

Characteristics of Signature Bonnie Cashin Designs

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Abstract *The purpose of this exploratory research is to study Cashin's fashion philosophy and to draw her design characteristics through analysis of her work. As a result of this research, 76 garment pieces were selected from the 180 Bonnie Cashin collections at the University of Cincinnati to document and evaluate. The final selection includes: sixteen jackets, fifteen skirts, five pants, five tops, seven dresses, twenty five coats, and three capes. Bonnie Cashin specialized in practical and functional; yet innovative designs such as leather trimmed tweed Jackets/coats, canvas raincoats, suede leather coats, and ponchos. Her trademark elements include toggle closures, oversized pockets, her Noh coats, tweed suits, canvas raincoats, fringed suede dresses, funnel neck pullovers, jersey dresses, and ponchos. She emphasized function and comfort and she believed that a good design must also be practical. The examination of these 76 pieces from the University of Cincinnati's private Bonnie Cashin Collection brings to light Bonnie Cashin's creative design and what she represented in the development of American fashion design in the 20th century.*

Key words *American sportswear, Bonnie Cashin, Characteristics of Signature Design*

Introduction

The Necessity of study

Fashion is not just the current trend of clothing, it is also the expression of personal aesthetic and a reflection of the spirit, taste and outlook of the times. Analyzing fashion can be a way to study social trends, as well as a means for representing designers in current times, for designer brands are an expression of a designer's personal aesthetic. Good designers study current and coming trends, making their designs with their own philosophies in order to hold a dominant position in fashion. Regardless of the trends, a fashion designer's philosophies parallel social trends or stand out amongst them. Before the mid-20th century, U.S. apparel firms mostly copied French styles for the American market. The war

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years made communication with Europe difficult, and Americans began to appreciate their homegrown talent. American fashion design was the beginning of new category of clothing that be distinguished with Paris, and showed unique characteristics (Cincinnati Art Museum, 2015).

American women designers, such as Bonnie Cashin, Norman Norell, and Claire McCardell, started enjoying and designing for leisure activities in the early to mid-20th century. They developed sportswear to meet consumers' needs. The demand continued into the 21st century, and, today, American sportswear has become a global phenomenon. Since the 1930s, American sportswear has been used in daytime and evening fashions of varying degrees of formality. Modern sportswear demonstrates a relaxed approach while remaining appropriate for many businesses or social occasions (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004). The early sportswear designers, mentioned above, proved that the creation of ready-to-wear fashion could be a legitimate design art, which responded stylishly to utilitarian requirements (Martin, 1998). Renewed attention was drawn to Bonnie Cashin's work, when the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) Museum in New York City held a widely publicized retrospective of her work shortly after she passed away in February of 2000. The exhibition was the brainchild of three individuals who worked with Cashin during her life: Anthony Muto, Stephanie Day Iverson, and Dorothy Twining Globus.

The work of American fashion designer Bonnie Cashin reflects the best aspect of American culture and the fluid way of life, which other countries are now seeking to achieve (Bill, 1962). Bonnie Cashin was one of the most important and influential American fashion designers of the last century. Her contributions to American fashion are especially notable given the dominance of European designers during the 1950s. She pioneered new styles and approaches in casual wear that continue to influence fashion design to this day. These styles and approaches are now fundamental to so many aspects of fashion design that they are considered foundational. Through association with these individuals, a greater understanding has emerged of the significance of Cashin's contributions more comprehensively. Knowing that the University of Cincinnati has a private collection of 180 pieces of Cashin's original designed garments, a decision was made to document some of these pieces thoroughly. This was a valuable undertaking in the understanding of American fashion history.

The Purpose & Method

Bonnie Cashin was a highly acclaimed and prolific fashion designer noted for her revolutionary contributions to 20th-century American fashion design. A pioneer of American sportswear, Cashin had a nonconformist attitude and approached fashion design in a way that appealed to women who shared her independent attitude and some of Cashin's signature elements continue to appear and influence fashion design today.

The University of Cincinnati house a collection of Bonnie Cashin garments within its Historic Garments Collection. The University of Cincinnati Cashin Collection affords researchers a unique hands-on opportunity to learn about Bonnie Cashin and her place in history, both American and within the context of the fashion industry, through these garments.

The purpose of this exploratory research is to study Cashin's fashion philosophy and to draw her design characteristics through analysis of her work. In order to achieve this it was necessary to research and review the evolution of American Women's Sportswear. This research yielded a compilation of written material and garment data to analyze Cashin's design work. The documentation includes a timeline of the garments, fabric and analyses of pattern design, and design details.

First, several interviews were conducted with Stephanie Iverson, a protégé of Cashin, Shinoi Suman, a costume appraiser, and Anthony Muto, a fashion designer and friend of Cashin, to understand her work from a more foundational perspective. Secondly, literature and data that contains extensive material on Cashin were collected. Such material includes her original sketches, articles and advertisements on newspapers or magazines about her works that enhanced the understanding of the significant pieces of her work in general. Thirdly, American sportswear fashion literature, from 1850 to 1980s, was reviewed in order to examine the role of Cashin's designs in American sportswear history. As a result of this research, 76 garment pieces were selected from the 180 Bonnie Cashin collections, within the University of Cincinnati Historic Garment Collection to be documented and evaluated after our initial overall research. The reason in selecting these 76 pieces was because Bonnie Cashin used a variety of materials of the same design from the 180 garments to pursue the concept of layering and mix-and-matching.

Review of American Sportswear Fashion

The history of American sportswear consists of changing style, cultural history and the history of American fashion industries. American sportswear designers created a new American model out of an influence of Paris, and manufacture of this affected the American ready-to-wear industry. Therefore, the history of American sportswear is as study of value of national characteristics.

