Life*style*

AMERICAN APPAREL

Students express their values, beliefs through fashion by finding confidence, personal voice, breaking social norms

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At the beginning of every school year, many new students walk into classes, scanning the room for anyone they might know or want to know. Clothing and appearance can influence these first impressions. At Paly, like at most schools, students have a story intertwined in all that thread.

According to The Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, the term "enclothed cognition" illustrates the psychological impacts that clothes have on both people. Clothing affects human cognition, the process of acquiring an understanding through thought and experience.

In simpler terms, what people wear can influence how they feel and think. For example, wearing a suit can make someone feel more formal and more confident.

Regardless of how clothing makes a person feel, sophomore Kae Huang said a person's clothing also sends a message to others since it's one of the most important factors in regards to first impressions.

"Style is important because that's how people see you at first, and it's your way of expressing yourself," Huang said. "It's not that easy to talk to everyone, so style is (how you make) a good first impression."

Senior Kyle Vetter said style also reflects someone's personality and can tell a story of who they are to others. While styles are about the individual, there are many factors that influence these styles, including culture, sports and the environment.

Vetter said his individual, androgynous style takes inspiration from 1970s rockstar David Bowie.

"He was very big into counterculture, and by wearing similar styles to his, I feel a lot more connected to that idea," Vetter said. "Aside from our personal enjoyment, (style) is also indicative of our values and beliefs."

Vetter said many students who express themselves through clothing find the majority of their clothing through thrifting.

However, some students, such as freshman Maggie Crady, take it a step further and upcycle thrifted clothes, creatively reusing materials to give it new use.

"I don't buy clothes other than thrifting and sewing my own clothes," Crady said. "While I don't usually (sew) full articles of clothing, I'll usually upcycle or crop them."

Huang said he shares a similar passion, and said he enjoyed making many of his outfits.

"I've made bags, and I've combined pants and added unique pockets and designs, too," Huang said.

At the end of the day, no matter where students get their outfits or how they choose to appear, those like senior and cross country runner Allie Difede find styles that make them feel self-assured. Difede said her outfits come from clothing articles that give her confidence.

"My style is a mix of '90s fashion and early 2000s as well as current fashion trends," Difede said. "These outfits are important to me because it makes me more confident in myself, and having confidence in yourself helps you in other aspects of your life."

Sophomore Stefan Sochacki said confidence and comfort are common themes in students' diverse styles. He also said some might describe his style as 'beach-boy preppy.' Sochacki wears flip flops as often as he can, and while some might think it goes against social norms and fashion, Sochacki said he doesn't care how others label his style. He wears what he feels good in.

"I dress up in what feels most comfortable to me and what I think looks good," Sochacki said. "I don't care what people think about me. I'm just wearing what I want to wear."

Whether people are dressing for themselves or others, first impressions are made.

"Everything has a meaning behind it, and it has a way of expressing yourself," Huang said. "Wear what you want to wear, and as long as you're happy with what you wear, that's all that matters."

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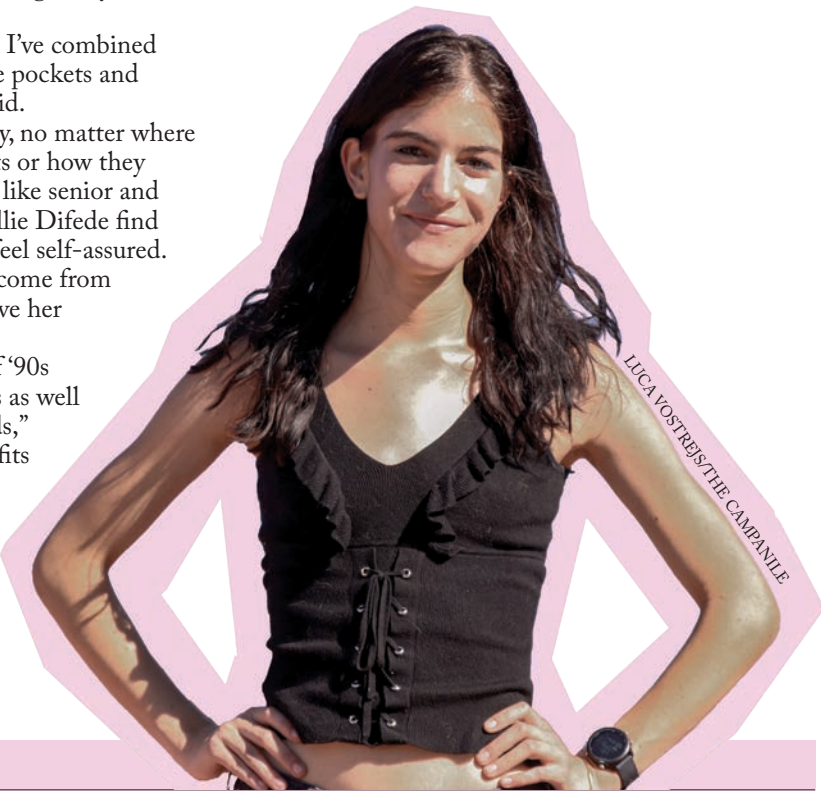
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Barbenheimer garners world-wide attention, grows in popularity among students

Blockbuster films 'Barbie,' 'Oppenheimer' gain pop culture recognition, promote discussion of contemporary issues with memorable story-telling, visuals

Cynthia Huang
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Bright pinks and brooding black hues blur throughout the cluster of people in the movie theater lobby. While the lines at the concession stands seem familiar, the bizarre hot pink and dark black clothing choices many of the movie-goers wear are not.

