are often used on less expensive garments. These labels are printed in roll form on various widths and coloured fabrics by 'rotary letterpress' and 'offset printing machines'. The fabrics used include polyester satin, taffeta, cotton, acetate, and polyester self adhesive.

The printed label is cheaper and much quicker to produce; from receipt of order to dispatch can take as little as 48 hours when requested. There are various steps in the designing and making of a printed label.

After the artwork and design has been completed, the labels are printed, then baked for four hours in a kiln to allow the print to dry and in order to increase the labels washability.

The printed rolls can either be sent to a customer in roll form or can be 'finished' in various ways. They can for example be cut and centre fold; cut and sealed or cut and bagged.

The other type of label which is more valued is the woven label. These labels are used on all of the designers' collections due to its prestige. Also, considering the expense of these garments, the label cannot be a cheap printed label. These woven and embroidered labels give high definition and high quality finish where even the smallest lettering or detail can be clearly visible.

Woven labels come in many forms and in two qualities: Taffeta and Satin.

Taffeta labels (fig.5), traditionally were used on knitwear due to its hard look finish but are now widely used on other garments. Satin labels (fig.6), on the other hand are preferable as their appearance is more modern and clean with a shiny finish.



Fig.5. Taffeta Quality Woven Labels

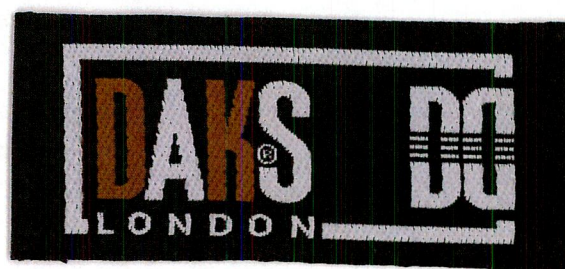


Fig.6. Satin Quality Woven Labels

Many designers would opt for this quality for labels. With its finish and shiny look, it is the finishing touch for a garment.

Swing tags are another form of labelling which are used only while the garment is for sale. Many retail stores use them to enhance the display of the clothes and also to attract the eyes of the customers.

Swing tickets carry information to customers on sizes in a more accessible way than having to find a size label inside the garment. But most importantly, it usually carries the price. From the point of view of the sales staff, the swing tag is also useful in being an easily accessible place to find the style number of the garment which is also recorded on it. The swing tag can be used as an effective way of advertising, but unlike fabric labels, swing tags disappear after the garments are purchased.

Types of Labels

Labels come in various forms to be attached to different parts of the garment.

Back neck labels are usually woven labels bearing the brand name and should be securely sewn to the back neck of the garment.

Woven labels are produced in two ways. They are either individually woven with a woven edge or mass produced in sheet form, then slit with a hot knife and heat sealed.

They come in two qualities; Polyester taffeta and polyester satin. These are usually finished in various ways, end fold; loop fold; mitre fold and side seam. (Fig. 7).

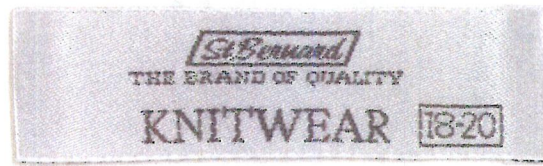
End fold labels (Fig 7.a) are labels with both left and right edges folded in and then stitched along these edges on the back neck in a horizontal position.

Loop fold labels (Fig 7.b) are woven or printed with the information printed only halfway down the label. The label is fold up in the middle and the raw edges are sewn into the back neck catching the back seam of the garment. (The underside can also contain information like caring instructions).

Mitre fold labels (Fig 7.c) are woven with an extended length, then folded up at a forty five degree angle. The raw edges of the label is caught within the back neck binding and stitched down. Manufacturers opt for this type of label so no extra stitches are visible on the outside of the garment due to putting it on. This label is sewn on in the process of assembling the garment, therefore the time to sew on the label itself afterwards is eliminated. Also, this label can be useful for hanging up garments.

Side seam labels (Fig 7.d) are similar to the loop fold labels, the difference is that the side seam label is attached to the side of the garment. It is sewn inside to act as a care label or outside as a design feature.

(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

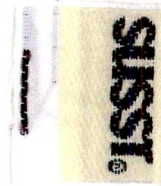


Fig.7. Labels generally come in four different formats.

(a). End Fold, (b). Loop Fold, (c). Mite Fold, (d). Side Seam.

The location of labels on different garments varies. They should be stitched on to an article in a prominent location visible to the consumer, On sweaters, shirts and tops, labels are attached to the back neck position. On coats and jackets, the label is either sewn on the back neck position or inside the garment. As for skirts and trousers, the labels are stitched inside on the waistband.

Ordering of Labels

Manufacturers and designers have to consider carefully on the information given to label suppliers. The following information is considered prior to ordering of labels.

Label Type: Woven or Printed

Fabric: Satin polyester or taffeta polyester

Length: It must be noted that this measurement is usually longer than the face length, which is required for woven labels. This length must include folds or sections of the label taken into the seam. It is the distance between the cut lines.

Label Widths: Standard widths are;

10mm	32mm
13mm	35mm
15mm	38mm
20mm	40mm
22mm	44mm
25mm	50mm
30mm	75mm

Artwork: Very few label suppliers have label designers. If the label is simple, i.e. script only, this can be done by the label manufacturer. If more detail is required, it is recommended that one engages in the services of a lithography designer.

Colour: Ground and letter colours must be specified. Designs on more complex labels should have colour specified. On woven labels, the base colour (ground) is achieved by mixing other colours with either black or white. For example, if you want the ground colour to be navy, blue is used on the black or vice versa, if a baby blue is required, then blue is used with white to achieve this colour.

Label manufacturers also specify that companies should always sort out the colour scheme for woven label first. Many designers would produce an image or copy of a swing tag and ask the label manufacturer to produce a label or match it. This is not the way to go about this as colours for labels do not necessarily match colours on the swing ticket, but vice versa, swing tags can be printed up easily to co-ordinate with the labels.

Garment Sizing: All labels on garments are to be sized, therefore the sizing system and size information must be given on order.

Country of Origin: This is mandatory for some countries and also secondary fabrics may need their origin stated.

Having visited label manufacturers specialising in the production of printed and woven labels, I was impressed with the complexity of producing these small precious pieces of cloth. Many people have overlooked and underestimated them, but we have to realise this is another product for manufacturers and a whole and separate business within the vast enterprise of fashion.

Fig.8 shows some machinery involved in the production of woven labels by Calmon Clare and Fig .9 shows the complexity of design and image possible with woven labels.

