

패션 디자인 조형을 응용한 캐릭터 컨셉 디자인

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Character Concept Designs Utilizing Formative Methods in Fashion Design

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요 약

캐릭터 디자인에 있어 '패션'은 캐릭터의 정체성과 성격, 개성과 설정을 한눈에 뚜렷하게 제시해주는 강력한 도구이다. '특정한 시기에 유행하는 복식이나 두발의 일정한 형식'으로 정의되는 패션은 의상뿐만 아니라 다양한 장신구, 헤어를 포함한 메이크업 등을 아우르는 하나의 '이미지'를 창조해낸다. 현재의 트렌드를 선도하고 반영하는 실제 런웨이 위의 패션 디자인과 게임 업계 내의 캐릭터 디자인은 서로 영향을 주고 받을 수 밖에 없다. 하지만 이러한 패션의 중요성에 비해 캐릭터 디자인에서 패션 디자인에 대한 분석적인 접근과 접목은 잘 이루어지지 않고 있다. 본 논문에서는 게임 캐릭터 디자인과 패션 디자인 사이의 상호 영향에 대한 고찰을 하고, 패션 디자인에 대한 이론적 분석과 조형적 고찰의 접목이 보다 응용된 시각적 시도의 캐릭터 컨셉 디자인에 도움이 된다는 것을 제시하고자 한다.

ABSTRACT

'Fashion' is one of the most important aspects in game character design. However, despite its influence, analytical approaches in integrating fashion design methods in character designs are rare practices within the industry. The following paper aims point out the practicality of integrating and utilizing theoretical and formative methods in fashion design in creating character concept designs and show how the following application can create visual stimuli for artists in future concepts.

Keywords : Character(캐릭터), Game Character Design(게임 캐릭터 디자인), Concept Design(컨셉 디자인), Fashion Design(패션 디자인)

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1. Introduction

Fashion is one of the most important aspects in game character design. Defined as ‘a popular or the latest style of clothing, hair, decoration, or behavior,’[1] fashion creates an overall image not only through garments but also through various accessories, hair, and makeup. It immediately portrays a character’s identity, personality, and setting, and acts as “a three-dimensional artwork created by extracting and expressing historic elements from the game’s periodic background and story.” [2]

As an industry heavily influenced and dictated by consumer taste, current trends and styles in fashion design are bound to influence appearances in game character design. Inversely, as analyzed in Lee and Yang (2008), game character design influences can also be observed in fashion design on the runway. [3] Referencing each other, fashion design and game character design evolve alongside each other. However, despite its influence, analytical approaches in integrating fashion design methods into character designs are seldom practiced within the industry.

As interviewed in Yi and Shi (2016), when creating design concepts, most professionals rely on personal experience of trial and error rather than going through an organized formal process. The paper further states that “many methods and techniques used in the field of character design lack objectivity and structure –making successful character designs reliant on the individual designer’s creative skills from personal experience, learning, and research.” [4] Although establishing a structured process for

creativity may seem counterintuitive, procedures highlighting how to interpret, digest, and integrate references and visual inspirations can provide useful tools for artists in complementing their workflow.

The following paper aims to point out the relationship and influence between fashion design and character concept designs, and point out the practicality of integrating and utilizing theoretical and formative methods in fashion design in creating character concept designs and show how the following application can create visual stimuli for artists and aid them in future concept developments.

2. Contemporary Fashion

2.1 Characteristics of Contemporary Fashion Design

Overarching characteristics of contemporary society and culture include people’s desire for change and need for uniqueness and personality. Constantly searching for new values and styles, contemporary fashion puts finding new styles over practicality, making it difficult to maintain a single value or trend for an extended period. Seo and Jin (2004) define these characteristics as postmodern influences in fashion, and highlight 5 characteristics as summarized in [Table 1][5].