To examine the development of American sportswear, we separated out four periods of development by literature, material, and definition. The first or *Evolving period* dates from 1850 to 1919, when sports began to appear in daily life. Slowly, special clothes began to be worn by sporting women participating in tennis, yachting, cycling, horseback riding and hunting. Next, *the Innovative Period of development*, from 1920 to 1939, saw a huge change in modern clothing that occurred after World War I. The term *sportswear* was the first used to define a class of clothing worn when participating in all kind of sports and other casual activities. The third period or *Period of Establishment*, lasted from 1940 to 1969, a period where America emerged. Post-World War II, as a strong nation, and sportswear was redefined as casual style of clothes that reflected the relaxed, affluent life of middle class. The fourth or *Maturing period* reflects a large change in the concept of sportswear post 1970. During this time, sportswear was signified as activity wear for one's life; designed for everyone regardless of place, age, and sex.

The Evolving Period (1850~1919)

During the mid-nineteenth century, advancements in systems and equipment related to sewing led to the establishment of the ready-to-wear garment industry. The invention of the sewing machine and the elec-

tric circular knife, when joined with the development of standardized sizing, meant large numbers of garments could now be produced faster and cheaper, spawning the ready-to-wear industry. Mass production of clothing became possible for the first time. Post-Civil War changes in society, along with the growth of industrialism, ushered in a greater acceptance of woman working outside of the household. And, after 1870, woman's participation in a small amount of sports began to grow. (Stanfill, 2007). The ready-to-wear industry grew, and by the 1890s, firmly established itself in America, mostly serving workingwomen by constructing shirtwaist blouses, skirts, camisoles and petticoats. But such clothing followed the fashion styles of the day, which allowed very little ease of movement so necessary to participate in active sports. As more women began to participate in sports such as golf, tennis, hiking, cycling, and bathing, the need for movement in clothing became apparent. For golf, pleats, added in various areas provided more ease of movement for tweed jackets and long skirts and by 1909; the cardigan sweater replaced the traditional jacket as the first casual women's garment.

World War I influenced styles of the period in a major way. Women had to cast off the restricting fashions of the Edwardian Era, for they now required functional clothing for their active involvement in the jobs they had taken over while filling in for the men fighting in the war. Working women in munitions factories wore trousers beneath their overalls and after the war; some kept trousers for private wear at home. Chanel introduced jersey knit fabric to create her lightweight suits in 1915, and women who yearned for sporty clothes found more comfort in her new designs (Batterberry, 1979). Such events were important catalysts that gave birth to the development of sportswear in earnest.

The Innovative Period (1920–1945)

In post-World War I America, life brought an improving life style. The automobile allowed workers to live in suburban areas and commute to the city, plus it made new recreational opportunities possible by carrying individuals and families out of the city and into the countryside (Tortora & Eubank, 2005). This expansion of outdoor recreation plus the increasing active participation in sports for everyone established the need for a new class of casual, practical clothing, or sportswear. American sportswear designers usually copied the ideas coming from Paris throughout the 1920s.

But that would all change when, in 1945, Dorothy Shaver, president of the department store, Lord and Taylor, promoted the *American Look*, a marketing campaign that recognized American designers by name, elevating them up as full equals with their European counterparts (Lee, 1975). Claire McCardell, Vera Maxwell, and Bonnie Cashin became well known as designers who welcomed a new, modern dress code that allowed pants, playsuits, and other active wear as acceptable informal fashion. McCardell popularized a new way of dressing that included the dirndl skirt, swimsuits, sundresses, wool jersey dinner dresses, and the popover denim wraparound housedress. In trying to be creative with the scarcity of fabric mandated at the time, Bonnie brought fashion and style into a new type of clothing - separates. In addition, suburbia started influencing fashion trends (Lockwood, 2012).

The Establishment Period (1945~1969)

After the end of World War II, America society envisioned a new and exciting world that offered endless opportunities for an ever better life. American left the cities to raise their children and moved to newly built houses in suburban neighborhoods, where they created a casual, relaxed lifestyle; a lifestyle which required new sportswear designs for men, women, and the newly named teenager. Unlike the rigid designs coming out of Paris, American sportswear handed the determination of control over to the consumer. In a wrapped McCardell or a Bonnie Cashin the shaping was not ceded to the designer; that assignment was given to the wearer, thereby assuring an element of relativity as opposed to a designer-imposed sovereignty (Martin, 1998). Eventually, Prêt-à-porter, or high fashion ready-to-wear, grew to become the new norm. Sportswear truly established itself during the 1950s. The increasingly affluent middle class began to travel the world and needed clothing that would pack and travel with greater ease of care and also easy to wear for several situations, and American sportswear designers answered this need.

In the 1960s, designers from England, Italy, and Spain join the Americans in challenging French designers. At the same time, the teen market grew rapidly as American baby boomers became young consumers and clothing industry grew swiftly. Teenage fashion and fads played an important role in garments industry (Tortora & Eubank, 2005).

The Maturing Period (1970s~1980s)

The oil shocks of the 1970s, made Americans, realize that energy security and conservation were important concerns. As awareness of environmental problems emerged, the fashion industry worked to implement more eco-friendly methods and practices. Socially, the divorce rate doubled, leading to the increased number of households headed by women. This resulted in a large number of women entering the professional work force, which effected fashion trends. Female executives wore business suits with pants, while women wore pants in every walk of life. Women's fashion in the late 1970s was dominated by suits: leisure suits, pantsuits, jumpsuits and tracksuits were seen everywhere (Ewing & Mackrell, 1992). Geoffrey Beene, one of the first significant male sportswear designers, incorporated elements of menswear into his relaxed women's clothing, layering garments and menswear elements, now widely used by early 21st century industry designers (Stanfill, 2007). By the late 1970s, the quest for health fitness led many men and women to jog, run, and work out. Manufacturers responded with new lines of warm-up suits, running and jogging clothing, and shoes.

In the 1980s, designers created casual layered looks using mix and match contrasts in suits with a hint of formality, but with wide shoulders and relaxed style lines. The designers in this period promoted a total look; well-coordinated garments that answered the need for power dressing by young professionals, male and female, rising up the corporate ladder. Interest in fitness continued to stimulate the growth of clothing for running, jogging, exercising. The distinctions between clothing for active sports and sportswear for non-sports activities blurred, while at the same time designer labels and branding

gained momentum.

