



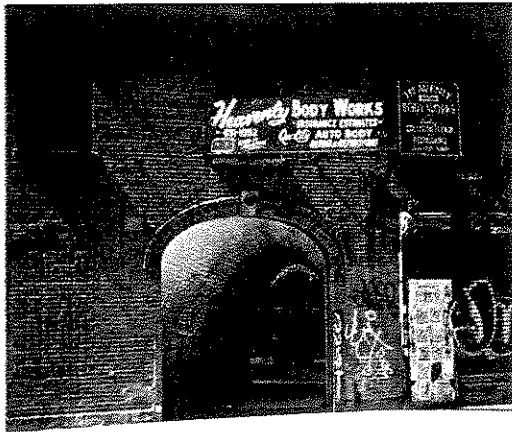
**Fashion and
Imagination
About Clothes
and Art**

Chapter III

Presentation

Gilles Lipovetsky and Veronica Manlow

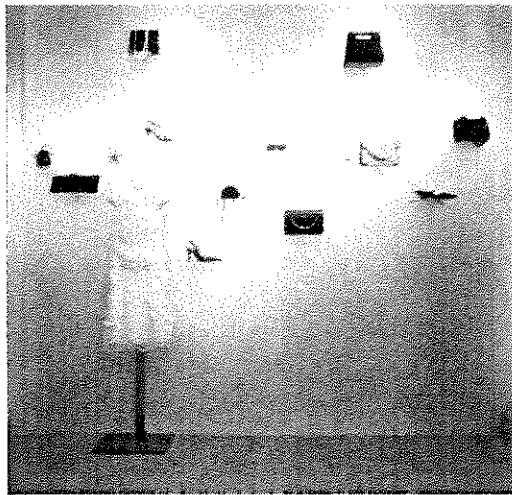
The 'artialization' of luxury stores



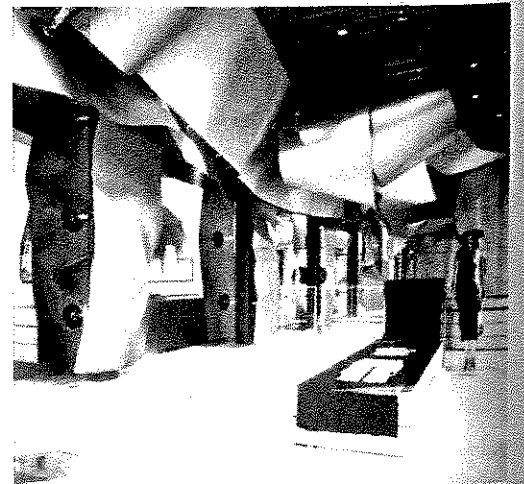
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01 Comme des Garçons,
New York City, 1998
02 Comme des Garçons,
New York City, 1998

03 Emporio Armani, Milan,
2001
04 Issey Miyake, New York,
2001

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Since the 1990s, financing, marketing, communications and consumption in the universe of fashion and luxury brands have been entirely transformed. A new system we shall call 'hyperfashion' is being established: fashion in the era of globalization. And the retail aspect has certainly not escaped this total disruption. The major brands are not just opening a growing number of their own stores in all the world's major cities to control and strengthen their image, but they are also forging new ties with artists, designers and architects to design and fit out these stores. While this is not a new partnership, the scale of the current phenomenon shows that we have entered a new era, that of the hyperstore.

This new relationship between art, fashion and luxury is not merely a result of fashion being recognized as art and showcased in museums and art galleries. Nor is it because artists now sign collections for commercial brands (Takashi Murakami, Stephen Sprouse, Richard Prince), assist in designing fashion shows (Edouard Levé, Haim Steinbach) or make fashion and branding the subject of their work (Olaf Nicolai, Elmgreen & Dragset, Gilles Barbier, Sylvie Fleury and Claude Lévêque). It is the very design of these stores that is becoming an explicitly creative pursuit, in line with today's slogan: 'no concept, no business'. The stores are now caught up in an endless race to outdo each other in architectural size, innovation and renovation. They are constantly being re-designed and revamped, and their windows have become canvases for avant-garde artists. Inaugurations are now performances. Original works are commissioned from contemporary designers and artists and displayed in the stores. This is a period for mixing genres and for hybridizing art and fashion. Greater competition, the communications requirements of branding and temperamental hyperconsumers' quest for novelty have combined to provide a new role for architects, designers and artists in transforming these stores and making them a key factor in the strategies of fashion and luxury brands.