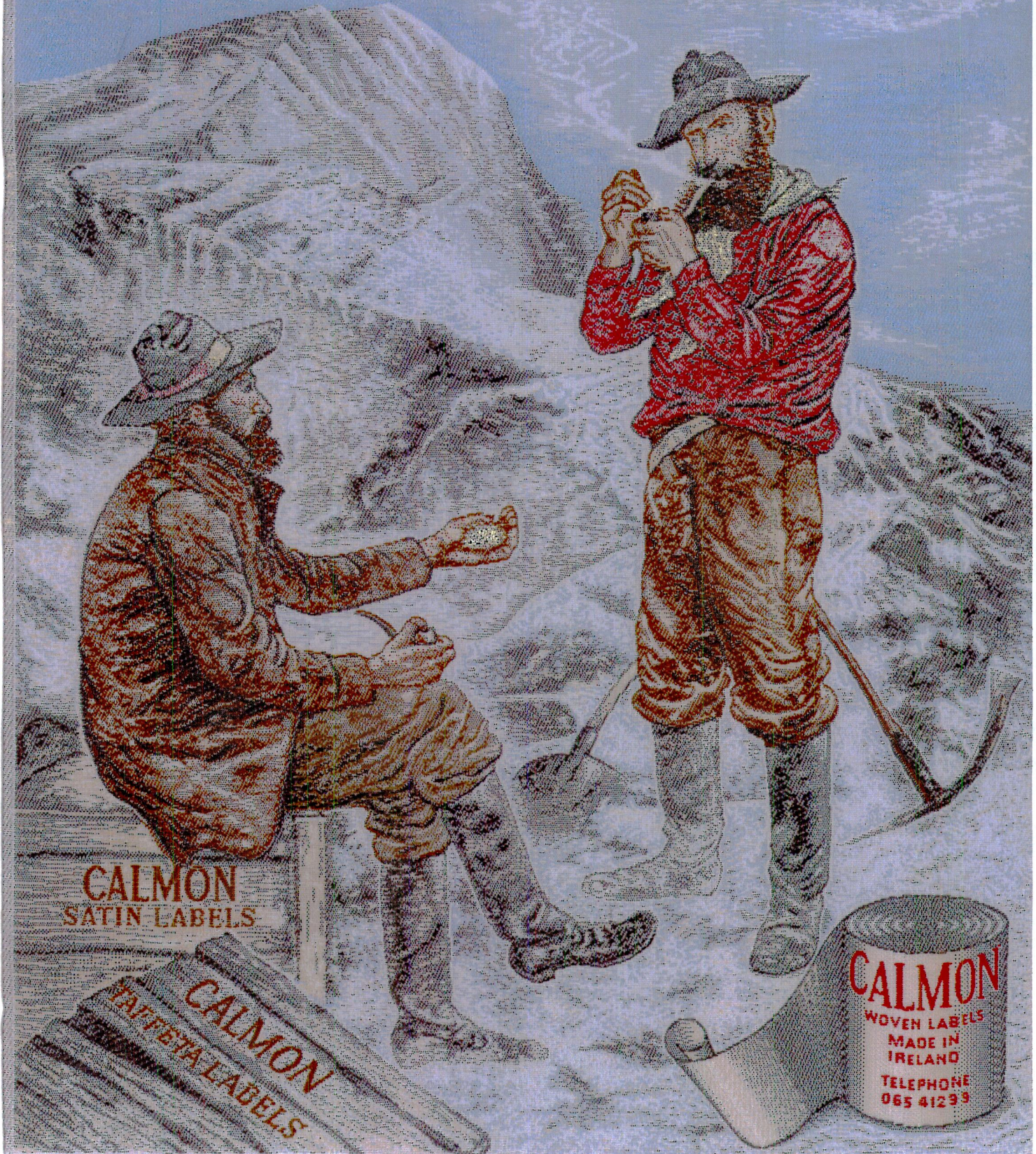


**Fig.8. Irish Label Manufacturer, Calmon Clare Specialise
in the Production of Woven Labels.**

THE ONLY COMFORT IN KLONDYKE

See these nuggets?
I'd give the lot for another roll of

CALMON CLARE LABELS.



CHAPTER TWO

With the mention of the word 'labels', designer clothing and expensive garments instinctively spring to mind. But that is only one part of it.

Care labelling, a compulsory element for clothing is often overlooked. The function of the care label is to guide consumers and cleaners in the best selection of the best cleaning procedure, for maintenance of the garments aesthetic appearance and texture. The care label defines the standard range of colourfastness, dimensional stability and appearance retention of the garment. When suggested care instructions are usually followed. The following treatments are discussed in care labels: washing, chlorine-bleaching, ironing, dry-cleaning and tumble drying after washing. Standards have been set for this label as to what type of information and how this information should be carried across to consumers in a clear, simple but not misleading way.

The variety of fibres, materials and finishes used in the production of textile articles together with the development of cleaning procedures makes it difficult and often impossible to decide on the appropriate cleansing treatment for each article simply by inspecting it.

To help those who have to make such a decision (principally the consumer, but also laundrettes and dry-cleaners)

A code of graphic symbols have been established for use in the permanent marking of textile articles with information on their care in use, (Fig. 10).

In order to make this code 'easily understood and recognisable' for the consumer, symbols have been limited as to types and numbers. This international standard is the result of a compromise between two requirements: being simple enough to be understood by users in all countries irrespective of the language they speak, yet

Washing

The washtub symbolizes the domestic washing treatment (by hand or machine) (see figure 1). It is used to convey information regarding the maximum washing temperature and the maximum washing process severity, as shown in table 1.

Table 1		Table 1 contd.	
Symbol	Washing Process	Symbol	Washing Process
	- maximum temperature 95 °C - mechanical action normal - rinsing normal - spinning normal		- maximum temperature 30 °C - mechanical action much reduced - rinsing normal - spinning reduced
	- maximum temperature 95 °C - mechanical action reduced - rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) - spinning reduced		- hand wash only - do not machine wash - maximum temperature 40 °C - handle with care
	- maximum temperature 70 °C - mechanical action normal - rinsing normal - spinning normal		- do not wash - be cautious when treating in wet stage
	- maximum temperature 60 °C - mechanical action normal - rinsing normal - spinning normal		
	- maximum temperature 60 °C - mechanical action reduced - rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) - spinning reduced		
	- maximum temperature 50 °C - mechanical action reduced - rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) - spinning reduced		
	- maximum temperature 40 °C - mechanical action normal - rinsing normal - spinning normal		
	- maximum temperature 40 °C - mechanical action reduced - rinsing at gradually decreasing temperature (cool down) - spinning reduced		
	- maximum temperature 40 °C - mechanical action much reduced - rinsing normal - spinning normal - do not wring by hand		

Chlorine-based bleaching

The triangle symbolizes the bleaching process (chlorine process) (see figure 2 and table 2).

Table 2	
Symbol	Process
	- chlorine-based bleaching allowed - only cold and dilute solution
	- do not use chlorine-based bleach

Ironing

The iron symbolizes the domestic ironing process (see figure 3), maximum temperature levels being indicated by one, two or three dots placed within the symbol, as shown in table 3.

Table 3	
Symbol	Process
	- iron at a maximum sole-plate temperature of 200 °C
	- iron at a maximum sole-plate temperature of 150 °C
	- iron at a maximum sole-plate temperature of 110 °C - steam-ironing may be risky
	- do not iron - steaming and steam treatments are not allowed

Tumble drying

The circle in a square symbolizes tumble drying after a washing process (see figure 5), maximum severity levels being indicated by one or two dots within the symbol, as shown in table 5.

Table 5	
Symbol	Process
	- tumble drying possible - normal drying cycle
	- tumble drying possible - drying at lower temperature setting
	- do not tumble dry

Dry-cleaning

The circle (see figure 4) symbolizes the dry-cleaning process for textile articles (excluding genuine leather and furs). It provides information relative to the different cleaning processes described in table 4.

Table 4	
Symbol	Process
	- dry-cleaning in all solvents normally used for dry-cleaning - this includes all solvents listed for the symbol P, plus trichloroethylene and 1, 1, 1 trichloroethane
	- dry-cleaning in tetrachloroethylene, monofluorotrichloromethane and all solvents listed for the symbol F
	- normal cleansing procedures without restrictions
	- dry-cleaning in the solvents listed in the previous paragraph - strict limitations on the addition of water and/or mechanical action and/or temperature during cleaning and/or drying - no self-service cleaning allowed
	- dry-cleaning in trifluoroethylene, white spirit (distillation temperature between 150 °C and 210 °C, flash point 38 °C to 60 °C) - normal cleansing procedures without restrictions
	- dry-cleaning in the solvents listed in the previous paragraph - strict limitations on the addition of water and/or mechanical action and/or temperature during cleaning and/or drying - no self-service cleaning allowed
	- do not dry-clean - no stain removal with solvents

Fig.10. These graphic symbols are used on the care label to guide consumers on their care in use.

providing as much information as possible to prevent damage caused during care treatments.