Bonnie Cashin's fashion biography & fashion philosophy

Born in Oakland, California in 1907, Bonnie was the only child and learned to sew by being a dress-maker apprentice to her mother, Eunice. Her journey began during high school, when she went on a practice run of job seeking armed with her sewing skills and her portfolio of design sketches and presented them to the director of the Fanchon and Marco Dance Troupe, who hired her on the spot and asked her to start immediately (Iverson, 2000). (figure 1)

In 1936, Cashin designed a wardrobe of fashionable street clothes, which the ensemble wore within a fashion show number. Each dancer stepped from the pages of a giant facsimile of *Harper's Bazaar* magazine dressed in new, exquisite fashions, modeling them to the audience's delight. *Harper's Bazaar* editor, Carmel Snow, attended a performance and arranged for Cashin to become a designer at the prestigious house of Adler & Adler, which created suits and coats (Grady, n.d). She worked as their chief ready-to-wear designer from 1937 until 1943. Bonnie answered New York Mayor LaGuardia's call when in 1941 she, along with fashion designers, Claire McCardell and Vera Maxwell, formed a top secret design team that contributed to the war effort during World War II by designing New York City's civilian defense uniforms for women workers. (figure2) We were designing new uniforms and we had to make our samples with great secrecy. And it was interesting having an outside job to do when the



Fig. 1.
Design for Betty as "Russian Princess", *Types*, ca. 1932
(<http://unitproj.library.ucla.edu/special/cashin/dreamer17.htm>)



Fig. 2.
New York City Women's Civil
Defense Volunteer Organization
Uniform, 1942
(www.nyhistory.org/exhibit/civil-defense-volunteer-organization-uniform)

whole industry was feeling cramped from the wartime restrictions on the amount of material and trim that could be used for any one garment (The Shippensburg University Fashion Archives, 2001). In trying to be creative with the scarcity of fabric mandated at the time, Bonnie brought fashion and style into a new type of clothing - separates.

In 1943, Bonnie accepted a new challenge by returning to California and took a position as a film costume designer for Twentieth Century Fox. The actresses that Bonnie was dressing for the movies were also coming to her for their off-screen outfits (Iverson, 2001). Her first film, *Laura*, released in 1944, won her critical acclaim for its fashionable contemporary wardrobe. (figure 3) She was asked to design *Anna and the King of Siam*, a movie that allowed Bonnie to study and research clothing from the orient. She was often on the move for inspiration, travelling to international locations such as Paris, Japan, India, and Spain. She observed the locals with a keen eye, and designed fashions that reflected her travels abroad. While in Paris, she saw fashions influenced by Christian Dior. She sensed they were impractical for the lifestyle of modern women like her. She travelled to Far East Asia, where she was introduced to the simple and practical aspect of layering clothing in Korean, Chinese, and Japanese traditional clothing. In terms of the ever-changing weather, she observed that the versatility found in adding layers of garments was especially appropriate for cooler temperatures, or what the Japanese described as a *nine-layer day* (Grady, n.d). She also studied the simplicity of cut and designs of Asian fashion and found that, to her, it was much better suited to what she saw as an answer for the lifestyle of the new American woman.

Using what she had observed in the Far East, Cashin totally reformed her thinking and used her ingenuity to adorn. She designed ponchos, mantles, capes and togas for her premiere 1949 collection applying her creative insight and knowledge of what she learned regarding traditional Japanese garments. Her utilitarian design concepts answered the need for to function in a practical way to the contemporary woman's daily life, and became the signature of her belief in the simple mobility of clothes. Cashin decided to return Adler and Adler, where she dressed women using simple geometry and sumptuous fabrics. Inspired by the Orient, her collection consisted of layering lightweight garments in a mix and match manner. Her *We Live as We Please* collection introduced a completely new casual look for the American woman and catapulted Cashin's career upward resulting in great recognition (Iverson, 2000). She emphasized simplicity and comfort and insisted that a good design must also be practical design. The following year she won both the Fashion Critics Award and the Neiman Marcus Award for her original contribution to the field of American fashion design for a prototype of her signature *Noh* coat, an unlined, sleeved or sleeveless T-shaped coat with deeply cut armholes to wear singly, in combination, or under a poncho or cape.

She began designing on a freelance basis in 1951, creating Bonnie Cashin Designs, Inc., Working on a royalty basis, she created complete coordinated wardrobes - accessories, knits, capes and coats, dresses, and separates - to be combined in layers to suit the climate or the event. By working with manufacturers, each with their own focus and strengths, Bonnie was able to produce high priced, and well as low cost versions of her clothing. She teamed with Phillip Sills, a leather manufacturer, in 1953; to

develop her unique leather piped sportswear that became one of her trademarks (Robinson, 2003). In the 1950s when most women's clothing was concerned with structure, the Cashin silhouette was based on the rectangle or the square and called for a minimum of darting and seaming. Cashin showed layered dressing long before the concept became a universal option; she brought canvas boots and raincoats out of the show ring and into the street in 1952 and she introduced jumpsuits as early as 1956. This practicality resulted in her flat-fold clothes, her layered, and her large carry.

In 1962, Cashin became the sole designer for Miles and Lillian Cahn's men's wallet and cigarette case company, Coach (figure 4). She launched a new women's division for leather handbags and accessories. Her line was known as Cashin Carry bags featuring brightly colored leathers, large outside pockets for change and keys, and bright, fun patterned linings (Robinson, 2003). Cashin wisely developed collections that complimented her Sills and Co. clothes. Seeing the practical use of the hardware and closures used in purses and handbags that she designed, she used such closures in her clothes when she was disappointed with the quality of buttons. In the mid-1960s, Cashin partnered with Ballantyne, a Scottish knitting company, producing funnel neck cashmere sweaters, based on op art and African themes. After several years, formed The Knittery to produce and distribute her own knitted fashions.



