

# Put A BOW On It: Unravelling Coquette Core

*To embrace or not to embrace? Angelina Mable talks femininity, childhood and controversy in the societal and cultural coding of the new 'it' aesthetic.*



Photography by Isla McCormack

Her designs take the bow from the classic accessory to a bold statement piece. Another high fashion brand that inspired this trend is the resurgence of Miu Miu and their collection of ballet flats, which ties into the 'ballet-core' trend. Social media makes high fashion accessible with influencers showing their audiences how to get the look on a budget; for example, adding craft store ribbons into your hairstyle or adding lace embellishments to your clothes. They also provide a constant stream of inspiration with daily outfit videos, lifestyle vlogs, and trends that reference the aesthetic. Social media allows users to put their own spin on popular trends and helps formulate new trends under the same umbrella.

Many praise the rise of hyper-feminine style for allowing women to embrace girlhood again by dressing in feminine

**C**oquette-core, the Internet's new favourite aesthetic, is characterised by its ultra-romantic and hyper-feminine style. The trend embraces bows, lace, frills and all things girly and whimsical. The word 'coquette' is simply defined as a woman who flirts, the style references this in its playfulness and use of classic feminine motifs. Like many internet-born aesthetics, it draws elements from various styles like 'ballet-core' and other 'soft-girl' inspired aesthetics.

Historically, the coquette look draws influences from the Regency period but is also very inspired by 'Lolita' fashion, which is often deemed controversial based on its origins. Like coquette-core, the 'Lolita' aesthetic has flirtatious and girly characteristics but it has been credited with glamorising the sexualisation of young girls due to the source material being Vladimir Nabokov's 1955 novel *Lolita*. As trends change, we find that many current aesthetics

are just re-iterations of previous styles. For example, many of the aesthetics that fall under the umbrella of coquette-core were heavily popularised on Tumblr in the 2010s. Many popular Tumblr-born aesthetics were also quite controversial in the communities that they created. An example of this is the 'waif' aesthetic and the birth of pro-Ana content on the platform. It romanticises eating disorders, drug use, and mental illness in its influences of the 1990s supermodels, *The Virgin Suicides*, and toxic diet culture. It's quite common for popular internet trends to have a dark side that strays away from their positive intention. Social media is credited with the rise of many trends and their spread to the masses. However, many fashion trends are started with high fashion brands and diffused through social media. Designer Sandy Liang is known for her use of bows by making them the focal point of her collections, like her SS24 runway.

motifs like lace, bows, and baby pink. It's a common experience amongst young women that - at some point - we begin to resent everything seen as hyper-feminine and hate the idea of being seen as a 'girly-girl'. The idea of being 'not like other girls' was praised while those 'other girls' were seen as basic, vain, and unserious. This return to hyper-feminine fashion allows us to reclaim our childhoods and embrace the whimsical playfulness of being a 'girly-girl' once again. Last year saw the rise of trends based around girlhood from internet terms like 'girl-dinner,' the impact of Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* movie, to a slew of high-fashion trends embracing femininity. Heading into 2024, coquette-core is predicted to be one of the most popular trends due to how easy it is to participate in reclaiming femininity by simply 'putting a bow on it'.

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