Politics of Fashion in Dubai

The Abaya, Gallabaya and Hijab

Interestingly, even the stark black abaya makes for fashion statements. Gold and silver ribbons, sequins, beads and semi-precious stones. Most of the decorative embroidery is at the throat, covering the frontal part of the garment, at the base of the sleeve and near the ankles. Decorative work on the body of the garment is less, except of ornate gowns worn during weddings and religious functions. Galabays come in an explosion of colours, emerald green, purples, fuchsia, brilliant blues, sunflower yellow, and evergreen. Favourites of gold and silver Moroccan designs and animal motifs are among the favourite decorative patterns. Designers are now experimenting with slightly bold touches like one-shoulder-off gowns with a lace stole showing glimpses of the bare shoulders.

The Hijab too, does not escape the changing trends in fashion. They are sometimes beaded, fringed, sequined, and ornately decorated. Weddings give an opportunity for local designers to indulge their most ornate fantasies. The traditional white wedding gown, much like gowns worn at Christian weddings, are normally high-busted, with a narrow waist and flowing lines from the hips. The embroidery and decorative work is splendid, with pearls, sequins, precious stones, lace, ribbons and diamante – the limits are set only by the designer’s imagination.

Designer Wear

If women wear the all-covering abaya and the hijab, and below the abaya, mostly their gallasays, then what are some of the biggest names in fashion doing in Dubai, vying for a small market of a few million people? Armani, Gucci, Ralph Lauren, Jean Louis, Dior, Givenchy, Balenciaga, and many others. In addition, many Asian designers to indulge their most ornate fan-tasies. Designers are now experimenting with slightly bold touches like one-shoulder-off gowns with a lace stole showing glimpses of the bare shoulders.

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