



FanMail by TLC

the new

millennium bug





The early 2000s fashion has made a comeback in recent times with a new twist

Story by Cecilia Wang | Photography by Misael Cruz

After 20 years, Y2K fashion is back but with new flair. Y2K fashion has been modernized to fit today's day and age where people are pulling inspiration from the past and adding their "za."

Lingerie tops are being worn as statement pieces and fanny packs are worn just about everywhere but the waist. Women can be seen wearing large bright patterns, baby tees and high-waisted jeans while carrying baguette bags and wearing acrylic jewelry. Men who wear this style use polo shirts with popped collars, puffy skate shoes, Ed Hardy shirts, cargo pants and belt buckles sporting their names.

Though the community is not fully credited, Y2K's aesthetic roots can be traced back to Black street culture. This trend was originally introduced to mainstream media by the iconic group Destiny's Child. Other Black artists who helped start this trend include Jay-Z, Janet Jackson, Nas, Nelly, Missy Elliot and TLC. From there, other celebrities such as Britney Spears, Nichole Richie and Paris Hilton embraced this style and helped make it "vogue." Movies and TV shows such as "Malcolm in the Middle," "Mean Girls," "Clueless" and "Freaky Friday" were all flaunting this style pattern. Even popular kids' toys such as Bratz dolls were influenced by this. It's not new that many trends are created by POC but POC don't always get the praise they deserve.

Rachel Nevarez, a fashion professor at Fullerton College, goes more in depth about the huge influence music has on clothing trends.

She explains rap artists were the ones who wore bucket hats, baggy pants with crop tops and acrylic jewelry. Many artists showed their unique ways of styling and millions of fans wanted to be like them, so they started dressing like them. With the Y2K coming to light again, it has some old nostalgia but also, a new look in the styles. The fashion trend has brought people together through childhood memories.

Like history, fashion also tends to repeat itself. With the help of social media, influencers with a massive following are starting to accelerate this cycle. TikTok influencers such as @lindiann, @styledbysoleil, @mmivia and @virghoexoxo are creating videos where they show off their pieces of clothing and how to wear this style. Many of their TikTok videos received views ranging from 5,000 all the way up to more than 7 million views.

"It's not about what's new, it's what's forgotten," Nevarez says.

A fashion student at Fullerton College, Alexandra Cadena, says that this Y2K style gives those who were in their preteen and teenage years the feeling of nostalgia. "I used to go to the thrift store and sew stripe look on the pants," says Cadena.

That feeling is what brought back accessories such as butterfly clips, bucket hats, low rise jeans, trucker hats and beaded necklaces. Breaking norms and expressing yourself in bright and head-turning clothing has always been part of the Y2K aesthetic. While we may be in a different decade, these clothes will make people say again, "That's hot." ❖

◀ "I'm inspired by celebrity streetwear and music videos from the early 2000s, yuh. I feel good looking good," says Hannah Nguyen, a former Fullerton College student.

► Hannah Nguyen carries her Game Boy Advance SP around as an accessory even though she doesn't play it anymore.

◀ "It's hard to dress the way you want to nowadays because of the male gaze, but I just do me," says Brittany Lopez.

► Brittany Lopez, a Fullerton College student wears her strawberry ice cream cone hair clip to match her pink shirt.

▲ "I love Tom Penny and ska, when I'm not busy looking like Tom Penny, I'm making music," says Collin Mayeda, Fullerton College transfer student.