However, the jarring contrast is welcoming and expected. The rise of the pop culture statement "Barbenheimer," a combination of the names of the blockbusters "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer," used to describe their same-day release, shook the movie industry when both movies hit theaters on July 21. According to "Insider," the "#Barbenheimer" hashtag has over 100 million views on TikTok.

Thousands of people posted their cinema experience online and thousands more jumped onto the trend of watching them together as a double-feature and dressing up in the respective themes of "Barbie" or "Oppenheimer."

Sophomore Maeve Williams, who dressed up for "Barbie" and also encouraged her family to do so, said the success of the two films stems from their differences.

"They were two opposites. There's this super cool, dark, extreme action movie and then this super cute, Barbie, pink movie," Williams said.

"Barbie," a live-action Universal film directed by Greta Gerwig, features Barbie and Ken's eye-opening experience in the real world, far from Barbie Land.

On the other hand, "Oppenheimer," a Universal Studios biographical thriller film directed by Christopher Nolan, recounts physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer's involvement in the Manhattan Project and the creation of the atomic bomb during World War Two.

Senior Johan Garcia said "Barbie" took off because of how fun the movie was to watch and the influence of the Barbenheimer meme.
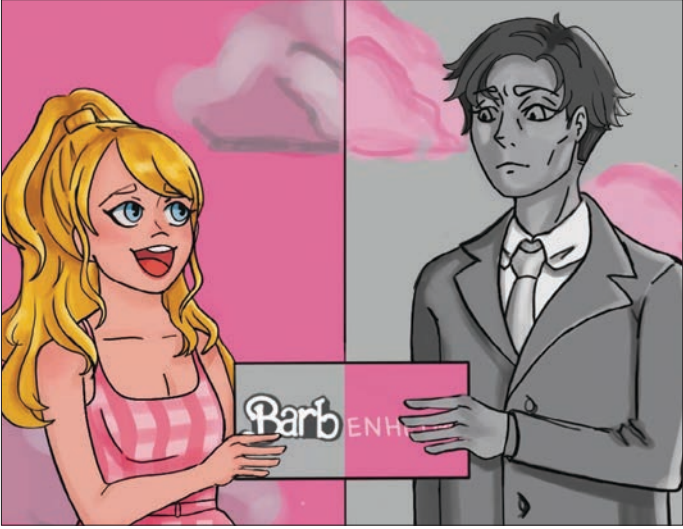
ART BY SOPHIA KELLY

"People just thought it was funny," Garcia said. "Even the actors started taking note of what people were doing. I saw pictures on Twitter where Greta Gerwig and Margot Robbie were buying tickets for 'Oppenheimer.'"

Junior Aiden Chen said the success of Barbenheimer led many people to watch both films, rather than just one of them.

"Social media and online presence allows for greater advertising and a bunch of people went to go not only watch either one, but both at the same time," Chen said.

Williams said she liked that both films targeted different contemporary issues, with "Barbie" touching on feminism and the idea of accepting oneself despite imperfections, and "Oppenheimer" recounting WWII's Hiroshima bombing and the Manhattan Project.

"I appreciated seeing that contrast but also how both directors each interpreted those world issues," Williams said. "It was controversial. It was great. So many people had so many opinions about it."

Garcia also said the Barbenheimer trend encouraged many to watch the movies while dressed accordingly, choosing bright, fuschia colors for "Barbie" and all-black formal wear for "Oppenheimer." As the trend of blending the films together started to gain traction, people posted their Barbenheimer viewing experiences at the cinema and their own fan creations of the meme online.

"I saw people dressing up and having one outfit for 'Barbie' and then another for 'Oppenheimer,'" Garcia said. "When I went to see the movie, I saw people dressed in pink."

Following the success of Barbenheimer, where "Barbie" received an 88% critics score on Rotten Tomatoes and "Oppenheimer" a 93%, "Barbie" became the highest-grossing domestic film for Warner Bros. "Oppenheimer" had the second highest opening domestic box office of all time without ever achieving first place in the weekend box office results.

Sophomore Joy Tan said "Barbie" was a memorable watch because of how touching the film was.

"I did cry a little bit, and I don't usually cry during movies," Tan said. "No one really expected it to have such a deep meaning. Everyone thought it would just be another one of those feel-good shows. But instead, it really told a story that isn't seen in many other movies."

Similarly, Freshman Paul Wang said he enjoyed the writing and music of "Oppenheimer."

"I feel like 'Oppenheimer' was really emotional. Especially with the nuclear concerns and scenes where there's insanely fast foot tapping. It just built up a lot of suspense," Wang said.

"I love both of them, honestly," Williams said. "I love the way the storytelling happened, and seeing how certain things were executed. I love seeing the characters build all of it. I don't have any criticisms on either end."

Garcia said he enjoyed the visuals of "Barbie."

"It went all out with the costumes, all the hair and makeup, and it was pretty funny too," Garcia said. "I wouldn't be surprised if this movie got nominated for a few Oscars next year."