The hyperstore era is one in which art is called upon to enhance fashion and luxury, in which the stores model themselves on art galleries, and creation gives an artistic image to commerce. Ever since Worth, fashion has viewed

itself as the art of clothing. With hyperfashion, it has become total art, even encompassing the space in which fashion is sold.

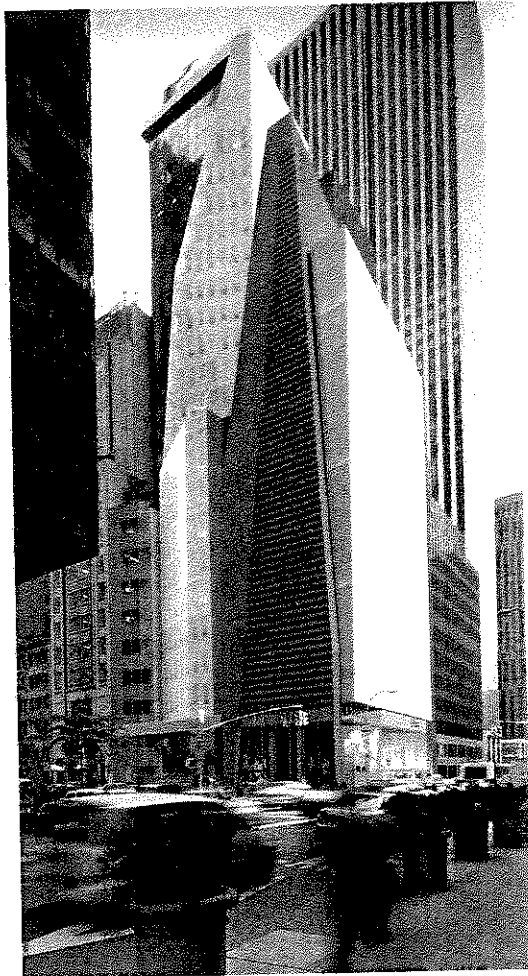
Star boutiques

In recent years multi-brand stores have declined while luxury stores, controlled and financed by the major brands themselves, have multiplied spectacularly.¹ At the same time, the major brands in the sector have committed themselves to Pharaoh-like projects. Flagships and megastores have sprung up worldwide. Now the luxury giants build 'temples', 'pyramids' and 'monoliths' to the glory of their brands. In 1998, Vuitton inaugurated the first megastore in its history, on the Champs Élysées in Paris. This is the company's flagship store, with 1,800 square meters devoted to selling its products. In 2003, Vuitton built an eleven-storey building designed by Christian de Portzamparc on New York's Fifth Avenue. In Tokyo, the major luxury groups compete fiercely over who can build the highest tower: a tower of eight floors for Gucci, a twelve-storey glass tower of 6000 square meters of retail space for Hermès, a ten-storey building for Chanel, a building of twelve floors and 6000 square meters of retail space for Armani. One is far from the time of small discrete family houses. A sort of hypermodern potlatch is visible now on the stage of luxury commercial architecture.