Often words are used with the symbols as it is felt the symbols alone are not universally understood.

It is very important that the labels and symbols are designed in such a way that they can easily be read by the consumer. The label should be permanently affixed to the garment in such a way that they can be easily located and read by the consumer and that no part of the symbol is hidden, e.g. in the bar of the stitched seam.

The treatments represented by the symbols apply to the whole of the textile article. The symbols may be procured by weaving, printing, or other processes and they should bear and retain in a ready legible manner, the stipulated care information throughout the useful life of the article.

Labels should be made of suitable material with resistance to the care treatment indicated on the label at least equal to that of the article on which they are placed (Fig.11).

The selection of the correct care label for use on the textile articles should be based on information of the properties and performance of the article and all its components. Any additional claims, for example, flame resistant should be evaluated according to the internationally set standards. The label selected should give instructions for the most severe process that the article could withstand whilst maintaining it in a serviceable condition and without causing a significant depreciation of its properties.

If more than one alternative process seems possible, the less severe process should be carried out first. If this process gives no satisfactory result, the more severe process should subsequently be carried out so that the maximum safe process can be



4 50°                                       

RESHAPE WHILE DAMP
IRON ON REVERSE SIDE
OF PRINT
DO NOT SOAK
Made in Ireland
50% COTTON
50% POLYESTER

100%
COTTON
MADE IN IRELAND



49% VISCOSE
49% COTTON
2% LYCRA



49% VISCOSE
49% COTTON
2% LYCRA



40 % Polyamide 86°F/30°C/
35 % Cotton
20 % Elastodiene
5 % Elasthan fibre
Beiersdorf
MADE IN IRELAND

40 % Polyamide 86°F/30°C/
35 % Cotton
20 % Elastodiene
5 % Elasthan fibre
Beiersdorf
MADE IN IRELAND

40 % Polyamide 86°F/30°C/
35 % Cotton
20 % Elastodiene
5 % Elasthan fibre
Beiersdorf
MADE IN IRELAND

Fig.11. Care and Content Labels.

determined. For example, in the case of washing, the importance of labelling for the most severe condition particularly relates to cleaning efficiency. A heavily soiled garment will be more efficiently cleaned at 60 °C than at a lower temperature. Washing at 30 °C and in cold water occurs in practice and although both conditions may be satisfactory for lightly soiled articles, it is essential to ensure that the washing procedure recommended is the one showing the maximum possible temperature for cleaning efficiency purposes capable of being sustained by the total article.

Excel Dry Cleaners in Dublin have the very experience to be the ones to decide on what information goes on a care label.

“After designers and manufacturers would send made up garments with printing or special fabrics with finishes on them, to us. We run them through a cycle of different treatments.

After certain cycles, we would actually recommend the care label and give caring instructions for the articles. Therefore, when the garment is manufactured with the affixed care label and is sold to the public, the same washing procedure is carried out.”

(Paul Kanis, 3.11.1997)

When asked about to what extent do ^{neers}clearness follow cleaning instructions on care labels, Mr.Kanis guaranteed that the label is followed completely and the process of cleaning to be carried out fully.

“As different fabrics contain various fibres and finishes, every letter and symbol provides information for us before carrying out special treatments”.

It was not until the last two decades that care labels were made a compulsory element for apparel. Many vintage clothing from the 1920's and 1930's do not bear

this label at all. Items bought from vintage clothes shops without a care label, how are they to be cleaned if this valuable piece of information is absent ?

Excel Dry cleaners have experienced and gained knowledge in handling different fabrics, even the most delicate ones and are quite familiar with treatment.

“What happens is when we do get an article without care labels, we would inform the customer and ask them for owners’ risk before action”

(Paul Kanis).

The risk of chancing and accidents illustrates the total disadvantage of the absence of a care label.

FIBRE LABELLING AND THE CONTENT LABEL

Mandatory requirements for fibre labelling were set out and implemented in Ireland through International Standard (I.S.) No. 388 of 1985 and I. S 174 OF 1988

This regulation states that fibre content must be clearly stated on a label sewn to the garment, (in this case no adhesive labels are allowed). If the article is in sealed packaging, the manufacturer must indicate the fibre content on the outside of the pack.

The information on the fibre content must be separate from any other information on the label and must be clear, legible and uniform in lettering.

Brand names of fibres e.g. lycra are not sufficient. The fibre must be given by its generic name i.e. elastane.

The expressions "100%" "pure" and "all" should only be used for articles composed of one fibre (though there are some exceptions).

In the case of a mixture of fibres, none of which accounts for more than 85% or more of the total weight, the name of each fibre should be listed in descending order of their proportion. For fibre mixtures a manufacturing tolerance of 3% is given. Fibres separately accounting for less than 10% may be labelled individually or may be labelled as "other" fibres.

Where a textile product consists of two or more components which have different fibre contents, the fibre content of each component shall be indicated. For example with an anorak- details should be given of the fibre composition of 1 . Outershell, 2.Filling 3.Lining.

The function of the content/fibre label is to inform consumers of the composition of fibres in the garment .

Many may not be aware of this labels' existence or do not understand the purpose it serves. This is a valuable piece of information for people who are allergic to certain fibres so they can know which garment to avoid.

FIRE LABELLING

Flammability and labelling requirement for fabrics and fabric assemblies used in children's' nightwear are set out in international standard 148 of 1988. This warning is compulsory in the labelling system of apparel. The regulation applies to garments manufactured for use in children's' nightwear. It is important to remember that the made up garment must be tested. Fabrics or trims which comply with the flammability requirements are not acceptable on their own for compliance.

Manufacturers have had difficulty in interpreting the regulations for different garment types and have it best to apply the regulations to 'all' babywear, 'all' childrenswear and 'all' adult nightwear. It is also recommended to attach a label or swing ticket with warning, 'KEEP AWAY FROM FIRE' to garments with raised surface fibre or nap e.g. cotton, knitwear, or cotton velour's that are flammable. Manufacturers exporting garments which fall into the above categories must comply with local flammability regulations in the country where the garment will be sold.

The regulation specifies that the warning 'KEEP AWAY FROM FIRE' must be highlighted in red ink, in medium letters of 10 points in upper case (Fig.12). Any garment or fabric which is treated with flame retardant chemicals must carry a label with the words

'DO NOT WASH AT MORE THAN 50 oC Check SUITABILITY OF WASHING AGENT'.

These words must be in medium letters of 6 points in upper case. Labels showing flammability performance and washing instructions must be permanent and securely sewn on the garment.

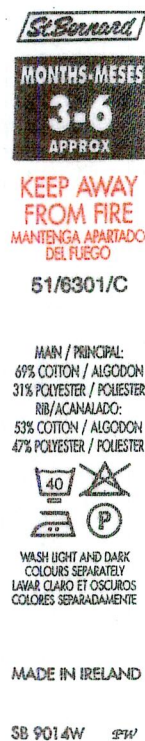


Fig.12. The fire warning on this care label is highlighted in red.

I was alarmed to find out through discussion that many people ignore these warnings and signs on labels. It seems that it is now taken for granted that almost everything can be put through the domestic washing machine, while these labels are being put on all apparel to serve a purpose.