Fig. 3.
Laura's star Gene Tierney
(<http://bonniecashin.org/2013/06/>)



Fig. 4.
1962 COACH AD
(<https://coachinc.wordpress.com/>)

The 1970s found the fashion industry crossing over from its former marketing orientation and no longer dictated fashion to consumers. Now, Cashin analyzed what the consumer needed and wanted and designed to fit the needs of their customers. Bonnie Cashin pioneered with her first sportswear collection in 1949. In 1981, the Innovative Design Fund Award, provided the seed money for designers with original creative ideas in home furnishings, textiles, and fashion enabling them to manufacture design prototypes.

The Analysis of Bonnie Cashin's Design

After extensive study and evaluation, 76 garments were selected and numbered from Bonnie Cashin's work. The selected garments were then categorized by type (jackets, skirts, pants, blouses, dresses, coats, and capes), and the year each piece was designed. The final selection includes: sixteen jackets, fifteen skirts, five pants, five tops, seven dresses, twenty-five coats, and three capes.

Table 1 shows all the items selected and design details including fabrics and colors. Silhouettes of jackets, skirts, coats, dresses, and tops are included as thirty seven A-line, twenty two Straight, nine fit, two each of fit& flare and slightly A-line. Fabrics included are: fifteen wool tweed, fifteen leather, fourteen canvas fabric, twelve jersey, eight wool plaid, seven other kinds of wool, four suede, and one fake fur. The colors used were: sixteen yellow, eleven brown, fifteen green and multiple hue variations to create tweeds and plaids, ten cream, nine orange, seven beige, five red, and three blue.

Table 1.
Selections

Sample no. (Item no.)	1 (JK1/SK1)	2 (CO1)	3 (CO2)	4 (JK2)	5 (JK3)	6 (CO3)
Photo						
Sample no. (Item no.)	7 (CO4)	8 (JK4)	9 (JK5/SK2)	10 (CO5)	11 (CO6)	12 (JK6/SK3)
Photo						
Sample no. (Item no.)	13 (CO7)	14 (JK7)	15 (JK8/PA1)	16 (CO8)	17 (PO1)	18 (CO9)
Photo						

Continued table 2.
Selections

Sample no. (Item no.)	19 (TO1/PA2)	20 (CO10)	21 (TO2/SK4)	22 (CO11/SK5)	23 (CO12/SK6)	24 (PA3)
Photo						
Sample no. (Item no.)	25 (CO13/SK9)	26 (CO14)	27 (JK9/SK7)	28 (CO15)	29 (JK10/SK8)	30 (DR1)
Photo						
Sample no. (Item no.)	31 (CO16)	32 (JK11/PA4)	33 (JK12/SK10)	34 (CO17/SK11)	35 (DR2)	36 (DR3)
Photo						
Sample no. (Item no.)	37 (CO18)	38 (CO19)	39 (TO3/SK12)	40 (CO20)	41 (CO21)	42 (TO4)
Photo						

Continued table 3.
Selections

Sample no. (Item no.)	43 (DR4)	44 (CO22)	45 (CO23)	46 (DR5)	47 (CO24)	48 (PO2)
Photo						
Sample no. (Item no.)	49 (TO4/SK13)	50 (CO25)	51 (JK13/PA5)	52 (JK14)	53 (JK15)	54 (SK14)
Photo						
Sample no. (Item no.)	55 (PO3)	56 (JK16/SK15)	57 (DR6)	58 (DR7)		
Photo						

Jackets

The sixteen jackets were analyzed as a follow. Eight silhouettes of the jackets were straight; those have a cute, slightly masculine look with a short length. Another eight silhouettes of the jackets were slightly fitted at the waist as a result of princess-line styling that has a more feminine look. Fabrics consisted of four wool tweeds, two wool plaids, two wool blends, five leathers, two canvases, and one jersey. Colors were six light natural colors, like off-white, cream, beige, two pinks, six green, one yellow, and one blue. The collar designs consisted of six shirts collars, four round necklines, three convertible collars, two hoods, and one mandarin collar. Leather edge bindings were used in necklines, fronts, hems, and sleeve hems. Four jackets had linings made from different patterns, colors, and fabrics than the outer material. Sleeves consisted one raglan sleeve, one kimono sleeve, and fourteen regular set-in sleeves. Cashin's signature toggle closures were used instead of buttons in the most of the jackets. Other trim-

gings included antique gold frog clasps, dog-leash clasps, and industrial zippers in five jackets. Each jacket's analysis is shown below in Table 4.

Table 4.
Jackets

Sample no.	1 (JK1, 1971)	4 (JK2, 1967)	5 (JK3, 1967)	8 (JK4, 1967)
Fabric	Wool tweed	Boiled wool	Wool tweed	Boiled wool
Color	Pale olive & Mixed color	Pale pink	Powder pink	Pale olive
silhouette	Fitted at the waist	Straight	A-line	Slightly fitted at the waist
Details	Princess line jacket Leather Shirts collar Under-collar: leather Princess line	Kimono sleeve jacket Round neckline Neckline, front, hem, sleeve hem: 1 1/4" leather trim Unlined	Princess line jacket Shirts collar Shirts collar w/ a separate stand Under-collar, collar stand, facings: leather	Princess line Unlined Suede: under-collar and collar, front, hem, and sleeve edges Convertible collar
Sample no	9 (JK5, 1971)	12 (JK6, late1960s)	14 (JK7, 1969)	15 (JK8, 1967)
Fabric	Wool plaid	Leather	Wool tweed plaid	Twill knit
Color	Cream & Mixed color	Lime	Cream	Ecru
silhouette	Straight	fitted at the waist	slightly fitted at the waist	Straight
Details	Leather Shirts collar	Princess line Lining: voil	Princess-line jacket Leather edge bindings Lining: cotton plaid Set-in sleeves with dropped shoulder	Convertible collar Corded leather belt Leather: upper-collar, stylized chest flaps, pocket flaps, corded loop
Sample no	27 (JK9, 1967)	29 (JK10, 1969)	32 (JK11, late 1960s)	33 (JK12, 1967)
Fabric	Knobby wool tweed	Wool tweed plaid	Leather	Leather
Color	Black and taupe	Cream & Mixed color		Off-white
silhouette	Straight	Slightly fitted at the waist	Slightly fitted at the waist	Straight
Details	Polished gold shank buttons Convertible collar Leather: front and collar edges, belt, facings, under collar Patch pockets	Princess-line jacket Rolled collar Leather: collars, cuffs, center back and hem facings	Hood Lining: Plaid woven	Mandarin Antique gold frog clasps Lining: Jersey

