

# Reeling in Style

SOME OF THE MOST MEMORABLE FILMS IN HISTORY FEATURE FASHIONS THAT HAVE INSPIRED THE WAY WE DRESS / By Illysia Neumann-Loreck

Films have influenced fashion trends going all the way back to the silent movies of the 1920s. Those wildly popular flapper dresses were made even more enticing when worn by actresses such as Clara Bow in films like *It*, a 1927 romantic comedy.

Beyond *It*, a number of films are standouts because of their huge impact on fashion.

Here, we present five movies that have inspired theatergoers to beeline to their favorite department store or boutique following an afternoon at the show.

**BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S AND THUS WAS BORN ... THE LITTLE BLACK DRESS.** The 1961 Audrey Hepburn/George Peppard film, which turned 50 last year, created the most iconic fashion item in film history — the little black dress, which took hold of the public's heart and still hasn't let go. In fact, the actual dress in the movie was donated by the designer, Hubert de Givenchy, in 2006, and sold at auction for more than \$900,000. The proceeds went towards helping those in need in India. Fun fact: Marilyn Monroe was originally supposed to be the star of the film!

As for supporting actress Patricia Neal's wardrobe, "Pauline Trigere's ladylike ensembles best suited Neal's character: a successful interior designer," says Sandy Schreier, a metro Detroit-based author and fashion historian who's known for her iconic fashion collection. "Neal, in real life, was only

two years older than adorable Audrey, but her serious wardrobe was in juxtaposition to Holly Golightly's *joie de vivre* wardrobe by Givenchy."

Meanwhile George Peppard was cast as an everyday man who showed his down-to-earth side by dressing in conservative suits, cardigans, and tweed jackets (news flash — tweed is especially *au courant* these days, and even more so with the traditional elbow patches). The point was to admire him, not his clothes, in contrast to Hepburn and her dazzling apparel.

## THE GREAT GATSBY

PEARLS, CLOCHE HATS, FRINGE, AND HEADPIECES. Robert Redford and Mia Farrow starred in this 1974 film (based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel of the same name) that won Theoni Aldredge an Oscar for designing the costumes that portrayed the doomed Jay Gatsby and his lost love, Daisy Buchanan.

The gorgeous white suits that Gatsby favored for his trysts with Buchanan signaled the wealth and sophistication that he gained after she married someone else. Ralph Lauren provided the menswear for the film's male leads.

Farrow, as Buchanan, dressed in low-waisted, frothy, and flowy confections (appropriate for the 1920s time period of the film and easily hid Farrow's pregnancy). Her frocks ranged from the palest yellow and blush to silver and lots of white. These were topped off with gorgeous hats and rows of long pearls that were in style at the time.

"Theoni Aldredge begged Helen Larson, who owned one of the biggest costume rental houses at the time, to lend her beaded evening dresses from her personal collection for the film," recalls Schreier, whose books include *Hollywood Dressed and Undressed: A Century of Cinema Style* (Rizzoli) and *Hollywood Gets Married*



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**In the wardrobe department:** Audrey Hepburn (left and top) and George Peppard, (top) cast as an everyday man, heat up the screen in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*; Mia Farrow (middle) and Robert Redford (middle and bottom) bring Roaring '20s glamour out of hiding with hats and caps, long pearls, pinstriped suits, and elegance galore in *The Great Gatsby*.



## {EPILOGUE}



**The look of love:** Midi-skirts and dashing, suited men find their way onto the runway during *Bonnie and Clyde* fame. Fashionistas fell in a big way for chinos, white shirts, and vests with *Annie Hall*'s popularity. Fashion goes farther afield in luxe linens and lots of headgear in *Out of Africa*.

(Clarkson/Potter Publishers). She currently is writing *Desperately Seeking Fashion* (Rizzoli, to publish in 2013). "Helen eventually acquiesced. During the filming of the party scene where the dresses were featured, the director announced on his megaphone, spur of the moment, that the actors should jump in the fountain. All of the dresses were destroyed."

The 1920s resurfaced again this past spring with many designers showing white suits, for women this time, and low-waisted, beaded dresses. The trend will most certainly continue, as in spring 2013, Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire, and Carey Mulligan will again draw us into a much-talked-about remake of the movie. Catherine Martin oversees costume design for the 2013 film version. This *Gatsby* remake is sure to instill an even stronger 1920s fashion appeal. Ladylike has never been more pronounced ... get your pearls out — the longer the better. And gentlemen? Get out your single-breasted suits — but this time around with narrow, fitted, and flat-front pants. The lighter the color, the better.

### BONNIE AND CLYDE

MIDIS AND BERETS, ANYONE? In 1967, Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway starred in this movie about the infamous Depression-era bandits. And even though it was costume designer Theadora Van Runkle's first film, she was nominated for an

Oscar for her creative thrift-store mix of berets, midi-skirts, and soft sweaters that showed Dunaway's character to be feminine but powerful.

Dunaway later was known to have said, "The Bonnie look became the rage because women saw it and felt that they could pull it off. The maxi replaced the mini of the '60s because of this movie." Sales of berets doubled as well.

Van Runkle was head over heels for Beatty, according to Schreier. "Although Dorothy Jeakins, one of Hollywood's great costume designers and Van Runkle's boss, told her (and Beatty as well) that she could pull off the job, it took a lot of lunches (and then some) for Beatty to 'persuade' Van Runkle to costume the film."

Van Runkle was quoted as saying of Beatty, "Boy, was he great to dress because he would do absolutely anything! He loved himself and his looks, but he was lots of fun and of course looked fabulous in all the clothes."

### ANNIE HALL

PEA VESTED INTEREST IN TIES FOR GIRLS, AND A CLOSETFUL OF CHINOS FOR ALL. The 1977 film starring Diane Keaton and Woody Allen as two neurotic New Yorkers trying to find love changed the face of fashion forever.

The simple ease of slipping into chinos, white shirts, and vests (men and women) translates well for a casual look today. The costume design was

by Ruth Morley, but Diane Keaton chose most of her on-camera wardrobe from her own closet.

Keaton's androgynous style was simple: chinos, white dress shirts, ties, vests, and a derby-style hat with a floppy brim. The film came out at the same time Ralph Lauren was tailoring down menswear to create a womenswear collection, and a few of the pieces that Allen and Keaton wore were by Ralph Lauren.

Allen's wardrobe paralleled Keaton's, but with less style — he pretty much stuck with chinos, jeans, and dress shirts. A timeless look, to be sure.

### OUT OF AFRICA

FASHION AFIELD IN LUXE LINENS AND CRISP COTTONS. Meryl Streep played Karen von Blixen, who moved to Kenya in 1913 to marry. Robert Redford played her love interest when her marriage failed.

The Oscar-winning costume designer for the 1985 movie was Milena Canonero. Both characters wore similar styles of chinos, jodhpurs, shirts in linen and cotton (with the occasional long skirt for Streep), and riding boots. Form followed function with pockets on the shirts, belts that carried bullets, and always a hat to keep out the sun. The palette of earthy khaki, ivory, and jungle green suited Africa perfectly.

In 1985, Banana Republic was known for its safari clothing, and *Out of Africa* actually helped the company become a household name.

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