

Rachel Murray – Fashion Communications

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OBJECT:

Clutch bag

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The History of the Clutch Bag

The clutch bag started when woman started using small embroidered silk bags called 'recticules' during the 19th century. The recticules were used in the same way as clutches are today- to carry small essentials. Back then it wasn't just for money and makeup but for little bottles of perfume, a needle and thread or an embroidered handkerchief.

By the 20th century they went out of fashion and instead women had shoulder bags or bags of a larger size due to the increase in the quantity of leather so fashion designers made larger bags. During WWI and WWII the clutch bag came back into fashion because of rationing and small amounts of material were available.

Now there is a wider range of clutch shape, size and colours to choose from with fashion designers creating new and exciting designs for each of their collection.



Figure 1 Oldest Clutch Bag in History

Documentations/Street Style

We went around Brighton and London asking people what a clutch bag means to them, why did they choose it and how do they feel when holding it. These are some of the answers that we got.

(A)

“Purely somewhere to keep my necessities when I go out”

“It has enough room to fit my phone, purse and my lipstick (simple and big)”

“Safe as I have full control of my object in my hand.”



(B)

“Fashion item accessory that is handy and beautiful at the same time.”

“It adds to my style.”

“I like holding all my personal belongings so I know where they are at all times, especially when out clubbing and you’ve had a few too many. If you had a across the body bag you can see or feel your stuff and it’s not safe.”

“I feel model and into the latest trend.”



(C)

“It is my identity when you open this bag you see the real me.”

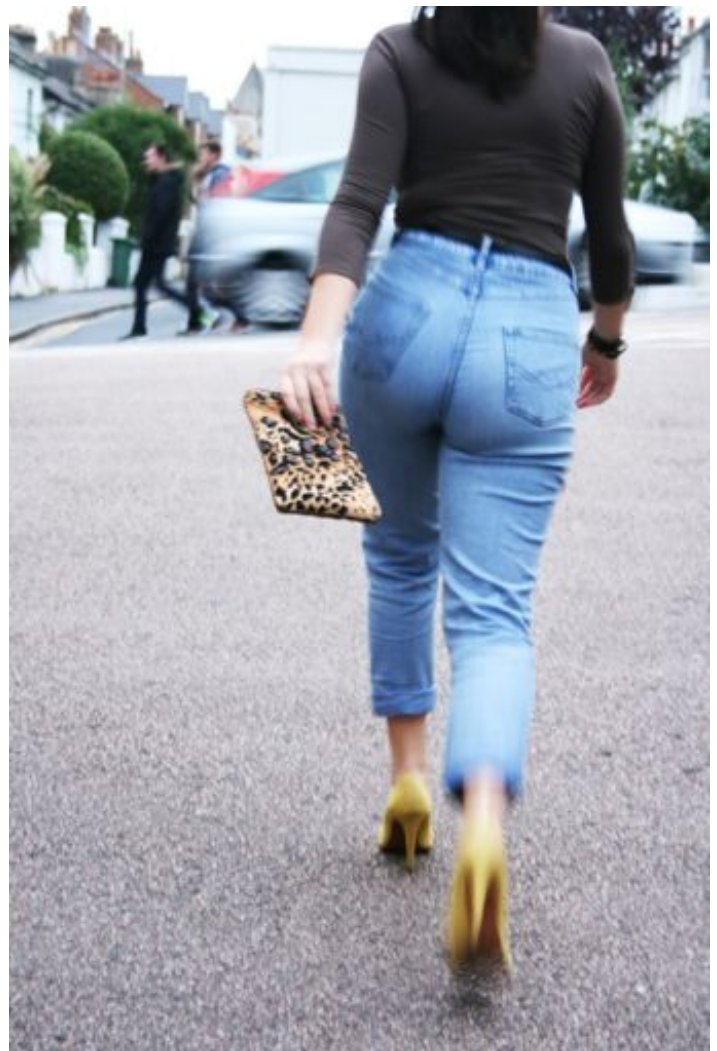
“The colours and style adds to my outfit.”

“Power I can move freely as I have no restrictions on my shoulders. I feel liberated when holding a clutch bag.”

(D)

“When you dress up it nice to dress up your bag as well. Some clutch bag are embellished or encrusted with beads and jewels and it can be too risky to take them to work every day as they might get ruined. So for special occasions I bring out my special bags.”

“They are simple and it can make your outfit look a lot better if your bag and clothes match!”



