Timeless

By: Chloe E. Williams

“Gabrielle Chanel’s life can be summed up in three ways: to choose, to desire, and to be,” Inside CHANEL said.

The aforementioned playlist found on CHANEL’s YouTube account uses a quick-paced narrative and the juxtaposition of black and white graphics to tell the story of Gabrielle Chanel. The French native created many pieces that changed the look, and the trajectory, of women’s clothing forever.

What makes one timeless? How can a single designer become so powerful that they transcend the restraints of finite time and create pieces for self-expression that not only cross decades, but also styles and ways of life?

Born in France in 1883, Coco Chanel never intended to be a fashion mogul. She learned to sew in the orphanage that she grew up in, and then spent some time as a singer before opening a clothing shop in 1910. Yet even though she came from such a humble beginning, Chanel refused to be discouraged.

These struggles Chanel faced allow for girls today to not only consider her an icon, but a hopeful, determined and relatable young girl, just like them. She was an invincible, relentless and eternal rebel, Inside CHANEL said.

Many college-aged girls today share the same origin story of struggle and hard work. Seeing that Chanel was able to defy the odds and turn her dream into a reality offers hope in a time of both stress and sleep deprivation.

Coco Chanel reminds us that we can overcome whatever and wherever we come from, and inspires us to strive for the impossible.

Today, Chanel’s handprint can be seen at every turn: in pop culture, on the runway and in closets worldwide. Holly Golightly, a plethora of runways at New York Fashion Week and even a previous issue of *Coulture* all point back to Coco Chanel.

Chanel’s introduction of the little black dress initiated a new age in women’s fashion, where an ensemble of this color had the potential to be chic instead of mournful. This dress has taken the modern world by storm, transforming women’s attire from voluminous to elegant and eye catching.

Another successful venture was the pant suit that she tailored for women. Such an ensemble has been donned by men for centuries, but never before had women felt the freedom to step away from the constraints of a long skirt.

The introduction of these suits came hand-in-hand with women’s liberation and the suffrage movement in 1925. The change in clothing and the freedom from the physical restrictions paralleled the social restrictions women were breaking free from during this period. While men and women’s suit styles differ in look and cut, the very fact that women now wear them conveys that that women can be just as powerful as men.

Such design and expression could be nothing but art. All artists have been given the task of translating the emotion we feel as humans into something tangible, something to enrapture and enthrall.

While fast fashions and pop culture celebrities come and go, Chanel’s ability to rise from the ashes of an impoverished childhood to create such art assure that she will live in our hearts, minds and closets for eternity.

<https://www.biography.com/people/coco-chanel-9244165>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6hSh\_J8oZU