Sample no	51 (JK13, 1967)	52 (JK14, late1960s)	53 (JK15, late1960s)	56 (JK16, 1968)
Fabric	Leather	Leather	Canvas	Canvas
Color	Beige	Sky blue	Persimmon	Khaki
silhouette	Slightly fitted at the waist	Straight	Straight	Straight
Detail	Raglan sleeves Lining: jersey Convertible collar Front and back yoke-lines, Princess-line 2"slit on the sleeve center line	Metal chain zipper	Knitted hood, sleeves Leather edge bindings	Leather: neckline, front hem, sleeve hem, pockets Industrial zipper Lining: cotton, checked chambray

Skirts

Fifteen skirts were analyzed as a follow. Most were knee-length; only one is just above ankle length. The skirt fabric included five canvases, four wool tweeds, two wool plaids, one leather, one suede, one wool jersey, and one quilted cotton. The silhouettes of skirts consisted of twelve A-line silhouettes, and three straight silhouettes. The skirt designs included two flare skirts with A-line silhouettes, four gathered skirts, one pleated skirt, and one gored skirt. Within the patterned skirts, three skirts were cut on the bias. Cashin signature leather binding was used at the waistline, in waistband, and hem.

Sample no. 1 was cut on bias and sample no.9 included a leather binding. Sample no. 12 was four pieces flared skirt and made from quilted cotton. Sample 21 had a leather binding on the waistline and sample no.22 had a half-lining on back. Sample no. 23 included leather patch strap on front and back. Sample no. 27 had a leather binding and yoke line. Sample no. 29 was a gored skirt and had a leather binding at the waistline. Sample no. 25 included brass toggles and side inseam pockets. Sample no. 34 was a gathered skirt and had center-back pleats. Sample no. 39 had shank buttons and box pleats around front and back side. Sample no. 49 was a parabola skirt and had a leather binding at the waist. Sample no. 54 included pleats at the center front and brass toggles. Each skirt analysis is shown below in Table 5.

Table 5.
Skirts

Sample no	1 (SK1, 1971)	9 (SK2, 1971)	12 (SK3, late1960s)	21 (SK4, 1973)
Fabric	Wool tweed	Wool plaid	Canvas	Wool tweed
Color	Pale olive & Mixed color	Cream & Mixed color	Lime green	Antique gold & Mixed color
silhouette	A-line	Straight	A-line	Slightly A-line

Details	Cut on bias Leather: waistline Cut on bias and gathers at the waist	Sew through plastic buttons Leather binding	3" quilted cotton 4piece flared skirt Leather waistband	Leather binding on the waistline Cut on bias
Sample no	22 (SK5, 1962)	23 (SK6, 1969)	27 (SK7, 1967)	29 (SK8, 1971)
Fabric	Knobby wool tweed	Canvas	Knobby wool tweed	Wool tweed plaid
Color	deep and light olive and fuchsia	Dull goldenrod	black and taupe	cream, navy, deep tan
silhouette	Straight	A-line	Flared A-line skirt	A-line
Details	Half-lined on back	2" leather patch strap on front and back, from belt carrier to hem 59" x 1/2" flat leather belt	Leather bindings at the waist and hem Unlined Yoke lines on the front and back	Gored skirt Leather binding at the waistline Fully-lined Gores: 3 front, 2 back
Sample no	25 (SK9, 1961)	33 (SK10, 1967)	34 (SK11, 1962)	39 (SK12, late1960s)
Fabric	Wool jersey	Leather	Canvas	Wool jersey
Color	Hot pink & Mixed color	Off-white	Persimmon	Dark cream & Mixed color zigzag pattern
silhouette	A-line	A-line	A-line	A-line
Details	Gathers at the front waist Unlined 1" x 7/8" brass toggles on the waistband (2) Side inseam pockets		Gathered skirt Center-back pleat Leather: waistband Centered zipper at the center back with dog leash clasp Side inseam pockets	Pleated skirt Leather: waist binding Unlined Shank button Box pleats around front and back (12)
Sample no	49 (SK13, 1965)	54 (SK14, late1960s)	56 (SK15, 1968)	
Fabric	Canvas	Suede	Canvas	
Color	Sea foam	Washed chartreuse	Khaki	
silhouette	Straight from hip to hem	A-line	A-line	
Details	Parabola skirt Leather binding at the waist Gathers at the waistline Unlined Side leather strap Front hip pockets Parabolic curve in front	Pleats at the center front Brass toggles Unlined Side inseam pockets Hidden opening	Leather patch strap	

Pants

Five pants were analyzed. Four pants were ankle length; one was knee length. The silhouette of the pants was all fitted type. The fabric used included three leathers, one canvas, and one wool plaid. Three pants had brass toggles on left as a double closure. Two pants had leather binding at the waist and waistband. Sample no.14 had brass toggles, a fly-front zipper, and side in-seam pockets. Sample no.15 included a shank button on the left and in-seam pockets on the right. Sample no.24 had brass toggles on the front and a double closure in the front of the pants. Sample no.32 had a fitted silhouette and a leather waistband. Sample no.51 had a fitted, tapered silhouette. Sample no.15 and sample no. 24 included a leather binding. An analysis of each pair of pants is shown below in Table 6.

