

The Way We Wore

What fashion dos (or don'ts) will we recall from the just-over aughts?

Recently, my mom gave me what is now my most prized possession: the high-waist, cherry-red Levi's she wore the day my dad asked for her phone number in 1980. Not only do I owe the pants my life, they're a glimpse into a decade I was too young to appreciate. (I was born in 1985.) Clothing can make one nostalgic, but it can also serve as a window to the past. Take mom's jeans (over my dead body): She wore the loud pants because they were de rigueur for Baby Boomers, who traded their predecessor's traditional values and garb for hipper ones. Though I'm sure, if I suggested this



The author's parents on their 1984 wedding day. Bucking the norm, as ever, her mom wore a blue silk dress in lieu of a traditional white gown.



to mom she'd say, "Baby what? Those pants just made my butt look good!"

Can you recognize a trend as it's happening? "Of course, otherwise it wouldn't be a trend," says Daniel James Cole, professor of fashion history at the Fashion Institute of Technology. "But

ing in a time capsule to represent the years 2000 through 2010 in America, what would it be?

"A smart phone," jokes Elka Stevens when I asked her the same question. The design programs coordinator at Howard University elaborates: "In strictly fashion terms? Embracing a designer

The '20s had flappers, the '60s hippie chicks. But what about the aughts?

I don't think it's possible to analyze the meaning of fashion too heavily without a wee bit of hindsight."

Regardless, I wanted to try. With the iconic looks of bygone decades as inspiration — flapper gowns of the '20s, poodle skirts of the '50s, leisure suits of the '70s — I set out to answer this: If I had to place one article of cloth-

culture would be the defining trend; having the latest branded item, whether it's purchased, borrowed or even rented."

What did Cole from FIT say in response to my time capsule prompt? "A zip-up hoodie with a big brand name on it." Ouch. You're talkin' 'bout my generation. Though I can't say I disagree. I've owned more \$80 sweatshirts than

I care to remember.

After flipping through old high school photos (yuck, lime green overalls!), I've decided that, decades from now, when people go to aughts theme parties, they'll all be wearing Uggs.

To me, the fluffy footwear represents a life without structure: The boots are literally formless slippers held together by flimsy seams. Unlike lace-up Converse or strappy Manolos, Uggs can be slipped on and off with minimal commitment. And though it pains me as a fashion journalist to witness, they can be worn with just about anything.

Are Millennials lazy loafers who can't make decisions? Not necessarily. It's just that our values have shifted. Compared to earlier generations, studies show we're marrying later, living with our parents longer and changing careers more often. In other words, we're dragging our puffy, rubber-soled heels to adulthood.

Other suggestions from friends that didn't make the cut: skinny jeans, ballet flats, oversized Olsen twin-ish sunglasses, velour track suits.

Perhaps it is too soon to tell what the aughts ought to look like. "Fashion history books show an image for every five years or so, which gives you the mistaken impression that one day women woke up and their skirts were five inches longer," offers Cole. "But fashion is more of a gradual transition."

I'm too impatient to wait (another trait of my generation?). That's why I'm putting the lid on this time capsule, tucking it away and hoping my future daughter's glad when she gets my hand-me-downs. **HOLLEY SIMMONS**

WHAT WE BOUGHT



1. A lemony yellow **outdoor chair** brings a sunny feel to the deck (\$70, CB2, 3307 M St. NW; 202-333-6204).
2. The snakeskin trend meets the tangerine color obsession on a ladylike **chain-strap bag** (\$298, Elie Tahari, Tysons Galleria; 571-765-3396).
3. **Tracy Negoshian's knit dress** comes in a hip tribal print (\$154, Simplysoles.com).



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