

WHY BLACK

Fashion Culture and Identity in the middle east

BLACK WOMEN'S GENDER IDENTITY IN THE ISLAMIC ARAB GULF

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ABSTRACT

- WHAT ?
- WHERE ?
- HISTORY
- Religion
- WHY ?
- WHAT NOW ?

This PRESENTATION explores the reason of color choice of black for women in the Middle East, and it explains that it has no religious implications but cultural and gender aspect. Muslim women share symbolic, functional and cultural characteristics embedded in tradition. Fashion trends are not arbitrary but manifestations of social, political, cultural, religious and economic changes. Fashion in the Arab Gulf has been associated with traditional static clothing, but some novelties as a result of important technological and social changes have been introduced. Embellished Hijabs and Abayas have become the sign of a type of modernity, especially for women. In this paper, the concepts of traditional and modern clothing in the construction of Muslim woman identity will be discussed.

In depth , this work will describe the dress in Arab Muslim Gulf, the Abaya design, and how it relates to Islam Orders. Additionally, it will explain the fundamental aspect of the color black as a women gender code and how it was not a religious order but a women's choice inherited by generations. Then we will mention how people view the Black color today in abaya and how the connection between religion, color, and the dress was initiated under Islam at this time.



ARAB GULF

Kuwait

Bahrain

Qatar

Saudi Arabia

United Arab Emirates.

WHERE



ARAB MEN WEAR WHITE
AND
ARAB WOMEN WEAR BLACK



ABAYA



WHAT IS DRESS MEAN IN ISLAM / MIDDLE EAST

- The abaya is a long, voluminous robe worn over other clothing. It covers from the neck to the feet, as well as partially the wearer's shoes with sleeves extending to the wrists. The abaya is traditionally black in color and is usually worn with a light, matching veil called a Shayla.
- But the real question is why most women in the middle east wear black?
- Did women wear black before Islam or was it infused by religion? If not, why is black a gender code for females and is it acceptable to change it?

HISTORY OF CLOTH

64-335

Roman Empire



335- 636

Byzantine Empire



636 CE

Islamic Empire





IN ISLAM

In Islamic countries like the Arab Gulf, every aspect of a person's life is connected to religion. Kids grow up, listen, see and touch Islamic implementation around them. What is allowed, appropriate and forbidden is known for most of the people, which enable them to teach it to and learn it from each other. Especially with clothing, what to wear, how to wear it and when to wear it is inherited from generation to another and all done with the Islamic base.

IN QURAN

In the Quran God tells the believing men and women to lower their gaze and to dress modestly. He (God) specifically addresses women when He asks **them not to show off their adornment.** (Quran 24:30-31)





RELIGION SCIENTISTS

- They said “The dress of the Muslim’s woman need not to be only black. It is permissible for her to wear any color of clothes as long as they cover her awrah. The dress should not resemble men’s clothing. What she wears has to be not so tight as to show the shape of her limbs or so thin as to show what is beneath it, and does not provoke temptation.”

The choice of color by women at that time was made of the **desire to not to attract unwanted attention from strange males and to protect her honor and her family's name**

On another hand it is to **find a way to flow religion** and to **bring a language of identity to all Muslim women** which later inherited by time for generations till today.

By wearing an Abaya, **she is publicly identifying herself as a Muslim, getting respect and will not be harassed.**



WHY BLACK

how it became as women dress? We find that Women at the beginning of Islam **chose to wear black** because it is so **dark and not transparent which would not imitate the shape of their body under it, in assents to not to provoke temptation around them**



TODAY

“Cloth makes clear reference to who we are. We know that through clothing, people communicate something about their persons; this results typically at the collective level in locating them symbolically in some structured universe of state claims and lifestyle attachments” (Davis, Fred page 4).





CONCLUSION

“Clothing’s meaning are cultural” Davis, Fred P13

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