

Retromania and the Sixties in Retrospect

Focus on Design and Fashion

Initial conditions:

- Youth-led “consumer revolution” → stimulated by full employment and rising incomes
- Utopian, alternative lifestyles & fundamental change in values

Design

‘Wow! Explode! The Sixties!’
(Memories of designer Betsey Johnson)

- Space Race between the superpowers was a source of inspiration for designers
→ Creation of utopian, futuristic designs for living
- New synthetic materials (plastic and PVC)
→ low-priced products for a youthful mass market
- Euphoria engendered by space flight, new technologies and materials
→ reflected in a geometric vocabulary of forms
- Informal furniture for casual occasions became popular. Also multi-purpose furniture, disposable, throwaway
- “Counter revolution” → return to established styles such as art nouveau, art deco
→ psychedelic art from West Coast America manifested in geometric forms yielding to new, neo-organic aesthetics

Fashion:

'Snobbery has gone out of fashion, and in our shops you will find duchesses jostling with typists to buy the same dresses.' Mary Quant

- “Swinging London” influences Europe and the US & replaces Paris as fashion capital
- Musical taste and styles of dressing closely linked
- Clothing becomes increasingly unisex → same boutiques for similar items
- New way of shopping → Prêt à porter gets popular
→ Mary Quant's Bazaar first boutique with cheap fashion

Literature:

- Reynolds, Simon. *Retromania. Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past*. London, Faber and Faber Ltd.:2011.
- <http://www.hofmobiliendepot.at/en/nc/services/press-information/archive/press-information-2011/press-information-detail-2011/artikel/sixties-design.html> (last accessed 06/16/2013)
- <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-1960s-fashion-and-textiles/> (last accessed 06/16/2013)