[Table 1] Fashion Design Characteristics within Postmodernism

Characteristics	
Deconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deconstruction of established values, changing the notion of what is valuable vs invaluable - Disordered mixture of various values such as historic, ethnic, etc. values
Pastiche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dismantlement of boundaries between high and popular culture, male and female
Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reemergence of the importance of fashion's ideological history - Comprehending the body from various viewpoints
Individuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desire to achieve individuality, individual desire, aesthetic expression, freedom amid consumerism society
Pluralism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revisiting and finding balance among existing ideologies through the listing and distortion of new ideas

As seen in [Table 1], not only does contemporary fashion focus on finding new formative expressions but it also puts emphasis on the value of ideologies behind fashion itself. Designers as well as people have become more aware of the social and behavioral impact and influence fashion can bring upon society. One such example can be found in the idea of the body and its image portrayed by fashion. Kim (2005) states that contemporary fashion focuses on the modeling of the body, which, in turn, decides the silhouette and overall body image made by the garment. In contemporary fashion, aesthetic characteristics of the body reflect various social values, distort and exaggerate, destroy and transform, aestheticize and sensualize the body. Fashion and the body it covers are no longer just a symbolized medium for traditional beauty, but also a means of presenting social and cultural values. Such change in the ideologies behind fashion can be pointed out as

one of the main characteristics of contemporary fashion. [6]

The collapse of boundaries between high and low or popular culture also brought visible changes to the high fashion runway. Once degraded and looked down upon “costume” like qualities have been reintroduced into high fashion, allowing outbursts of various visual experiments that shocked and stimulated audiences. Designers such as Jean-Paul Gaultier ([Fig. 1], [Fig. 2], [Fig. 3])¹⁾ and Alexander McQueen ([Fig. 4], [Fig. 5], [Fig. 6])²⁾ were coined the ‘enfant terrible’ of fashion, designing unconventional garments that transcended standards in both beauty and fashion, as well as John Galliano ([Fig. 7], [Fig. 8]),³⁾ who was frequently described as fashion renegades alongside Alexander McQueen. The fact that McQueen and Galliano became chief designers at Givenchy and Dior proves the dismantlement of long-established, conservative values held within haute couture Paris fashion. This rapid change and shift in fashion movement brought unexpected, scandalous, yet imaginative results to contemporary fashion.

1) Jean Paul Gaultier, *VOGUE*. <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/designer/jean-paul-gaultier>.

2) Alexander McQueen, *VOGUE*. <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/designer/alexander-mcqueen>.

3) John Galliano, *VOGUE*. <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/designer/john-galliano>.



[Fig. 1] Gaultier
Spring 2007



[Fig. 2] Gaultier
Spring 2010



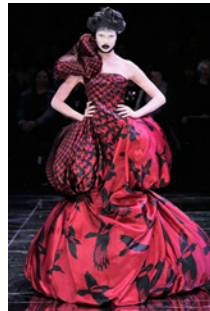
[Fig. 3] Gaultier
Spring 2014



[Fig. 4] McQueen
Spring 2008



[Fig. 5] McQueen
Spring 2010



[Fig. 6] McQueen Fall
2009



[Fig. 7] Galliano Fall
2004

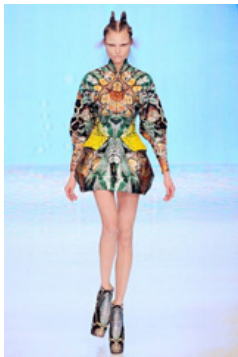


[Fig. 8] Galliano Fall
2007

Arguably one of the most influential and well-known designers in terms of publicity as well as criticism and controversy among those designers who first brought upon stylistic uproar and upheaval to contemporary fashion, Alexander McQueen's (1969-2010) designs are evaluated as shocking, lavish, unorthodox with dramatic theatrical performances during shows on the runway, which "bust fashion out of its commercial confines and reinvented its role in contemporary society." [7]

Alexander McQueen held a diversified vision for new technologies and culture—integrating them to fashion bound by popular culture and commercialism through challenging and experimental designs. Importantly, his designs not only proved to be artistically ingenious but also popularly successful in mass media, with mesmerizing drama and theater in each runway that held great storytelling settings; which makes McQueen's designs an exemplary benchmarking choice for visual experimentation and stimulation in character concept designs.