ISSUES OF COMFORT IN RELATION TO LABELS

So far, I have looked at the system of labelling in terms of function and importance.

However, the nature of labels is not always benign.

Discomfort is sometimes a major factor of labels. We may buy an expensive outfit with the perfect fit, style or colour but we can't wear it if the back neck label is constantly scratching and cutting into the back.

As a consumer, I have experienced this irritation. In (Fig. 13), it shows some examples of the results of certain consumers due to this irritation. The issue of comfort in relation to these labels has been a disappointment and also a disadvantage.

How much is the label worth when we have to cut it off because it was a nuisance?

The reason for this discomfort is due to the manufacturing of the label. As described in the last chapter, the label is produced in two ways. The slit edge label is the one that customers are not satisfied with, (Fig.14).



Fig.14. Slit Edge Label

This label is produced in sheet form and in order to size them down to the individual labels, they are cut using a hot knife and heatsealed. This way of cutting leaves a hard, rough edge on the label, therefore it scratches and causes irritation. In most cases, this is avoided if the designer chooses to use a woven edge label, where the label is woven individually alongside the edge creating a smoother edge.



Fig.13 Removed labels due to discomfort.

Apparently, the slit edge label is the quicker to produce and possibly the cheaper of the two, that is why clothes manufacturers sometimes opt for this label. Is it possible that they are not aware of the discomfort and the complaints that this label creates? Or is economy very much more their concern over comfort and elegance?

CHAPTER THREE

Having looked at the various types of labels in terms of their importance and functions, this chapter concentrates on the use of graphics by Fashion Designers. It will examine some designer labels and logos and how they have developed. The logo is the graphic expression of the designers image or style. They vary considerably in their configuration and can be created from e.g. signature, a name or a trademark.

The power of graphics, words or symbols constitute a major element of any garment designer's produce. In the contemporary urban environment we are surrounded by logos, statements, and graphics most of which shout an advertising message at us. As the stylist *Judy Blame* (1995, pg7) points out, "Its all information", whatever medium we consume it through. Images, words, signs and symbols are easily incorporated and made suitable for whatever purpose and by graphic designers who have the desire and the means to do so. Fashion designers have learnt to realise the power of creating label loyalty by means of promotional material, thus using one of the most powerful tools of communication, the body and inscribing their message upon it for all to see.

To offset the very high prices of designer collection, many fashion designers are developing merchandise at lower price lines carrying special designer brand names. In doing this, they hope to broaden their target market, promote their name and develop consumer loyalty, thus increasing sales.

One of the Irish designers who came to prominence in the 1980s and one of the many to launch a secondary line to promote his name, is John Rocha. John Rocha set up his own business in the 1980s with the "Chinatown" Label. He is renowned for his innovative use of fabric and colour and simplicity of silhouette. In choosing his label, Rocha opted for a satin quality woven label with black lettering against an off-white

background, (Fig.15). The label read John Rocha, Chinatown in small print underneath. When asked about the choice of colours and type for this label, Rocha replied,

“I wanted the label to look clean and crisp. To be as simple as possible, that’s why I chose black against white because its clear.”

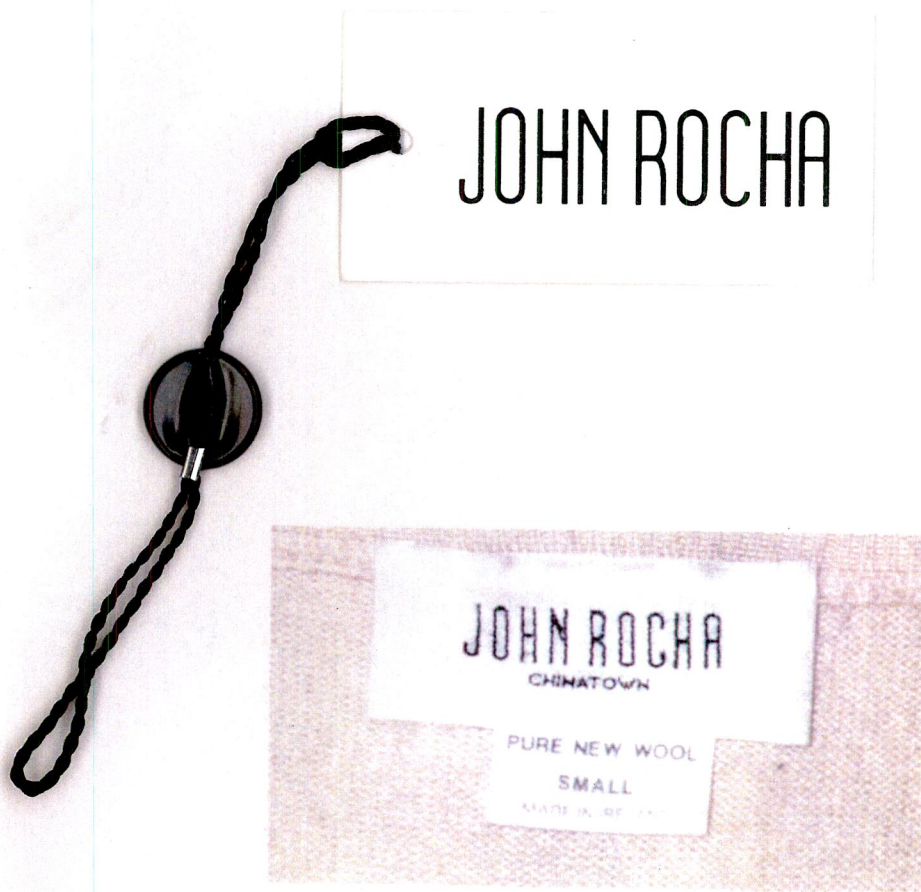


Fig.15. The John Rocha ‘Chinatown’ Label.

Do not underestimate the type on the label, it was an important decision to be made, as later the label would be attached onto all of his creations.

“I went for an elongated type because it reflects a simple feminine style. I preferred a rounded edge to the lettering as it gives a softer look instead of hard, sharp edges”, (John Rocha, 1997).

The label was made in the size of 25mm in width and 60mm in length. The Chinatown label was doing well, with a strong home and export market, but success combined with overexpansion and no real knowledge of business spelled disaster. Chinatown went out of business. John Rocha moved to Milan for two years and worked successfully for the manufacturer, ‘Reflections’, under his own label. In 1989 he returned to Ireland to develop the “*Chinatown*” by *John Rocha* concept, and from 1990 to 1994 he worked under licence to the prestigious ‘*Brown Thomas A-Wear Group*’, where *Deirdre Kelly*, then fashion director of A-Wear, was keen to promote designer clothes at affordable prices.

John Rochas success soared after winning the British Designer of the Year title in 1993. The Chinatown label no longer existed. He produced a new label to freshen up the look of the ranges. He persisted with the black lettering but this time on a silver-grey background, (Fig.16). The elongated type is gone. On his current label, *John Rocha* reads as a whole word with no spacing but instead uses capital lettering for “J” and “R”, with the rest of the name in small round type.

