Haute Culture: Coiffures de Elegance!

Throughout history, people have worn their hair in a wide variety of styles, largely determined by the fashions of the culture they live in. Hairstyles are markers and signifiers of social class, age, marital status, racial identification, political beliefs and attitudes about gender. In many cultures, often for religious reasons, women's hair is covered while in public, and in some, such as Haredi Judaism or European Orthodox communities, women's hair is shaved or cut very short, and covered with wigs.

At most times in most cultures, men have worn their hair in styles that are different from women's. During most periods in human history when men and women wore similar hairstyles, as in the 1920s and 1960s, it has generated significant social concern.

During the First World War, women around the world started to shift to shorter hairstyles that were easier to manage. In the 1920s, women started for the first time to bob, shingle and crop their hair, often covering it with small head-hugging cloche hats. In Korea, the bob was called tanbal. Women began marcelling their hair, creating deep waves in it using heated scissor irons. Durable permanent waving became popular also in this period: it was an expensive, uncomfortable and time-consuming process, in which the hair was put in curlers and inserted into a steam or dry heat machine.

During the 1930s, women began to wear their hair slightly longer, in pageboys, bobs or waves and curls. During this period, Western men began to wear their hair in ways popularized by movie stars such as Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Rudolph Valentino. Men wore their hair short, and either parted on the side or in the middle, or combed straight back, and used pomade, creams and tonics to keep their hair in place. At the beginning of the Second World War and for some time afterwards, men's haircuts grew shorter, mimicking the military crew cut. [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hairstyle]