Apart from his unconventional use of materials such as plastic, shells, feathers, glass, metal and bones in place of textiles, and extreme T-line and V-line silhouettes that add theatrical and dynamic looks, McQueen is also well known for his iconic headpieces and accessories that accompanies his garments. To a swarm of butterflies fluttering around the model's head and towering 12cm-high "Armadillo shoes" that resemble a lobster claw as shown in [Fig. 13], McQueen's designs v



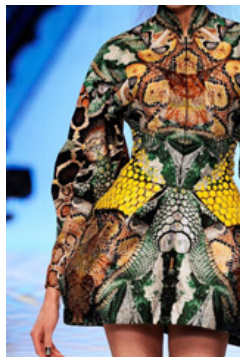
[Fig. 9] McQueen
Spring 2010



[Fig. 10] McQueen
Spring 2010 Detail (1)



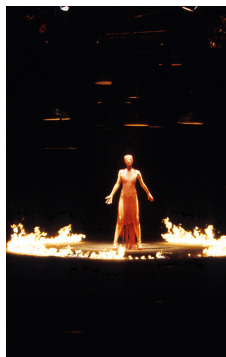
[Fig. 11] McQueen
Spring 2010 Detail (2)



[Fig. 12] McQueen
Spring 2010 Detail (3)



[Fig. 13] McQueen
Spring 2010 Detail (4)



[Fig. 14] McQueen
Fall 1998

embellishments. Makeup and hair designs—verging on the edge of becoming headpieces themselves—also play critical roles in Alexander McQueen's designs. Many of McQueen's details in textile, pattern, and ornaments used animal-inspired motifs; his 2010 Spring collection inspired by aquatic lifeforms as shown in [Fig. 9], [Fig. 10], [Fig. 11], [Fig. 12], and [Fig. 13]⁴⁾ show the designer's expertise and skill in combining all the elements mentioned above.

Coupled with his dramatic runways, as seen in [Fig. 14], verging on the edge of theatre and performance art, McQueen's fashion combine imaginative visual concepts and storytelling which are all essential parts of successful character designing.

3. Game Character Design

3.1 Defining Game Characters

A character is defined as 'a person in a novel, play, or film,' including characters in cartoons and games, advertisement models, brand symbols, etc., which assigns specific characteristics established through the character's form, personality, and actions to a product or service to build a natural affinity toward the character within the consumer. [8] Oh (2004) and Kim (2006) point out that, although in a general sense, the definition of a character in a game would refer to the player, the player's companions or enemies, in a broad sense, the definition encompasses all animated images including visible people, personified

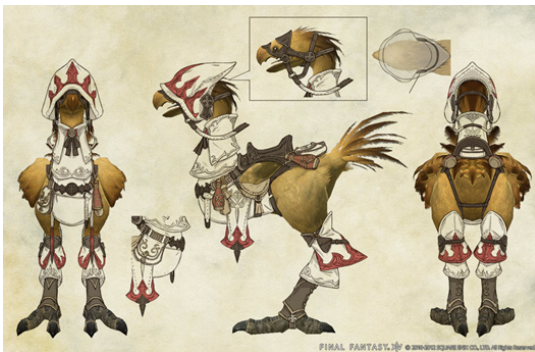
portrayed surreal and fantastic imagery through his use of shocking yet mesmerizing

4) Alexander McQueen. *VOGUE*. <https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/designer/alexander-mcqueen>.

plants and animals, moving machines and more that aid in the game's progression[9,10].



[Fig. 15] Final Fantasy 14 Illustration



[Fig. 16] Final Fantasy 14 Chocobo Costume Design

[Fig. 15] and [Fig. 16] illustrate an iconic character from the Final Fantasy series by Square Enix. The characters resembling a yellow chick called Chocobos mainly serves as a riding device similar to horses for players and human characters. The species, although intelligent, cannot talk and are not active characters, portraying mostly human-animal relationships within the game. However, despite their lack in active participation, Chocobos have become the main and most iconic symbol of the Final Fantasy franchise.