His current mainline labels are in two sizes. A smaller label (12mm width x 78mm length) was a wise choice as it is more appropriate for some of his delicate georgette tops and knits. The bigger label sized 22mm in width and 78mm in length are used on

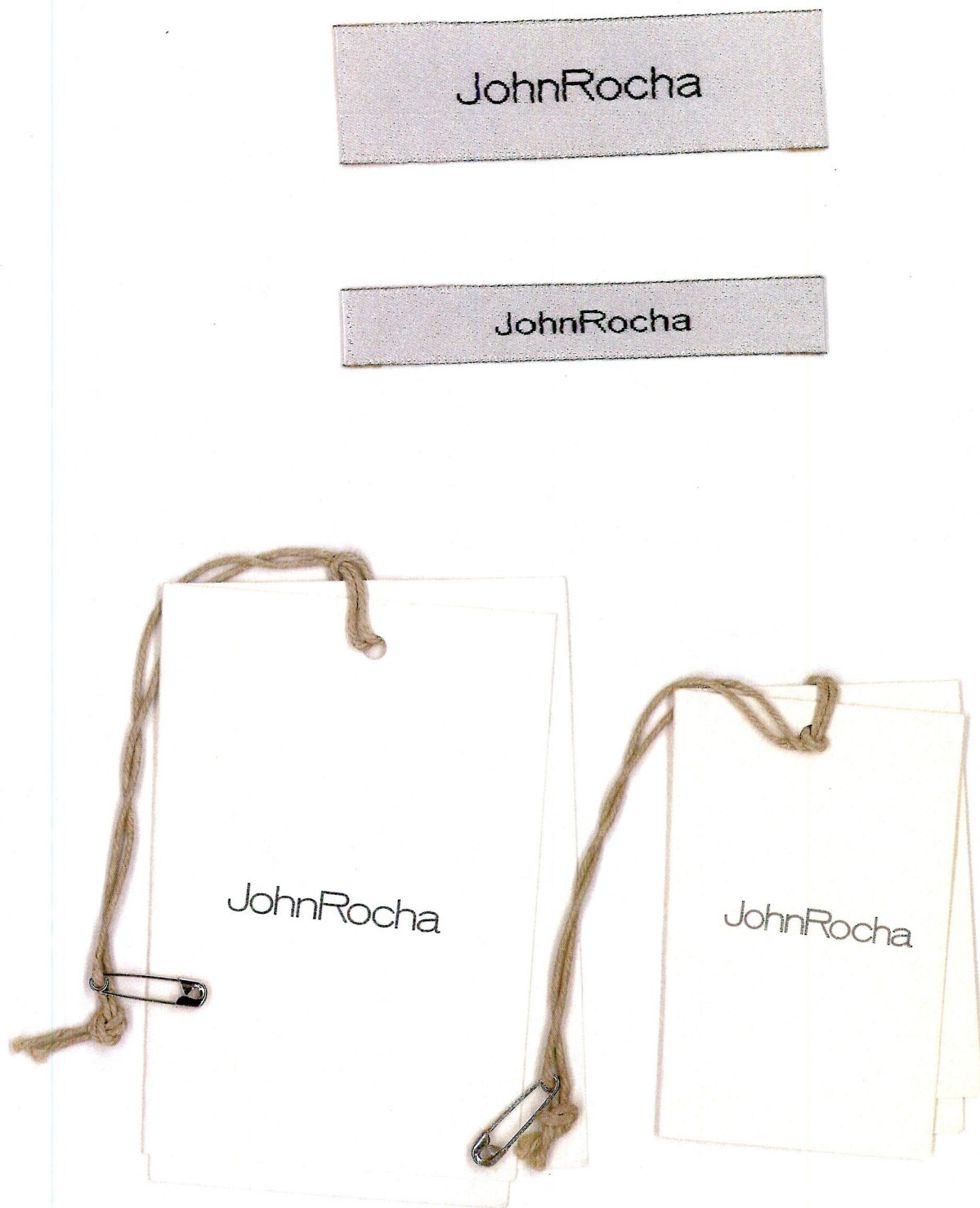


Fig.16. The current John Rocha labels and swing tags.

coats, jackets and on trousers waistbands. The swing ticket is made up in a birthday card type fold with uneven stepped edges to add character and style. A simple print of the name centres the front cover. Details of style, fabric, size and price would be allocated on the back of the swing ticket, then attached to the garment with a neutral coloured string. The swing tickets are also made up in a smaller format. Many of Rochas' creations are cut on the bias, therefore the lighter weight of the swing ticket (smaller version), the less drag it would have on the garment.

In 1996, John Rocha introduced a jeanswear line. A range of casuals and jeanswear for both men and women using fabrics such as moleskins, linen, denim along with other shirting and jersey knits for a younger market. In order to distinguish this range from the mainline collection, a jeanswear label was adapted for marketing and advertising.

For this label, he opted for a dark background with blue lettering producing a taffeta quality woven label and co ordinating swing tags (Fig. 17). Due to the nature and styling of this range, the label is made to look durable and hardwearing to work with and complement denim and also to look young and stylish. Although it is a casual range, the labels have to co ordinate with the mainline labels, therefore the layout of type and text remains the same. Jeans patches are developed by embossing the name on leatherette, as well as embroidered badges for T-shirts. The side seam taffeta label is used to sew on to the outside of the garment to add a feature and statement (e.g. Fig. 18), it is used on the side seam of the breast pocket. Notice how this minute label stands out to grab attention. The swing tickets have been reduced to a simple card with John Rocha Jeans printed in a lower position. By changing the colour and quality

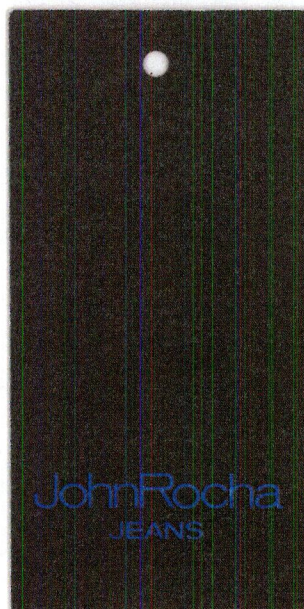
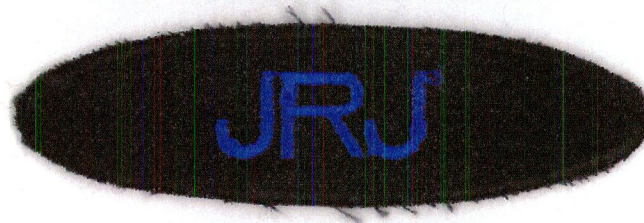
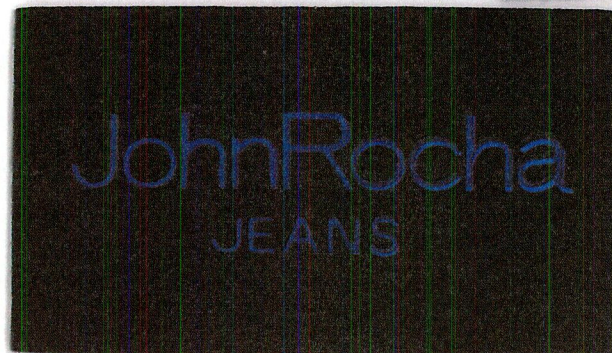


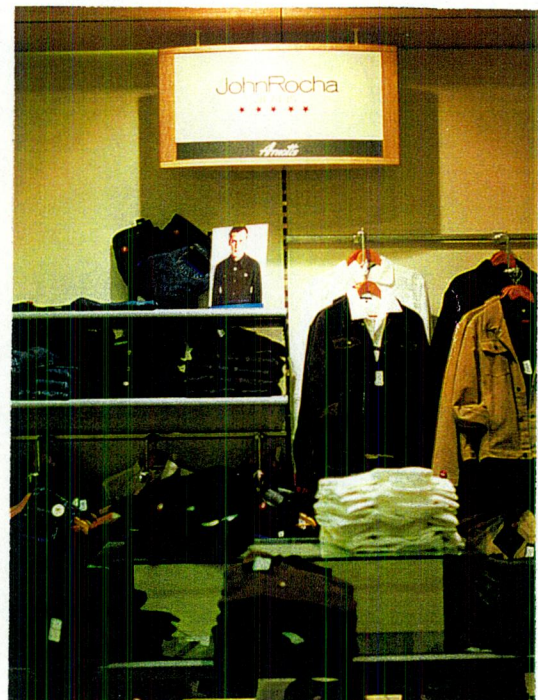
Fig.17. John Rocha Jeanswear Labels.

on these labels, it has adapted them and made them suitable for a different look, a different range from one designer.

