

LS SUGGESTS

Re-evaluating Ribbons

NOWADAYS, there is a variety of options to choose from while you think about dressing your hair. There are different types of clips, bands, headbands etc. However, the use of ribbons is a rarity now despite the trend of accessorising your hairdos. Back in the days, it was a common sight to see ribbons decorating the hair-dos of many women. If one recalls, she may remember her mother or grand-mother, sitting pretty in the morning, with a ribbon keeping their hair-styles tidily in place.

Ribbons are one of the oldest decorative and adorning materials for your hair. Cloth ribbons are made of natural materials such silk, velvet, cotton, and of synthetic material like polyester, nylon, lace etc. They come in a variety of materials, sizes, colours and designs. While one is prone to automatically associating hair-ribbons with school uniforms, this is quite unfair. The ribbons used with school uniforms were usually of one solid colour, that too not always the best one. Thus, getting so used to those ribbons, one doesn't give the more trendy ribbons a thought, oftentimes remaining unaware of their existence.

Determining the exact time when hair ribbons came into fashion is quite difficult. Historians, though, consider the 19th century to be the time when hair ribbons and bows really came into the scene. A quick look at the 18th century using Google Images will help understand why ribbons became such a fad in the 19th century. In the 18th century, the hairdos were impressive and elaborate, in fact too elaborate for most common folk. The hairdos back then were embellished with jewellery and held up in a bouffant-like look using jewellery, ribbons and much more. This grand set-up was usually reserved for royalty, with the common folk unable to dedicate the time to achieve the look and nor did they usually have the means. In the 19th century, the general populace tended to overlook the exquisite hair styles and focused on the practicality in the exaggeration. Hence, they quickly identified the helpful nature of the ribbon and began adopting its use in everyday fashion. This is when the story of ribbons really began.

Contrary to popular belief, the ribbons were worn by both men and women, with men preferring the bow look to tie their newly grown long hair. Soon though, as hats became all the rage, it became difficult to accommodate both, so men at times probably opted for hats over ribbons, leaving the latter for the female individuals. The women carried the ribbon movement forward and till the late 80s, they were a popular fixture in hair fashion. The ribbons took on many avatars, turning into bows and plastic, boomerang-shaped hair-bands. In the end, they endured and although having taken a backseat in recent times, their value as a fashion accessory remains undiminished.

These days, ribbons can still be found in their usual variety in many places around the city. The most famous of these locations are Jatra, Gausia, Chandni Chawk and even Mohammadpur Town Hall. The laces are bought according to yards these days and thus price depends entirely on the size, design and quality. Should you indulge? Of course! Bring sexy back; get a ribbon.

By Osama Rahman

Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel

Model: Mithila

Wardrobe: Jatra

Location: Jatra, Dhanmondi

Make-up: Farzana Shakil

Photo shoot coordinator: Tabassum Anila Hridi