Table 6.
Pants

Sample no	14 (PA1, 1967)	15 (PA2, 1969)	24 (PA3, 1969)	32 (PA4, late1960s)
Fabric	Leather	Leather	Canvas	wool
Color	Light taupe	Antique gold	Mustard yellow	
silhouette	Fitted	Fitted	Fitted	Fitted
Details	Fully-lined Brass toggles Fly-front zipper Side inseam pockets Seam-lines on lower hip and front	Fully-lined Shank button on left Inseam pocket on the right 1/2" leather binding on waistline	Brass toggles on front Double closure in front Yoke at hipline Leather binding	Half lined Brass toggles Leather waist band Yoke at hipline on front & back
Sample no.	51 (PA5, 1967)			
Fabric	Leather			
Color	Beige			
silhouette	Fitted and tapered			
Details	Half-lined Fly-front zipper			

Tops

Five tops were analyzed. The silhouettes consisted of three straight silhouettes, one A-line silhouette, and one fitted silhouette at the waist silhouette. Fabrics used were three jerseys, one wool-tweed, and one, leather. The necklines and collars included two stand collars, one funnel neck, a boat neckline, and a round neckline. Sleeves styles included one kimono style and four regular set-in sleeves. The leather binding was used in sleeve hems, necklines, front plackets, and hem edges. Sample no.19 style had brass toggles and 10" side-seam slits. Sample no.21 and sample no.39 style included leather binding. Sample no.42 style had kimono sleeves and a stand collar. Sample no.49 style was a jersey with a funnel neck.

Each top is analyzed such as Table 7.

Table 7.
Tops

Sample no.	19 (TO1, 1973)	21 (TO2, late1960s)	39 (TO3, 1977)	42 (TO4, 1965)
Fabric	Leather	Wool tweed	Wool jersey	Jersey
Color	Antique gold	antique gold & Mixed color	dark cream & Mixed color zigzag pattern	Yellow mustard
silhouette	Straight	Slightly A-line	Straight	Fit
Details	Stand collar Fully-lined Right side double welt pocket Brass toggles 10" side-seam slit	Boat neckline Key hole placket Leather binding: neckline, placket, sleeve, hem edges, and double welt pockets	Leather binding	Kimono sleeve Stand collar
Sample no.	49 (T5, 1968)			
Fabric	Jersey			
Color	Sea foam			
silhouette	Straight			
Details	Leather binding around neckline Funnel neck			

Dresses

Seven dresses were analyzed as follows. Silhouettes consisted of four slightly fitted at the waist silhouette, and three A-line silhouettes. Two dresses were above knee, and the others five were ankle length and made by jersey. Dresses fabrics included five jersey, one suede, and one wool blend. The leather or suede bindings were seen on front plackets, front facings or under-collars.

Sample no.30 was made of suede and had in-seam pockets on the front yoke lines. Sample no.35 style had a funnel neck and is unlined. Sample no.36 style was unlined and included short kimono sleeves, and leather binding. Sample no.43 style had a hood and suede bindings. Sample no.46 style included a shirt collar and a flat leather belt. Sample no.57 style was a sleeveless dress and had brass toggles. Sample no.58 style was made of a wool blend and included a convertible collar and polished, gold shank buttons. Each dress is analyzed such as Table 8.

Table 8.
Dresses

Sample no	30 (DR1, 1967)	35 (DR2, 1967)	36 (DR3, 1971)	43 (DR4, 1972)
Fabric	Suede	Jersey	Jersey	Jersey
Color	Butterscotch	Light pumpkin & light avocado stripes	Light mustard	pumpkin
silhouette	A-line	Straight, slightly-fitted at the waist	Slightly-fitted at the waist	A-line
Details	Inseam pockets on the front yoke lines Fully-lined	Funnel neck Unlined Side darts on the front	Round neckline Pewter snaps Short kimono sleeves Unlined Leather binding: neckline, placket side slit, hem edge	Snap buttons Hood Suede binding: front placket and hood edges Unlined Side inseam pockets
Sample no.	46 (DR5, 1972)	57 (DR6, late1960s)	58 (DR7, late1960s)	
Fabric	Jersey	Mohair Jersey	Blend wool	
Color	Intense Coral	Pumpkin	Blend of nutmeg, copper and olive	
silhouette	Slightly A-line	A-line	Straight, slightly-fitted at the waist	
Details	Shirt collar Flat leather belt Under-collar: leather front placket Unlined Side inseam pockets 5/8" x 1" polished gold metal belt holder	Sleeveless dress Brass toggles Round neckline Unlined Suede trim Side inseam pockets	Convertible collar Polished, gold shank buttons Fully-lined Patch pockets Collar stand, under and upper collars: leather 57 1/2" x 1/2" corded leather belt	

Coats

The coat item was the most many number as twenty-four, and characteristics of Cashin's design were seen here the more than in the other garments. Big pockets, loose silhouettes, belt-buckles, and leather patching were functional elements used for ease of activity.

The length of coats consisted of ten knee lengths, six thigh-lengths, two above ankle lengths, and seven mid-calf lengths. Two were long coats with cape. Seventeen coat silhouettes were roomy A-line styling, while the remaining consisted of three straight silhouettes, four slightly A-line silhouettes. The fabrics used six canvases, four leather, two suede, two-wool plaid, five wool tweed, four other wools, one fake fur, and one jersey. Leather and suede were used in part of binding or in patches, with the

leather binding seen at center-front, hems, sleeve, back slits, collars, pocket edges, under collars, and collar stands. Collar and neck line design included six convertible collars, five shirts collars, three stand collars, three notched collars, two rolled collars, two hoods, one round neckline and one v-neckline. One coat had cape. The material of lining used cotton, jersey, nutmeg, and fake fur. Each coat is analyzed such as a table 9.