Rocha has also designed T-shirts with his logo JRJ, derived from John Rocha Jeans. Today, his jeanswear collection is sold in outlets such as *Arnotts* (Fig. 19), *Makullas*, *Airwave*, *Raider*.....and soon JRJ will hopefully be just as recognisable as *CK Jeans* or *DKNY*.



**Fig.18 Using a side-seam label
on the outside of the garment
as a feature**



**Fig.19. John Rocha Jeans in
Arnotts.**

Not all designers start off with a beautifully woven satin label to accompany and establish their creations. *Miriam Mone* from Armagh, was the 'Late Late Show Designer of the Year 1995. Her confident, sharply tailored day wear, in plain strong colours is her great strength. When asked about her first label she recalls the tough, competitive times when she first started off as a designer.

"My first label was a cheap printed label. After I had some money I got the woven one made."

As you can see in Fig.20 , her first label was a cheap version printed onto satin ribbon. The only feature on this is the stylish writing of the designers name. According to Miriam, she had designed the label herself and particularly liked the typeface "It is very like my signature," she says. It is very evident, when you look at two labels, the difference between old and new. As business began to strengthen, the Miriam Mone Label was renovated for a new attractive look. Using a capital letter M as an underimage and black italic lettering. The new satin woven displays a clean, soft and modern touch up for her collections, unlike the old ribbon type label which was stiff and too rigid to be sewn onto clothes.

Miriam chose a large size swing tag, printed in similar format as the new label on heavy transparent paper, with a large M compiled of small capital M denoting her initials.

Since the emergence of 'designer denim' in the 1970s have learnt that is an easy way to promote and launch a designer. This is because designer denim is one of the fastest growing areas within the jeanswear industry. The major reason for its success is because of its affordable exclusivity, so *Calvin Klein* and *Gloria Vanderbilt* stuck

Miriam Mone

Miriam Mone

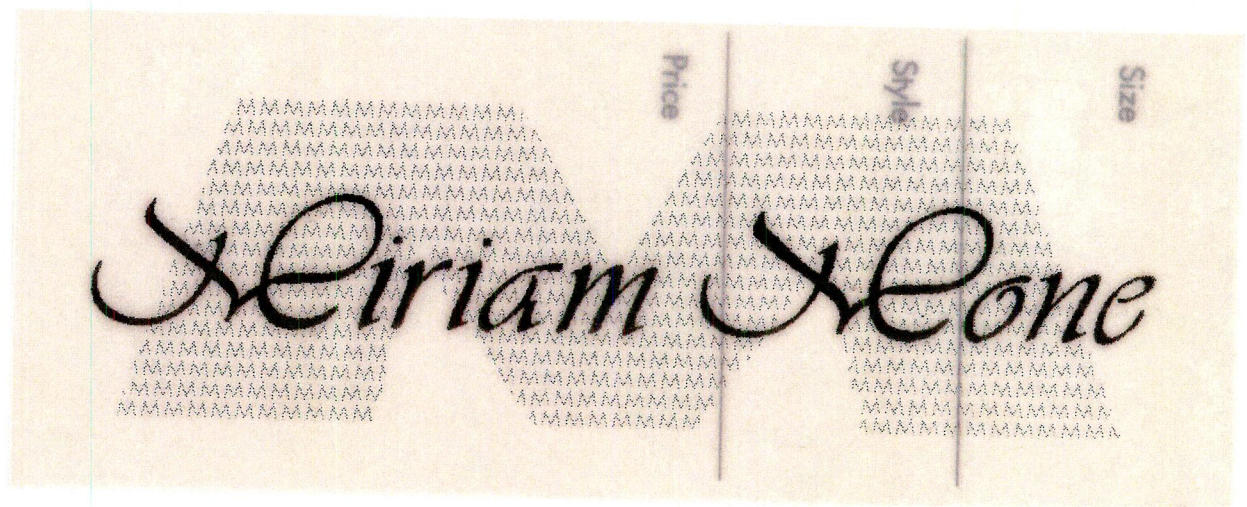


Fig.20. The Labels of Irish Fashion Designer, Miriam Mone.

their names on them. Following their lead, recent names to have taken the plunge into denim, i.e. *Donna Karen*, *Dolce & Gabbana*, *Armani*, *John Rocha*, *Versace*, *Katherine Hamnett* and *Moschino*. Each designer has developed their own individual type of image and logo. They develop adverts mainly for glossy magazines from the expensive middle to upper class market. These magazines include, *Vogue*, *Elle* and *Marie-Claire*. The type of photography used in these adverts along with styling in which the image is shot, and the model all works along with designer name/logo to provide the brand with a very distinct personal identity and a label to which people will identify.

Donna Karen is among the list of international designers creating an easily recognisable logo to promote her secondary line successfully. *Donna Karen New Yorks'* advertising campaign displays a carefree, casual lifestyle, (Fig.21). To show that she is a New York based designer, the logo is made up with the capital initials of *Donna Karen New York*.

The image she chose for the advert was developed by using New York City as the background showing the streets and yellow cabs with *DKNY* in bold capitals spreading across the page.. The *DKNY* logo can then be used on T-shirt's and bags, (Fig. 23). There are no hidden images and fancy taglines to accompany them.

The logo says it all.



Fig.21.

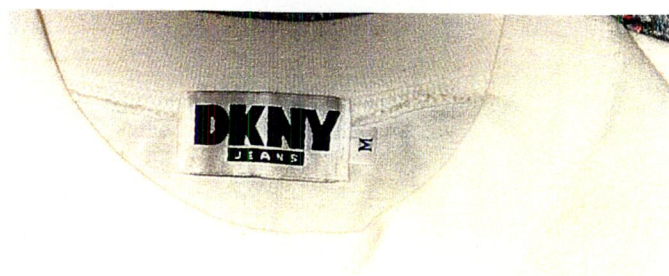


Fig.22. The DKNY Jeans label from Donna Karen.



Fig.23. The DKNY logo used on T-shirts are simple and direct.

Other designers take a different approach in advertising and promotion. *Katherine Hamnetts* advert uses her name to promote her jeanswear label in conjunction with environmental concerns, (Fig.24).

The images are taken in classic black and white photography. She sells her label through adverts showing sensuality and romantic images creating a young exciting image to which young men and women would relate, (Fig.25).

The *Katherine Hamnett* label is clean and straight forward yet stylish. As well as just their name on the label, many designers like to include the city where they base their work from, (Fig.25).

Another label which sells under T-shirt's, with hearts printed on them is *Moschino*.

Moschino (Fig.26), is famous for its advertisements' quickness, and outrageousness.

This is also the nature of the product. The designs are daring and fun and the images are energetic and powerful. The way to sell the label is to grab the public's attention and the adverts simply give the vibe saying,

'Wear *Moschino* jeans to be different'. Such as the priest wearing his religious robe in denim.



Fig.26. The ad for Moschino Jeans.

