



Olivier Ponsonnet – Opal Child

High Fashion

The Islands of the Rockery consist of close-knit communities with limited access to new resources. Fashion is driven by two things - local culture and 'Found Fashion', those items found out in the clouds and mists, from who-knows-where, brought to the dock-sides of Anchor. As such, changes in fashion are dramatic but rare. All fashion has, at some point or another, started out as Found Fashion.

Current fashion in the capital city of Anchor takes inspiration from the Regency and Romantic era through to the Victorian (1800-1860, before cages and bustles). Citizens and Islanders in particular favour the stripes and checked waistcoats of that period, as well as high-waist trousers and dresses. Trousers and skirts or gowns can be worn by either gender, according to personal taste.

Due to their rarity, metal and wood have been adopted as status symbols. The remaining populace make do with plain fabrics, using shells or nuts for buttons and

embellishments. Woven bands and a slightly militaristic styling add panache for those wanting to show off their taste, or lack of it. The constant wind and frequent wet weather means it is rare to find a Citizen or Islander without a hat or headgear of some sort, often using ties to secure them in the event of a squall.

Islanders (those living on islands other than Anchor) modify their dress dependent upon their occupation and have less access to the fine fabrics of the capital, choosing linens and cottons over fine silks - but what they lack in richness they make up for in ingenuity and practicality.

Servants of the Church of the Anchorer follow fashion in whatever way they deem appropriate, but they are easily picked out of a crowd by their traditional hooded cowls. The clergy wear brown hoods, the Inquisition wear black and the Anchorer Knights wear white. The Knights also wear pauldrons, with metal pauldrons denoting particular seniority in the ranks.

The latest Found Fashion includes inspiration taken from images of 1930s China, full length qipaos for men and women; knot-work buttons; asymmetric closures and floral elements. The avant-garde set may go for the whole look while many existing clothing, e.g. in a Spencer jacket or the ever-present waistcoat.



Changpao (R) and Cheongsam (L)



Illan Rivière (Skydancer - Everything's decoration)

often bare their midriffs or chests,

Skydancers, an elusive people who travel between islands, buck the trends. As they trade for everything, they make do with what they can, wearing what they own in a riot of colours and patterns. They favour loose wide skirts or wide-legged trousers rather than the slimmer sorts favoured in Anchor. As they also have access to metal, they flaunt it with their jewellery and accessories, such as in Kuchi style bracelets and necklaces. Items are displayed with pride on flamboyant but practical belts to assert status. Headgear is equally flamboyant. Inspiration can be taken from modern tribal belly-dance styles, mixed with European folk trends and standard Anchor fashion. While modern belly-dancers

Technology: There is no black-powder or gunpowder in Anchor and guns do not exist. There are some weapons and armour but, as well as being strictly licensed by the Bureaucracy, these are highly treasured and have often been handed down through generations.

Buildings are made with rock and a type of incredibly fast-growing bamboo, reserving wood for the rich or for certain highly expensive skyships. With space at such a premium, great revolving farms of bamboo have been built to increase yields and roof gardens are common. Skyships are the main form of transport between islands, kept aloft with large canvas wings and bags filled with flammable gas or structures to cage 'flight-rock' - floating rocks that are 'charged' by static current or electric eels.

Music: The music of the floating city of Anchor takes its inspiration from classical music of the 1800s and traditional West European folk songs. The Skydancers, by contrast, prefer improvised music - inspired by East European, Arabic and fusion styles, with a focus on drums.

In the last 10 years a number of Phonographs have been found on outlying rocks, these rare devices command a high price in the right circles. Streetmusic (*Blues*) has found its way to Anchor, offering a new sound and a new instrument - the guitar. Considered the music of the dock-sides, it has not yet widely spread amongst the higher echelons of society and, in some circles, is considered to be attached to unsavoury elements or political dissidents.



Harding Fiddle. Photo Laila Durán

Food: Most animal products are acquired from sea-life, insects, flying animals, or the occasional monkey. Staples include rice, barley, quinoa, and cassava, supplemented with vine fruit and tubers as well as a vast array of locally grown mushrooms. Herbs and spices are commonly added to provide variation to the meal and every citizen will have their own herb wall to pick from. Chillies are particularly common and richer citizens will grow tubers such as horseradish, ginger, Jerusalem artichoke, and turmeric, while honey provides sweetness. In the height of summer, when Anchor is above the cloud-deck, fresh water is scarce and every drop is carefully weighed.

Further images: <http://pinterest.com/midnightoak/tales-out-of-anchor/>