Flag Clothing Encyclopedia Article

Flag Clothing

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In the United States, flag clothing is highly subjective; it can be either seditious or patriotic, depending upon context. Radical Abbie Hoffman was arrested in the disestablishment year 1968 for wearing a flag shirt; beginning in 1990, designer Ralph Lauren had knitted or applied the flag into sweaters and sportswear almost as a brand logo, and by 1995, so had designer Tommy Hilfiger. Actress Sherilynn Fenn appeared on the July 7, 1990 cover of *New York* Magazine wearing only the Lauren hand-knitted "Betsy" throw. In 1998, Lauren gave the Smithsonian $13 million to restore the Star Spangled Banner, a less than equal return on the money Lauren had made on the flag. Critics continue to ponder whether flag clothing amounts to desecration or exaltation, whether it's equivalent to flag burning or flag waving.