Before:



After:



Working with photography:

We stacked all the deconstructed pieces of the bag together in order to create shadows and to see what shapes could be produced. These photographs of the shadows can be used for textiles or print making or even as a brands logo.





Reconstruct:

A clutch bag holds some of the most personal belongings a person needs. Same as a journal or diary. Both items contain hidden stories, messages and all kinds of memories. For us a clutch is a personal envelope that contains your most important secrets. A clutch is as private as the thoughts in our head.



What a clutch means to us:



I feel classy, very elegant and light. It can complement my outfit very well without spending too much of my attention to it, because a clutch bag has its own identity and character. A clutch bag can add to a simple outfit greatness and style. But it often feels uncomfortable - for example, to walk around with, dance and not so much practical for carrying many things. It may be a little clutch bag but it contains my little female secrets.

-Christiana Zacharia

With my clutch bag I feel like I can rule the world. If I was trapped on a deserted island, all I would need was my clutch bag! In there I have all my life; basically my money, id and of course my red lipstick. I am attached to my clutch bags as I have worn them faithfully and consistently for a few years and it has come to mean a lot to me. Holding it makes me feel in control as I am carrying all the necessities needed to get through the day! It gives me a feeling of calm, confident competence when faced with daunting tasks.

-Mikaela Smilas



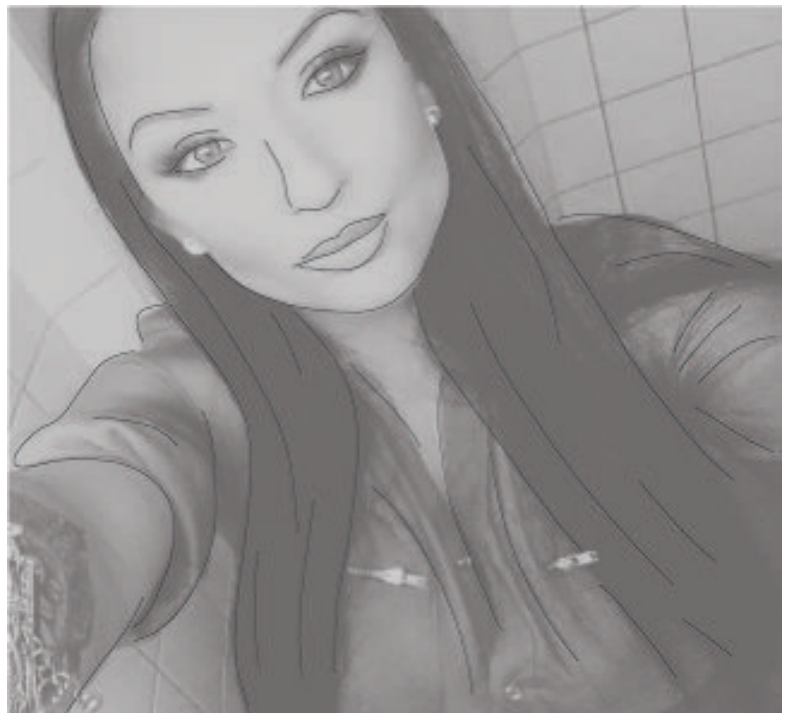


For me a clutch bag not only makes an incredible fashion statement it also is the most important thing when I go out. It holds all my necessities and valuables including my phone, money, ID cards and keys to my house so when I go out my clutch bag is stuck to me in case I lose any of these! Also my clutch bag provides me with a feeling of security because I have everything I need in one place and I can hold it in a position where I can see it and know that all my items are safe. I also like using clutch bags because they vamp up an outfit and make it complete, I don't want to be carrying a big bag about in a restaurant or having to stuff everything in my pockets. With the wide range of clutches available and the growing amount of clutch bags I own, I have a lot to choose from to make my outfit look and feel great rather than feeling as though I am going into school or work but that I'm out to have fun!

-Rachel Murray

My clutch bag. Everything I need for day in my hectic life, lives in that clutch bag. From keys to lipsticks, money to ID, a clutch bag it's filled with every essential object I need. Other than that every clutch bag I own makes every outfit of mine complete. Clutch bags; both a fashion statement and a way to make life easier.

-Loukia Liperi





WHAT IS A CLUTCH BAG?

