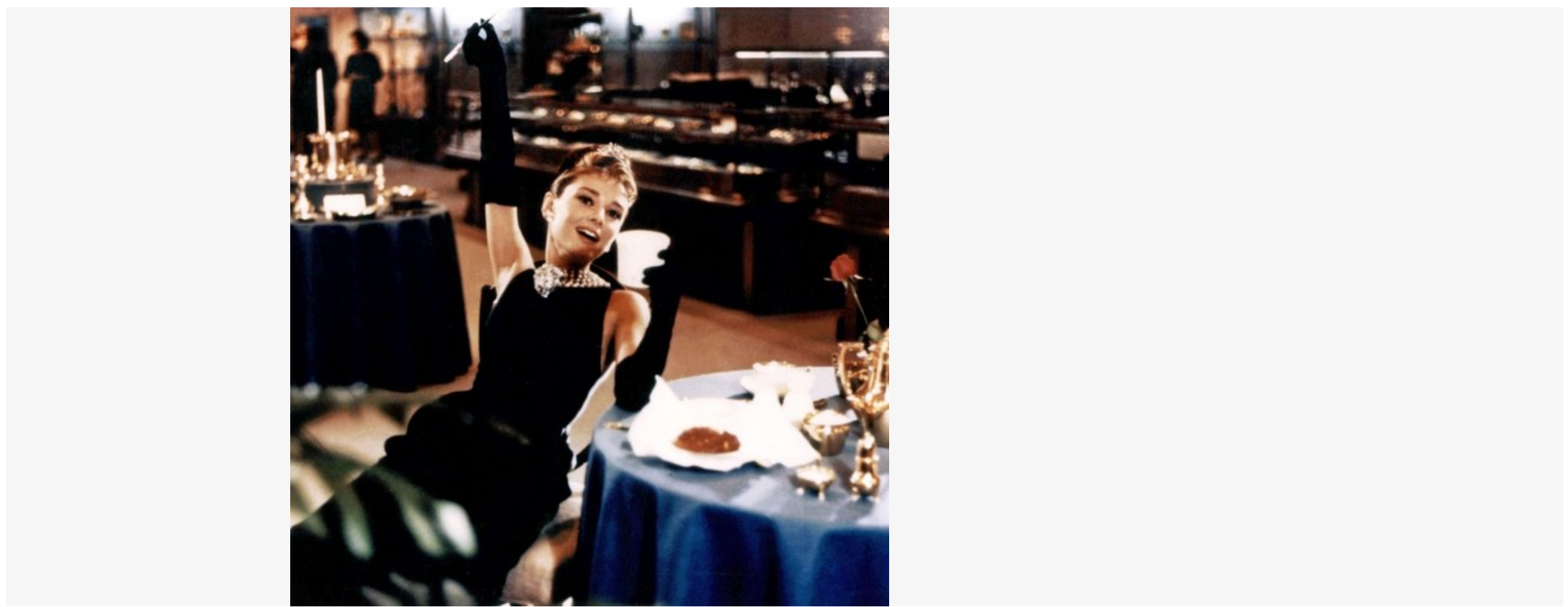


The Fashion Behind Breakfast at Tiffany's

Written By Manahil Munim



Perhaps the most influential film to combine cinema with fashion, *Breakfast at Tiffany's* produced multiple illustrious cinematic fashion moments. An alluring heroine living in New York City in the 60s, protagonist Holly was artfully established through style. While Marilyn Monroe was initially set to fill the role, the part was eventually passed on to Audrey Hepburn, who embodied the character effortlessly and established the 'little black dress' as a style icon.



"I should be a stylish Holly Golightly. Even if that's all I can contribute"

The opening scene introduces Holly as she steps out of a bright yellow taxi at dawn, just outside of the Fifth Avenue Tiffany & Co. store. Dressed in a sleeveless black Givenchy ball gown, Holly glides up to the lavishly decorated display windows with a coffee and a croissant in hand. Her ensemble is elevated with pearls, oversized black sunglasses, satin gloves, and a mini tiara, as though part of her usual morning routine. Blonde-streaked hair meanwhile distance Hepburn from her prior "primmer" look. Endlessly replicated and parodied in pop-culture, that scene and dress transcended the medium as a symbol of elegance.

Holly was pictured in many monochrome black dresses styled differently throughout the film, yet only two black dresses were designed. The dresses were tailor-made for Hepburn by Hubert de Givenchy, who had previously dressed her for the film *Sabrina*. Hepburn quickly became Givenchy's muse, and their relationship commenced a unique connection between celebrities and designers. The first iteration of the black dress was knee-length, and deemed too short for the film. It was later redesigned to be floor length by the film's costume designer Edith Head.



It was also Head who designed Holly's most vulnerable outfit, stripped back from the guise of glamour in a grey sweatshirt, jeans and ballet flats. As Hepburn puts it, "Every woman is an actress in a Paris gown", even when having breakfast in the clothes from the night before.

Currently only three copies of the dress exist – one at the Givenchy atelier, another at the Costume Museum in Madrid, while the third was auctioned at Christie's in 2006 for \$920,000.

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