Table 9.
Coats

Sample no	2 (CO1, 1971)	3 (CO2, 1964)	6 (CO3, 1972)	7 (CO4, 1973)
Fabric	Wool tweed	Self-striped wool jersey	Wool tweed	Suede
Color	Pale olive & Mixed color	Deep cream	Fuchsia & Mixed color	Mustard
silhouette	A-line	A-line	A-line	A-line
Details	Brass toggles Leather binding Unlined Raglan sleeves Shirts collar Under-collar, collar stand: leather Patch pockets	Blue grey snaps Convertible collar Yoke Fully-lined sleeve and yoke only Square sleeves 1" leather trim	Unlined Brass toggles Convertible collar Square sleeves Leather: welt pockets and collar, front, hem, sleeve edges	Fully-lined V-neckline Square sleeves Separate facings Patch pockets Brass toggles
Sample no.	10 (CO 5, 1969)	11 (CO 6, late1960s)	13 (CO 7, 1969)	16 (CO 8, 1969)
Fabric	Tweed	Canvas/Leather	Canvas	Leather
Color	Mustard	Burnt sienna	pale kaki	Chartreuse
silhouette	Slightly fitted at the waist	Slightly A-line	A-line	A-line
Details	Fully-lined Sleeves slit Leather binding Golden shank button	Fake fur lining Under collar: leather Leather binding Industrial zipper Clutch	Unlined Shiny brass buttons Convertible collar Under-collar: leather Raglan sleeves 3/8" leather binding	Fully-lined Belt-buckles Kimono sleeves Convertible collar 3 1/2" sleeve cuffs
Sample no	18 (CO9, 1968)	20 (CO 10, 1973)	22 (CO 11, 1962)	23 (CO 12, 1969)
Fabric	Leather	Cashmere/leather	Knobby wool tweed	Canvas
Color	Puppy	Light Pink	Fuchsia & Mixed color	Y-dull g
silhouette	Slightly A-line	A-line	Straight	Straight
Details	Dress type coat Lining: jersey Stand collar Shank buttons	Unlined Leather binding Belt Raglan sleeves	Noh coat Unlined Chain hat-pin at neck Suede binding:	Stand collar Collar facing: fake fur Lining: fake fur

	Leather binding: collar, front, sleeve, pocket flap edges	Upper collar: leather Pleats: Center back	sleeve, hem, neckline, front edges, side seams 22" deep slit on the side seams	Leather belt Brass grommets for drawstrings around the neck & at front waist
Sample no	25 (CO 13, late1960s)	26 (CO 14, late1960s)	28 (CO 15, late1960s)	31 (CO 16, 1977)
Fabric	Leather	Wool/leather	Canvas /leather	Wool tweed
Color	Bright orange	Almond	D.blue	Mustard & Mixed color
silhouette	A-line	A-line	A-line	A-line
Details	Kimono sleeve Shirt collar Vertical pockets Lining: cotton Polished gold shank buttons zippers on pockets	Yoke on bust level on front(function as pocket flap) & backside Shank button Leather Collar Leather facing: cuff Leather strap	Lining: Beige/cream Back big pocket	Hood Kimono sleeves Brass toggles Lining: nutmeg Suede: pocket, wallet, front and hood bindings, and front, sleeve and hood facings
Sample no.	34 (CO 17, 1962)	37 (CO18, 1970)	38 (CO 19, 1976)	40 (CO 20, 1976)
Fabric	Canvas	Heavy cotton	Suede	Wool plaid
Color	Persimmon	Taupe and off-white jacquard	Teddy-Bear brown	Deep rose red & Mixed color
silhouette	A-line	A-line	A-line	Slightly A-line
Details	Raccoon collar Fake fur: lining Flat leather strap Patch pockets Leather binding: sleeve, collar, hem, front edges	Convertible collar Leather: collar, front facing, cuffs, patches and front, hem, pleat edges Unlined Sew-through buttons	Hooded jacket Drawstring with pouch on the right side Square sleeves	Convertible collar Under-collar: suede Suede: under-collar, front facing (cape), pocket facing, edges Unlined Gold shank buttons
Sample no.	41 (CO 21, 1973)	44 (CO 22, 1963)	45 (CO 23, 1966)	47 (CO 24, 1975)
Fabric	Knobby mohair plaid Suede	Fake fur/Leather/knit	Lamb's wool and mohair Leather	Wool plaid
Color	Dusty rose	Black	Black	violet, forest green, turquoise, cream
silhouette	Slightly A-line	A-line	A-line	Slightly fitted at the waist
Details	Suede: lower panels, edges, belt Unlined	Rolled collar Leather: pocket welts, clasp attachments,	Leather: front, sleeve, hem edges and straps Leather straps on the	Leather facings Leather: front, hem and armhole facings

	Raglan sleeves Notched collar Square-shaped feature on the yoke on the back	sleeve hems, hem Knit: collar & front placket Raglan sleeves Dog leash clasps	neck Rolled collar Kimono sleeves Side inseam pockets	Unlined Fringed cape collar Cape connected at the neckline with gathers Strap ties at the neck & waist
Sample no.	50 (CO 25, 1976)			
Fabric	Leather			
Color	Beige			
silhouette	A-line			
Details	Brass toggle Convertible collar Square sleeves Accordion pockets with edge stitches Front and back yoke			

Ponchos & Cape

Other outerwear consisted of two ponchos and one cape. These were examples Cashin's combination of practicality and creativity that not only function well, but were also multicultural. The silhouette of cape was A-line. The fabrics used include two of wool plaids, and one of leather. The collars included a hood, a convertible collar, a shawl collar. These all had leather trimming, and toggle closures. Sample no.17 had a hood, five brass toggles, and a leather binding. Sample no.48 included a convertible collar and vertical single welt pockets. Sample no.55 style had a shawl collar and a lining made with fake fur. Each coat is analyzed such as a table 10.