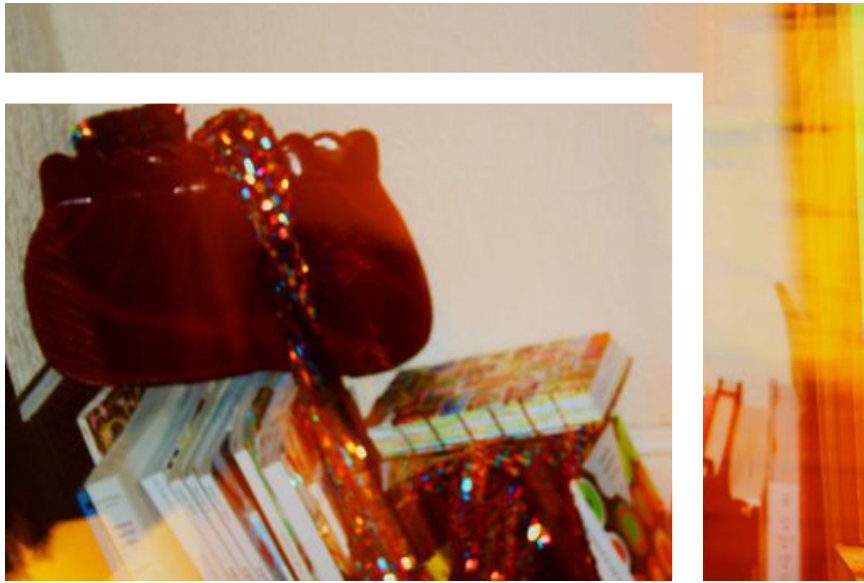


What does the clutch bag mean to us?

After researching the staple accessory most women use on a night out I realized I had underestimated the personal pouch. Back when the clutch was first in fashion in the late 19th century it was merely a silk bag used for keeping necessities such as a needle and thread or a handkerchief. Nowadays it's packed with modern necessities such as make up, the latest iPhone and some cash- a very different mix of essentials.

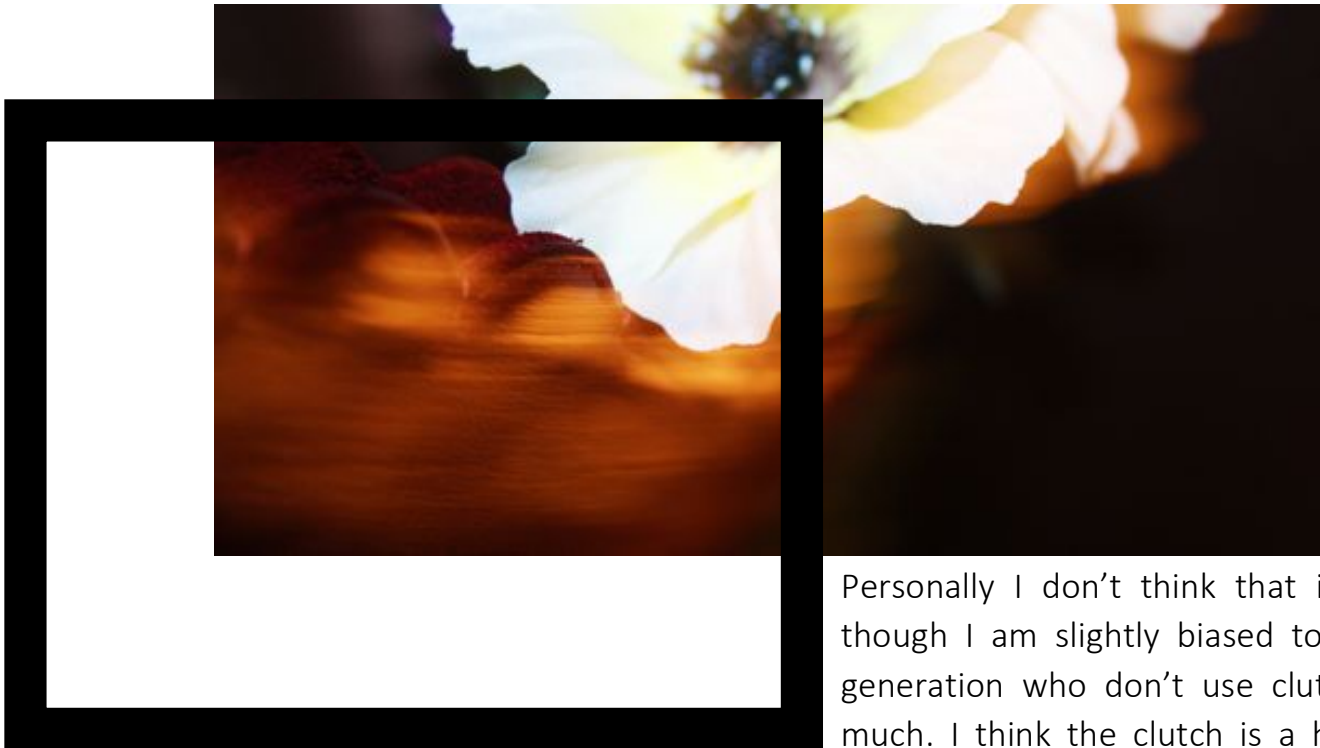
So how come the clutch bag was less popular and required back then? A night out in the 1900s was more coordinated couples dancing and less twerking and grinding so they needed their hands free so that they could dance with a partner. Women also back then were seen as potential wives, they didn't need anything that a possible husband didn't have. So times have changed but have they for the better?