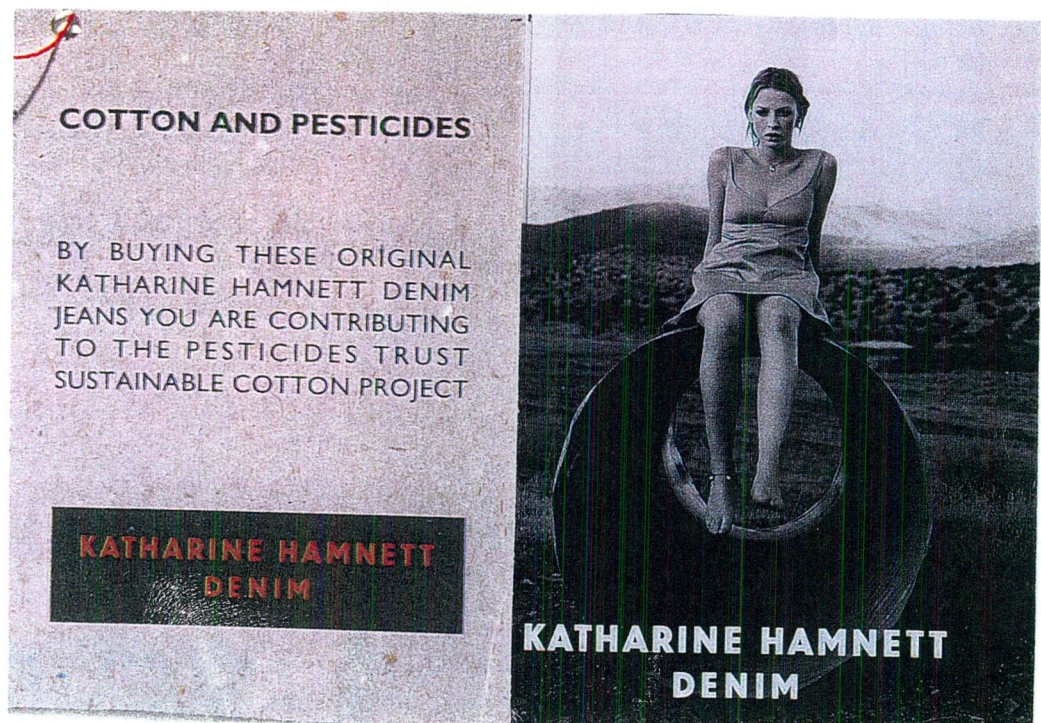
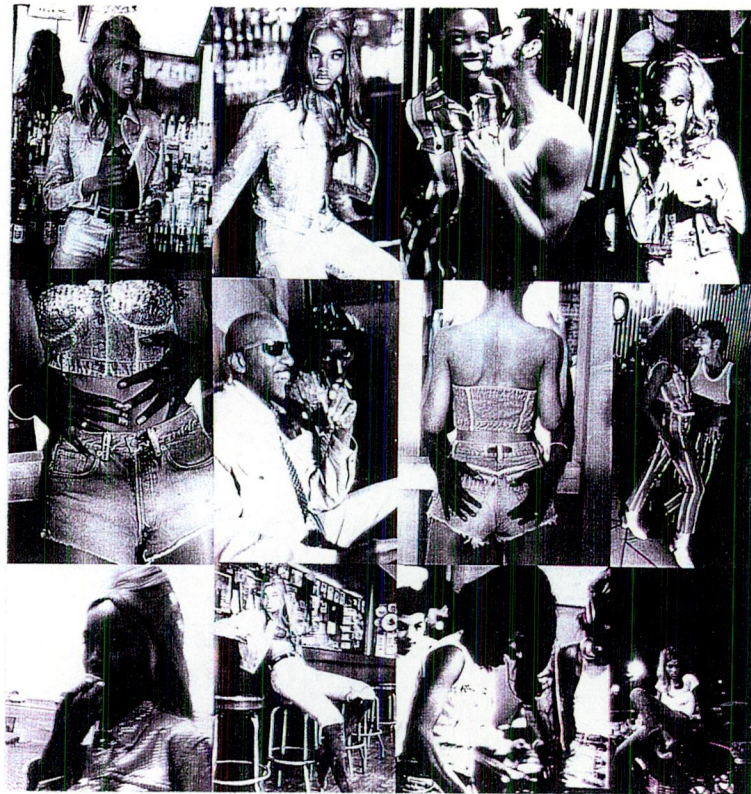


Fig.24. Top. The double page ad for Katherine Hamnett, 1984.

Bottom. Swing tag and ad for Katherine Hamnett denim, 1994.



KATHARINE HAMNETT LONDON

Fig.25. Katherine Hamnett's woven label and ad campaign.

The development of logos on front of T-shirt's and sweaters results in immediate recognition. It is the transferring of the tiny label on the inside of the garment and inscribing it largely on the outside. Although successful in a way designers are suffering great loss over the side effects. Due to the popularity of designer casuals, consumers are now very familiar with designer trademarks and logos. Their logos are valuable assets to the designers.

In the late 1970s, it was found that many brandnames, especially in sportswear were being copied and counterfeits were flooding in from the Far East.

Today a youth culture has emerged which involves printing the fashionable logos on all styles of clothing. The logos and designs are reproduced in combination so a T-shirt may have as many as eight or nine logos on it. The designs are usually limited editions with the screens destroyed, so there is no evidence for the Trading Standards Officer. The counterfeiters claim that the multinationals cannot produce adventurous clothing. Retailers who sell the garments claim that they have tried to stock the real labels, but as they are fashion rather than sports shops they have been refused. It has also been claimed that the clothes sell because they are 'rip-offs'.

Logos have become so familiar and simple today, it is to say that its impossible not to copy them. Imitations of designer names include *Calvin Klein*, *DKNY*, *Polo Ralph Lauren*, *Jean Paul Gaultier*, *D & G* from *Dolce and Gabbana*, plus many more.

The counterfeits often go for less than half the branded price. Ireland's clothing trade represents an estimated £15m in 'rip-offs', according to the Anti Counterfeiting Group, whose 'Don't Buy Fakes' Conference was recently held in Dublin.

Some fakes are so good that the retailer may think they are getting a good deal. The question remains, how are the fakes distinguished from the real ones. Many fakes are

identified through packaging differences. Other warning signs include unclear lettering on logos and sloppy manufacturing such as raw edges on clothing and missing buttons.

Many realise what they are paying for is a fake label, a 'dud', but that does not stop them. Has the wearing of labels connected to 'status' dressing?

To own and wear a label is desirable and to be able to 'show off' in front of people is important, even if it is a fake. The important thing is that the garment bears a famous designers name.

In the final chapter, I will discuss the effects of designer labels on consumer behaviour and the importance of 'prestige' in relation to labels.

CHAPTER FOUR

In the eyes of the consumer there is no such thing as just part of a product. A product does not come naked but acquires due to marketing techniques, a personality and status. The consumer expects to identify and locate a product either by its brand or label. It is the label of the product that becomes important to the fashion conscious consumer, the label that differentiates them from the other wearers of fashion. Retailers report that many consumers admit they are significantly influenced by designer name and status labels.

Others, who deny being so influenced, will acknowledge that designer name and status label products help them identify standards of quality in their search for value.

CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR AND BUYING MOTIVES.

The way people act in the market place is known as social behaviour. A consumers' social, cultural and personal influences have an effect on his or her buying behaviour.

Have you studied a man or woman buying a pair of shoes?

