

DOES SEXUALITY GOVERN STYLE?

Alexandra Waring takes a look at the links between sexuality and experimental style

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Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender celebrities have always been known for their extravagant style. Lady Gaga, Jessie J, Beth Ditto and, well let's be honest- most gay males. But is it their sexuality that governs their experimental approach to style?

Having recently discussed this with a friend, we concluded that 'good'

style does stem from a certain open mindedness. Maybe we could put this down to why women (with their generalised open attitude towards homosexuality) are so readily open

to the idea of creepers and PVC in jacket form, whilst straight men balk at the idea of smart shoes. This isn't to say that any straight man can't look good, but with regards to experimenting with fashion, they are notably more conformist. My father, for example, despite having nearly 30 years' experience in graphic design with an array of colourful individuals, still comments on my 50's housewife clothes and printed leggings. Not to

mention the raised eyebrows I get from my male friends at university.

Maybe it's the north-south divide? Since moving to South Yorkshire, my wardrobe has had to change to suit more conservative ideals so as not to cause a car crash when crossing the road. A friend of mine has said she'd never dream of wearing co-ord prints in Sheffield.



And I've even had a woman say (slightly louder than necessary) how disgusting she found my vintage fur hat, in the street. Even I have to psyche myself up some days if I'm wearing something particularly wacky. It's also very hard to ignore this archaic approach to fashion here and its coincidence with a more conservative attitude towards sexuality.

If it is all down to this 'open

mindedness' that people are afraid to discuss without crossing the 'politically correct line', then it is easy to see why LGBT individuals are less afraid of experimenting with fashion. They are less afraid of outlandish garments and indeed, people's opinions, because they have to deal with them on a daily basis- and on a very personal level. This confidence,

attuned from dealing with abrasion and conflict, would certainly help with the self-assurance needed to wear eccentric clothing. And I have to say, I applaud them for it.

But do you need to be gay to dress well? Well, that is certainly up for debate. But, as my friend and I discussed, it

definitely seems to overlap with liberal attitudes. I can certainly vouch for many straight individuals with fantastic taste. But what drives them to brush off the lingering eyes and the snide comments? What distinguishes them from the narcissists and the up-themselves high end fashion snobs?

Well now I might just have the answer for you...



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