Yes woman have more of a say in the world and as someone who hopes to work in fashion its fantastic that we have more freedom with what we wear. But for me a cliché lies in the



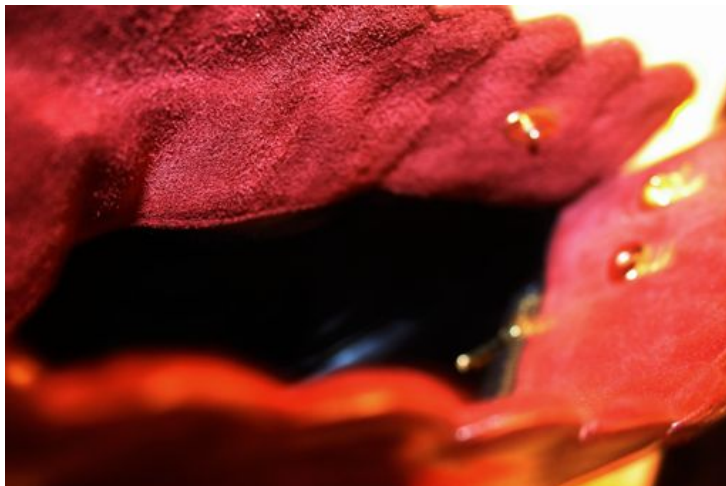
We have progressed as a gender but to a point where we have to take a bag out with us filled with things that are used to try and improve our physical appearance. After trying to research the clutch bag and ask people why they are carrying one I found I could only gain my research by going out at nighttime when clutch bags were most used. After asking to have a peek in a few the contents ranged from a phone, purse, ID and a lipstick to girls bringing out what seemed like their whole makeup bag. Since studying at university I also noticed that less girls had clutch bags out with them and asking those who didn't have one latched under their arm why they were hands free that night most of the answers were that they didn't need it or they didn't care about what they looked like or that they couldn't be bothered. So has one of the few accessories that make us feel fancy and classy gone out of fashion





Personally I don't think that it has even though I am slightly biased to a younger generation who don't use clutch bags as much. I think the clutch is a huge power tool and provides each woman (or man) with a sense of mystery. What's in their clutch bag? Where are they going? Who are they going to see?

After studying and researching the clutch for this project I noticed I became very defensive as to why I owned a lot of them. For me a clutch doesn't just hold my personal items it's quite a clever and useful accessory. It can tie out fits together or provide a statement with the use of colour or glitter or sequins. There is hundreds of ways to make each clutch bag unique and give you an insight to what the person holding it is like. I realized that a clutch bag is as powerful as a whole outfit and can summarize the owner's personalities in its appearance.



I think the clutch bag has progressed from the late 19th century to now into a staple piece in the women's wardrobe. Yes, it may be filled with make up and perfume but its all these little things that make us look

BIOGRAPHY

Hello, I am from Northern Ireland and I decided to study on the fashion communications and business course because of not just my interest in fashion but the idea that fashion is an expression of art but on the human body. For me growing up where everyone wears the same clothes and takes the latest trends from the high street stores and wears it the same as everyone else without making it their own is very pointless. My ambitions for the fashion industry is to expand it into being a desired profession and make it a career seen as challenging rather than something that people think is only for girls and for people who aren't very smart. Also I would like to get more people into art and fashion and to help them be able to understand this creative business. For me fashion communications is a very interesting and exciting course, as I hadn't realized the importance of communication within the industry, I had always thought of the communication being visual so I'm very enthusiastic to hopefully succeed in an ever-growing business world.

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