While in the past a character held little meaning on its own as it was simply an

aiding device to a game, the role of characters in games has changed over the years as the importance of characters was highlighted/reconsidered as story-based games evolved. [11] Characters have now become an essential selling feature for games, as well as an important “formative” feature expressing the game’s unique qualities that distinguishes the game apart from others. The example above shows how NPCs, creatures, or other subsidiary characters other than the main character or player can act as important in establishing key visual identities for game titles.

3.2 Characteristics of Game Character Design

Although inconsistent in classification criteria and method, there have been several previous studies that analyze and categorize formative characteristics of game character designs. Classifications regarding character garments include conclusions as the following. Seo and Jin (2004) identified characteristics of cyber character garments in games as “Retro, Avant-garde, and Cyber” while identifying their formative characteristics into “Reactionism, Mechanism, Futurism and Sensualism.” Oh (2004) classified visual characteristics of game characters according to formative traits into “Classicism, Surrealism, and Eroticism Imagery.” Kim (2005) categorized expressions of the body and garment in online games into “Exposure and Tightness, Enlargement and Exaggeration, Reduction and Simplification, Gender Fixed, and Hybridization,” and aesthetic characteristics into “Grotesque, Sensual, Futuristic, and Pastiche.” Lee (2007) classified

garments in mobile games according to game character images as “Erotic, Romantic, Heroic, and Grotesque” and compared these classifications to garments in fashion design. [12] Lee and Yang (2008) identified characteristic tendencies of game character clothing as “Imaginative, Sensual, and Corss sexual.” Finally, Seo and Kim (2015) categorized game character fashion styles into 5 different types: “Creative, Attractive, Grotesque, Usual, and Suit Style.” [13] Compiling the above data, classifications with similar characteristics were reorganized into categories with unified names as summarized in [Table 2], which revealed that most common overlapping characteristics found in game character design include sensual, imaginative/hybrid, futuristic and grotesque elements.

[Table 2] Overlapping Game Character Design Characteristics⁵⁾

Design Characteristics	Number
Sensual	6
Imaginative/Hybrid	5
Futuristic	4
Grotesque	3
Others	5

These elements are not distinctly present as separate elements in characters, but rather, mixed into character designs as dominant or secondary design features. Sensual and imaginative/hybrid elements are especially common in character designs. As pointed out by Oh (2004), these characteristics are the most inclusive and prominent features observed across computer game characters regardless of time. Such indiscriminating overuse of specific design features must be used with care and

approached with a critical eye conscious of design decisions.

4. Game Character Design and Fashion

By nature, games have always been closely knitted to the imaginative. Whether it be in the story, character, setting, or gameplay, the majority of games contain unrealistic or fantastic elements to a certain degree. One of the most potent devices that can express this fantastic nature is the game character’s fashion. [2] Lee and Yang (2008) further state that game character design fashions are not designed to be actually worn, and therefore, commonly exclude considerations for practicality. This is especially true for games that show strong imaginative tendencies. People can immediately identify, imagine, and feel what the game is about just by looking at the character and its design without any additional text or information. Regarding game character design, fashion is there to express.

However, according to Lee (2007), game character designs in Korea show similar design patterns, which hinders variety and further advancement in style—emphasizing the necessity to explore and expand from existing styles and established stereotypes, despite distinct industry criteria. Seo and Kim (2015) added that due to the success of certain genres in the online game industry, many character designs showed a tendency to stay within the visual spectrum and patterns of

5) Categories under Others include Classicism (1), Romantic (1), Cross Sexual (1), Usual (1), and Suit Styles (1).

those previous titles, which lead to an overall uniform and similar look in character design across the field. Although categorized into 5 different types in their paper, Seo and Kim (2015) comment that much of the design inspirations and references originate from similar sources.