Table 10.
Ponchos & Cape

Sample no.	17(PO1, 1969)	48(PO2, 1969)	55(PO3, late1960s)
Fabric	Wool plaid	Wool tweed	Leather
Color	Marine blue & Mixed color	Navy & Mixed color	Dark taupe
silhouette	Stright		Flared
Details	Hooded poncho Double welt Leather binding Unlined Brass toggles	Convertible collar Vertical single welt pockets Leather: collar, pocket, front and hem edges Brass toggles	Raccoon collar Lining: fake fur Strap ties at the empire line, emerging from strap slits

Conclusions

After extensive study, evaluation and analysis of the 76 garments selected from Bonnie Cashin's work from the University of Cincinnati collection for this analysis exposes the legacy of Cashin's functional, practical modern American sportswear design details. It also reveals the significant and often overlooked value of Bonnie Cashin's contribution in establishing American sportswear and to her contributions within the history of modern American sportswear design.

Findings of this study show that Bonnie Cashin specialized in simplicity and innovative use of fabrics. Her fabric choices in her outerwear designs resulted in canvas raincoats, leather coats, and woolen ponchos being accepted as fashion. Her unique creations range from tweed suits to simple, hooded, sheath jersey knit dresses. She emphasized function and comfort above all and felt that a good design must also be a practical design. The characteristics of Bonnie Cashin's design signatures observed in this study are analyzed as follows:

The Poncho

Bonnie Cashin is well known for introducing the poncho, her great classic shape. Driving her convertible car, Bonnie frequently used a blanket to protect herself from the cold wind. Her creative mind immediately seized on the idea of cutting a hole in the blanket, pulling it over her head, and fastening it under her arms with toggles, thereby inventing her own style of poncho in the process. She was intrigued not only by the utilitarian possibilities of the poncho but also the versatility as an outer garment and a fashionable article of apparel. Bonnie transformed the poncho into high fashion with the use of beautiful textiles and basic craftsmanship. She experimented with tweeds, knits, leather and wool to create these unique ponchos. They had leather trim, fringe and toggle closings. The poncho was timeless, basic, functional, and multi-cultural and perfectly illustrated Cashin's combination of practicality and creativity.

Coats

Bonnie Cashin's coats were unique and of particular interest to her. They were big, loose, and dartless, with squared, kimono, or raglan sleeves. They had pockets large enough and/or deep enough, to hold bigger articles. Their loose-fit allowed other layers of clothing to fit comfortably underneath. Cashin used unusual linings for her coats, including alpaca and fake fur. The combination of the texture of leather or suede with tweeds or mohair was another of her trademarks. As with her other garments, she designed her coats to be lightweight, but also climate-protective, representing her philosophy that practical function was an integral part of design.

Toggle Closures

Cashin designed her own hardware, notably the dog leash toggles and buckles that fasten many of her costumes. The use of hardware had part of its origin in her dissatisfaction with both the craftsmanship

and limited selection of buttons on 7th Avenue. The result was that there were not a lot of buttons on her clothes; the emphasis was on ties and toggles. Struggling to find an effective clasp for a handbag she was designing for Coach in 1962, Cashin remembered the fastening on her convertible when she put the top down. She quickly recognized that these same toggles on her car could be used on her purses and clothing. The hardware fastenings on luggage fascinated her as did the various components of a dog leash including the chain links and the toggle. She is widely recognized today for the combination of rough textiles and heavy hardware.

Cut and Construction

Cashin's construction methods were classic and clean and demonstrated practicality. She believed in simplicity, using as few darts and seams as possible. She liked to use simple cuts, pure silhouettes, geometrical styles, and fluid lines. Her ponchos were without shoulder seams and illustrate clearly her two dimensional approach to design. Her Patch pockets were added from the inside with only the stitching on the outside so that the outline of the pocket became an integrated aspect of the design itself. This simple but creative pocket application became another characteristic of a Bonnie Cashin design. She selected lush and thick fabrics for her designs, yet still kept her construction simple by finishing exterior edges with leather or suede bindings. Interior seams were finished with flat-felled seams to eliminate bulk in joining thick fabrics. These construction techniques made even her unlined garments appear perfectly smooth. She allowed the material to hang naturally, and she demanding the best match between textile and silhouette, as well as between textile and machinery.

Fabric and Color

Bonnie Cashin had a lifelong fascination with color and the way colors could be mixed and integrated into her trademark designs. Her color combinations became a feast for the eyes when mixed within fabrics including suede, leather, knits, mohair, tweeds, and canvas, which she utilized in various combinations. Accents, like leather or suede trim, complement or perfectly match colors in her fabrics. This affinity for using color creatively became an important characteristic of Bonnie Cashin's designs. Over three decades she used a symphony of colors, thinking in such hues as spring grass green, marigold, espresso brown, persimmon, lipstick pink, celery, dusty rose, cocoa, and military blue. Even when she used leather as her primary fabric rather than an accent trim, she dyed it bright colors like orange, hot pinks, and turquoise, turning it into high fashion. For Cashin the vibrantly colored fabrics themselves were the focus of the design along with the craftsmanship in the construction of the garments. She exhibited a great appreciation for the basic nature of the textiles, refusing to try to make the material conform to the design

This research, in conjunction with the findings from examining Cashin's patterns and design details, gives a strong insight into both the innovation and the execution of Bonnie Cashin's design work. Cashin's place in American fashion design history warrants further analysis, for though there has been

great amounts of published research on other, less influential, American designers, Cashin, seems to have been mostly ignored. Cashin was considered 20 years ahead of her time by her peers. She introduced the concepts of layering and mix-and-match garments into fashion lexicon, and helped to lay the very foundation of modern sportswear as we know it today. Despite her innovations, publications with respect to her profound influence on contemporary American sportswear remain scarce. To help rectify this injustice, the examination of these 76 pieces from the University of Cincinnati's private Cashin Collection brings to light Bonnie Cashin's creative design and what she represented in the development of American sportswear in the 20th century.

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Bonnie Cashin workroom photographs by Injoo Kim, University of Cincinnati Archives.