One may believe that fit is the necessary and main factor for comfort. However when one looks at the mirror with the shoes the question often asked is , 'How do I look?'. The look will take priority over fit. A woman's dress, a mans jacket, even a T-shirt

are all bought as a personal statement of style to please oneself and to create a derived impression of others. Here, 'impression' is the big word. People are complex and have a number of motives. Most often, more than one motive combine when making a buying decision. Buying motives stem from either physical or psychological origins.

Physical motives meet obvious physical needs, for example, for protection from sunburn on holidays people buy sunblock lotion. For comfort and ease on cold feet by buying a foot spa or to satisfy hunger or thirst by ordering a drink and a meal.

Buying motives can also be psychological , most commonly for approval and affection or for recognition and prestige. A girl may wear a certain sweater because her boyfriend likes it or a boss may buy a buy a designer suit for an important meeting.

Customers may have motives for purchasing a certain product or patronising a certain a certain retailer. Product motives are motives for buying a certain product and stem from the qualities of the product, such as its materials construction or style. An example of this would be when a customer purchases an item because of its name and reputation.

Designers have added a wide spectrum of products to their range by licensing manufacturers to use their names on many items not related to their field of interest.

There has been the licensing of bedware linens with a *Ralph Lauren* designer label and *Godiva* chocolates with a *Bill Blass* designer label on the box.

John Rocha and *Paul Smith* have also joined in, to produce a range of glassware under their own names, e.g. Waterford Crystal by *John Rocha*.

In the last decade, designers' names have flooded onto a huge number of products on the market creating a whole lifestyle under one brandname. Certain brandnames have become so powerful that they are synonymous with the product. One may talk of their *Levi's* instead of their jeans or of a *Burberry* instead of a raincoat. Some labels are prestigious even though they are not beyond the reach of the ordinary person but just slightly more costly than alternatives. For example *Levi's 501* Jeans have gained a place as a classic worn by the fashionable of all ages. Those wearing the jeans gain prestige, they are sending out a message. Because so many different people wear jeans

in one of their different versions, one might make the assumption that if you wear designer jeans, you may be demonstrating your need for identity.

The name *Rene Lacoste* may seem insignificant, but his famous alligator logo on shirts, sweaters, skirts, suits, and other familiar accessories such as belts and wallets has become a recognisable status symbol all over the world (Fig.27). The fabrics are uncomplicated and the designs are classic, but the alligator has crawled to a visible position on a wide variety of wearable apparel.

A scarf selling in *Marks & Spencers* is £14.99, while a similar one bought in *Lacoste* was £30.00. Both item serve the same purpose, the difference being the label attached to it. One can wear it in such a way that the little alligator logo shows. This also shows consumers go for products with designer names which they can afford, even if it means paying double the price.



Fig.27. The distinctive alligator logo of Lacoste can be found in a wide range of wearing apparel. Notice how the shirts are displayed with the logo to grab attention.

Take Dublin's shopping area for example. One may choose to shop in *Brown Thomas* in Grafton Street or in *Dunnes Stores* in Henry Street, but if consumers want products that are seen to be expensive and recognisable, it is only normal for them to head towards Grafton Street.

These two shopping areas are different in marketing strategies, selling of products and class differentiation. Shop names like *Principles*, *Warehouse*, *Jigsaw*, *Richard Alan*, all on Grafton Street belong to the upper middle class market. That does not mean you have to be rich to shop around there, it simply means you are fashion conscious and you are connecting yourself with those names. People sometimes refer to these consumers as 'posh shoppers'.

Advertising strategies are important for designers to sell their products in competition with other labels and brandnames of the same product. A good example of fashion image promotion by brand name apparel manufacturer, was *Calvin Klein's* underwear campaign to persuade consumers in their target markets that men's underwear can have style.

In this advert for *Calvin Klein* underwear, (Fig.28), there is no copy, but this says a lot without words. The visuals emphasise sexy fashion rather than the traditional selling points of comfort, fit and price.

The advertising appeals to customers who respond to the model's muscular good looks. The approach in advertising strives for an emotional response by persuading the customer that he will get the same results from the product. In this advert, the advertiser is appealing to a target market that can identify with the model's feelings about his body and what he wears. This method of advertising stimulates consumers' buying motives by making them believe that the 'look' takes priority over fit.



Fig.28. 'Calvin Klein Underwear'.

Not everybody can afford designer gear like designer underwear, but people like to satisfy their psychological factor, 'ego'.

Though many may deny that they have strong egos, it is there nevertheless and it craves constant attention.

The ego may be satisfied in several ways, one of which is surely the individual statement made by one's personal style of wardrobe.

Among consumers there are trend-setters. They often prefer an item that is destined to gain popularity. They wear expensive clothing as a way of demonstrating, or in other words 'to show off' their abilities. It also gives great boost to a person's confidence as they take pride in informing the public that he/she is up to date with the designer outfit they are wearing.

Magazines such as 'Hello' and 'W' feature articles on the 'beautiful people', and concentrate on photographing the newest of the trend -setters. These people are the upper crust of society with their names and photographs regularly in the news. They enjoy that leadership until new faces appear and take over. The focus on them depends in part on their recognition as unique or interesting dressers, but not necessarily the best.

Many models and celebrities are famous for the designer labels that they wear on their backs as a way of gaining press publicity for themselves and the designer, (Fig.29). For example *Gucci* and *Calvin Klein* like to send their collections to former girlfriend of *Brad Pitt* and actress in her own right, *Gwynette Paltrow*, because she was one of the new faces being highlighted.



Fig.29. Models and Celebrities' Passion for Designer Labels.

In this context, one must of course mention the late *Lady Diana*. As a royal, she uncharacteristically dressed in fashionable and even controversial styles from *Calvin Klein* to *Versace* which made headlines around the world. Nevertheless, her daywear trends still bear the stamp of tradition and predictability, She epitomises the old in the new through the wearing of classical lines under the banner of designer labels. She was transformed from a non-fashionable dress style , (Fig. 30) into a stylish and polished look (Fig.31).

Diana was renowned throughout the world as a fashion icon. Her style and elegance were copied and revered everywhere she went, buying sophistication and glamour to the British royal family and making her the most photographed woman in the world.

Lady Diana only had to appear in an outfit for the designer to be instantaneously overcome with orders.

It is very clear that designers make their names to the top through media attention. It may be hard to tell who designed the garment through a media image but not if the garment has a label.



Fig.30. Diana dressed in a non-fashion code prior to becoming Princess.



Fig.31. Lady Diana making her entrance in Versace and Catherine Walker.

CONCLUSION

Having looked at the subject of labels from various points of view, it has become clear that this is a whole large separate sector within the vast industry of fashion.

Labels make a difference in terms of the clothing trade. Without these signatures, all apparel would be so much more the same. Without the perceived high quality of designer products identified through their labels, there would be much less available in the way of high priced goods.

Labels and brandnames enable us to choose from a selection of products by associating the product label with a particular style and image. The symbol acts as a mark of recognition, both good and bad, for the public. The personal tastes of consumers expressed in sufficient numbers decides which label will succeed and which are doomed.

It has become clear that there is more to labels than just being a visual feature of the garment. The effects of the label on the consumer can also be psychological. Labels can make us feel important, prestigious and fashionable. The label has grown from being a small discreet piece of fabric concealed on a garment earlier this century to being a very prominent, sometimes even loud visual addition to almost every garment.

The designer label originated with expensive designer clothing. Its appeal was so great that the designer launched further ranges with modified labels.

The appeal of the label has become so great that the appeal itself can now be sold for huge prices without any garment attached to it. The label can now be sold entirely to be used attached to other products like bed linen, chocolates and glassware.

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