[Table 3] provided by Kim (2006) shows that over 50% of the characters from 100 of the most popular online games serviced in Korea (2006) show fantasy(other) characteristics in character fashion. Kim (2006) observes that most fantasy settings generally pull references from medieval periods, and even if the world is of creative nature, most settings refrain from creating modern worlds advanced in civilization and science.

[Table 3] Periodic Analysis of Human Characters through Clothing

Period	Number	%
Ancient	5	5
Medieval	22	22
Modern	20	20
Future	3	3
Other	50	50
Total	100	100

By comparing and contrasting game clothing and fashion collections, Lee (2007) suggests possibilities for further development in game character designs. As shown in [Table 4], Lee argues that game character designs show far less variety than that of fashion design, reiterating the problems mentioned above. Although fashion in game characters did evolve into more modern, sophisticated, and original designs over the years, [3] character designs still tend to hesitate to venture into unconventional methods and styles. The comparison results in [Table 4] implicate that

fashion design can provide useful stimuli for bringing awareness to insufficiencies in current character designs as well as discovering new techniques and methods that can aid in inspiring and solving stylistic stereotypes through fashion examples.

[Table 4] Comparison Between Game Clothing and Fashion Collection

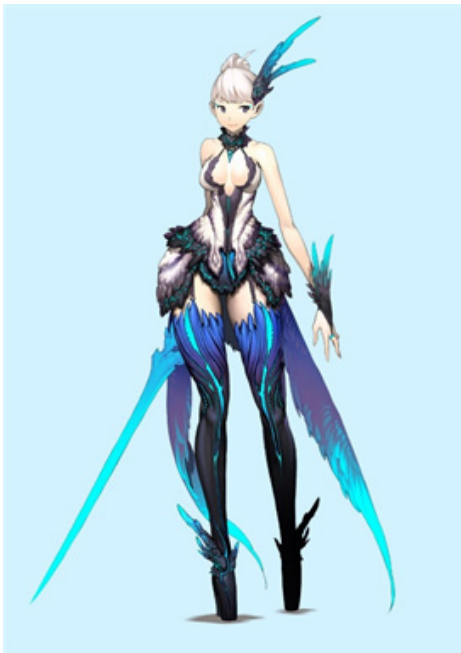
	Game	Fashion
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessories. - Clean-cut, closed silhouette separated from background. - Limited styles influenced by certain periods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blurry, open silhouette. - Various styles.
Color	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong or bright, dark colors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achromatic or neutral colors of various value. Toned down rich colors.
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited articulation of materials. - Weak articulation of drapability due to simplified lines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Various materials and designs that highlight drapability.

5. Discussion

By comparing and contrasting design examples from both fashion design and game character design, the paper highlighted the relationship and influence between fashion design and character concept design. The following example shows how designs by fashion designer Alexander McQueen has influenced the designs for a character in Blade & Soul as shown in [Fig. 17] and [Fig. 18]. The overall silhouette of the body with elongated legs and feet achieved through short dresses paired with the famous “Armadillo shoes” which elevates



[Fig. 17] McQueen Spring 2010



[Fig. 18] Blade & Soul (2012) Concept Art

The wearer above the ground show iconic similarities in their design. Complex, organic textures resembling aquatic or animal life interwoven with highly saturated, futuristic colors also give off a distinct hybrid vibe mixing the natural and artificial.

Although similarities point out the practicality of integrating and utilizing theoretical and formative methods in fashion design in creating character concept designs, the paper has its limitations in that more in depth studies focusing on specific game titles or genres should be followed in order to reveal clearer part-to-part formative analysis of design elements. However, the paper keeps its value in that it provides a table of discussion for further research.

With the ease of access to images through mass media and its constant stream of visual stimulation, current styles in character designs have become more integrated with fashion design influences, and show increased sophistication and experimental approaches than analyzed in previous studies. However, in order to apply and integrate these references more effectively, artists must further study and examine fashion design and its background—which is the backbone upon which formative inspirations and creative applications arise.

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