

Fashion For Everyone- Japan And Their Take On Gender-Neutral Fashion

In recent years, Japan has seen an influx of more runway shows created by designers who are choosing to take on the challenge of making fashion, beauty, and their works of art gender-neutral. This is done in both direct and indirect ways. Whether it be designers having their male models walk the runway in a skirt, or just saying that they encourage people of every gender to purchase their lines, these designers are making great strides in making the world of fashion a much more inclusive place.

Two designers making steps towards gender-neutral fashion in Japan are Tsukasa Kudo (designer for the brand Kudos and Sodik) and Chika Kisada (designer for the brand Chika Kisada). Kudo and Kisada have had their shows documented on Vogue Runway. Both have also stated having awakening experiences for their designs through their clients and those who inspired their collections.

Kudo told Vogue his perceived notion of his clothes and how they were associated with gender were actually caused to shift by the people who purchased his clothing. He admitted that when he launched the brands' Kudos and Sodik, they were meant to be more traditionally spun menswear and womenswear respectively. This

however changed when he saw more men were purchasing from the womenswear line and more women were purchasing from the menswear line. This led to the brands doing their shows as one cohesive line instead of two separate shows. According to Kudo: “Kudos and Sodus were mixed and styled in a way appropriate for [each], regardless of sex and gender. It is my sincere hope that the viewer fluidly perceives the gender of the collection (Vogue Runway, 2022).”

Kisada is the second name to note in designers making steps toward gender-neutral fashion in Japan. Kisada's opening to the world of more gender-neutral fashion and inspiration was much more recent than that of Kudo. In an interview with Vogue Runway, Kisada talked about how the muse for this collection was very similar to that of her previous lines—she pulled on her experience as a ballet dancer. There was something distinctly different about this collection however, she mentioned how her muse came from spending time with the internationally renowned ballet dancer Harou Niyama. When putting together the collection, she chose to put Niyama in her clothes. Seeing him in the clothes she designed opened her up to this new world, one where she was choosing no longer just to draw on a “strong feminine elegance” made for women and her “nuances of my way of thinking began to melt like ice”.

With Niyama as her muse, she had him dance behind a curtain throughout the show, actually wearing one of Kisada's tutus. The piece most highlighted by Vogue Runway in this collection was the MA-1 bomber jacket that was adorned with chiffon. In doing so it helped to balance the masculine aspects of the jacket with the graceful yet empowered femininity that Kisada is known for.

While creating fashion lines aimed to be worn by anyone and everyone regardless of gender is still a more nuanced concept, especially in Japan where even same-sex marriage is illegal, it is designers like Kudo and Kisada who in the states and fashion houses around the world can look to for inspiration. As well as a reminder that an inclusive and open fashion world is always possible.

Looked over by- Annelise Maraj, Kayla McHardy

Good work- a few more mistakes than you normally make but tough topic to write about due to all the angles which you don't want to miss. 92/100