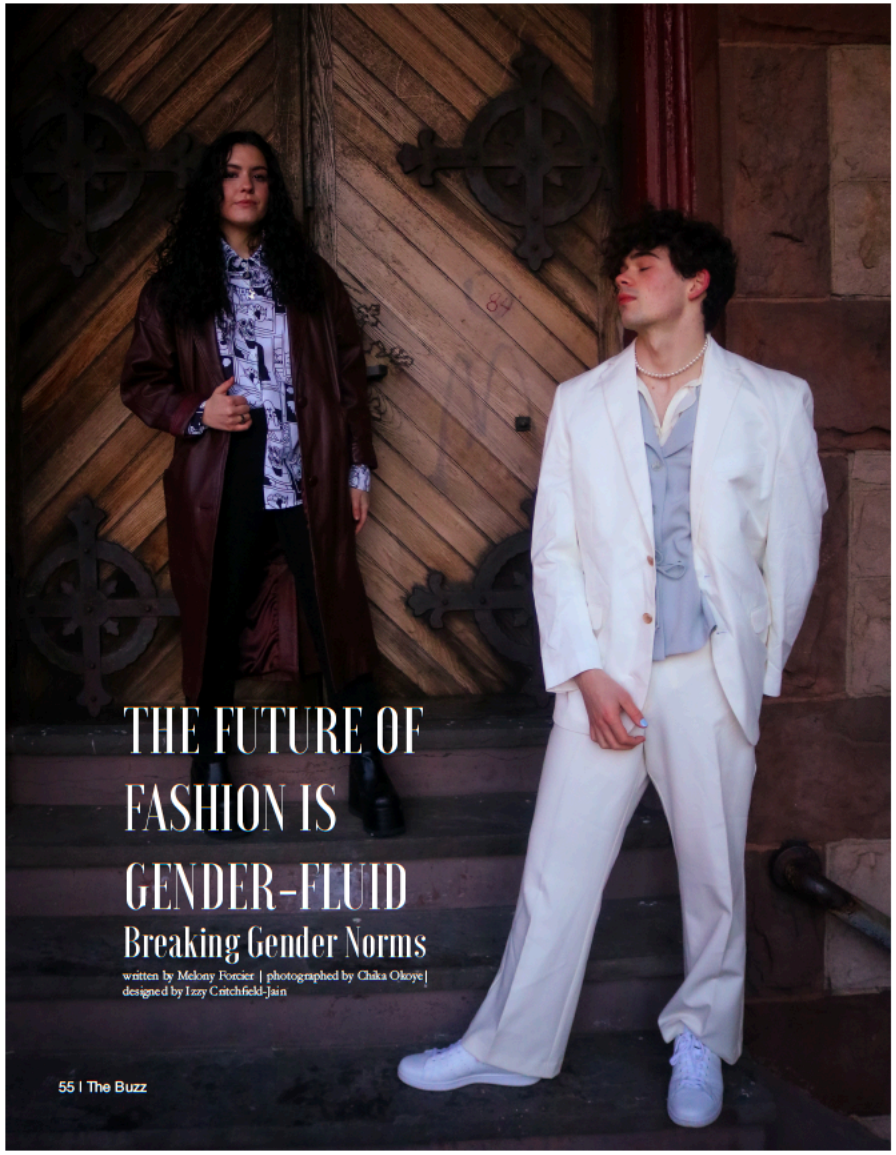


THE FUTURE OF FASHION IS GENDER-FLUID

Breaking Gender Norms

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History was made when Harry Styles graced the cover of Vogue's December issue in a Gucci ball gown. The photo sparked controversy across the internet, and it seemed like everybody had an opinion. While most praised Styles for his gender-fluid fashion statement, others believed it was outrageous for Styles to wear a dress. However, whatever view you had on the topic, the reality is that Styles just set a precedent for where the world of fashion is headed. More and more brands are shedding gender normative fashion and running in the direction of genderless clothing. Male models are shown wearing "female" clothing and vice-versa. With this change, it is looking more probable that this will become the new norm in a few years.

The idea that clothing should be made for a specific gender is laughable in itself. Who has the authority to assign fabric to a particular person? Consider the early Greeks and Romans. Traditional attire for men was skirts and dresses. According to the Victoria & Albert Museum, trousers were introduced during the 14th and 15th centuries. Although, even then, men still wore tunics. As time went on, trousers became more associated with men and dresses and skirts with women... but really for no good reason at all. European and American cultures told men and women what was socially acceptable for clothing, but in some cultures, even today, dresses are still worn by men. It is all very taboo.

Styles isn't the first man to prescribe to the gender-fluid fashion movement either. Jaden Smith was one of the first men in the past couple of years to make a fashion statement in traditionally feminine clothing. In 2016, Smith became one of the faces of Louis Vuitton's womenswear collection. Since then, he has been spotted several times on the red carpet in skirts and dresses. Another stand-out moment was at the 2019 Academy Awards when Billy Porter arrived in a stunning Christian Siriano dress. The ensemble combined both traditionally masculine and feminine qualities by acting as a tuxedo on the top with a large ball gown-esque skirt on the bottom. Despite this being something that wasn't traditionally seen on red carpets before, Porter topped almost every best-dressed list that year.

This movement isn't just for men. Women are also influencing the push towards gender-neutral fashion, notably superstar Billie Eilish. She has propelled the question "what does it mean to dress like a woman?" to the forefront of conversations. Eilish has never been spotted in a dress or heels; both pieces that gender norms have told us are