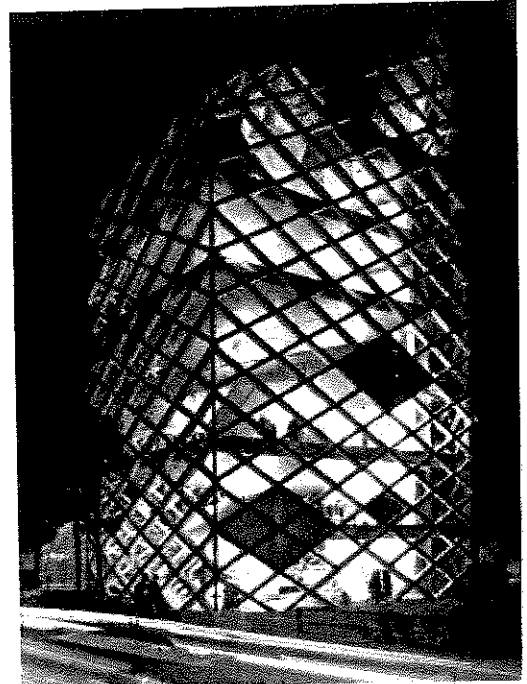
Star architects are designing these buildings: Renzo Piano for Hermès in Tokyo, Rem Koolhaas for Prada in New York, Franck O. Gehry for Issey Miyake in New York, Pierre Charpin and Pierre Huyghe for Dior Homme in Milan, Peter Marino for Chanel in Tokyo, and Eric Carlson for Vuitton's Champs Élysées store. The sky is the limit where investment is concerned. In 2001 Prada spent \$40 million for its 2,100-square-meter flagship store in New York and \$83 million for its six-storey 'boutique building' in Tokyo – a crystal palace designed by Herzog & de Meuron. The Chanel tower in Tokyo cost \$70 million.

These buildings are not just vast; they are also architectural gems, both innovative and spectacular. This phenomenon is especially pronounced in Tokyo. The Prada store, with its bevel-edged roof and faceted façade of 840 diamond-shaped concave and convex panes of glass set in stainless steel, set a new standard





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- 05 Christian de Portzamparc, LVMH headquarters with Dior shop on the ground floor, New York City, 1995-1999
- 06 Herzog & de Meuron, Prada Aoyama Epicenter, Tokyo, 2000-2003

in visionary fashion architecture. Not one wall in the Cartier boutique is perpendicular to the ground. The two narrow Hermès towers comprise 13,000 glass blocks, each the size of a Hermès square. The front of the 56-metre-high Chanel store is lit up by 700,000 LEDs, which serve as a giant screen. The Dior tower in the Ginza district is so light and simple, with its semi-transparent glass and aluminium exterior, that it appears weightless. These creative, prestigious and spectacular architectural achievements have become luxury 'sculptures' in themselves, and they are admired as much as the collections they contain, if not more. Thanks to their architecture, luxury stores have become exemplars of art, and at the same time mythical places and poles of attraction for a large public. The luxury store has been transformed into a mixed space of art and consumption, and into a mass tourist attraction. People visit the Vuitton store on the Champs Élysées in the same way they go to the Pompidou Centre or the Orsay Museum. No one goes to Tokyo without seeing the Prada flagship store.

In these new boutiques the commercial aspect seeks validation through its ties to art and culture. In the hypermodern era, luxury megastores are not satisfied with merely being stores, they want to be cultural and artistic venues, spaces of better living and even ethical spaces able to give rise to book manifestos such as that of Koolhaas. The stores built by Koolhaas are conceived in such a way that the art exhibitions sponsored by the Prada Foundation can be held there. The Baccarat store on Place des États-Unis in Paris contains a boutique, a museum and a restaurant. The Vuitton megastore on the Champs Élysées includes a small bookshop and a space for contemporary art exhibition. In the Maison Hermès in Tokyo's Ginza district, one finds rooftop gardens and exhibition and multimedia areas occupying the top two floors of the twelve-storey structure.

The above described situation applies equally to interior design. More than ever, the luxury stores engage the services of renowned designers. Baccarat asked Philippe Starck to redesign the 'hotel particulier' of Marie Laure de Noailles in Paris. Ron Arad signed the interior of the Yamamoto store of Tokyo and the Armani store in Hong Kong. Patrick Jouin redesigned the

salons of the Van Cleef & Arpels boutique on Place Vendôme, and Andrée Putman the Guerlain boutique. The more luxury reinvents itself in a marketing mindset, the more it acquires architectural gems and a universe in which art and fashion blend. The global economy equals the global store equals global aesthetics.

The staging of retail selling space

For a long time, luxury was synonymous with ostentatious signs and rich decorations. Luxury finds itself, to a great extent, at the opposite pole of this maximalist style. It is (by comparison) a minimalist, sober, highly unadorned luxury that many boutiques display – a 'Zen' style: white and empty spaces, the purity of unfinished granite, and plates of lacquered steel (reminiscent of the art gallery). From now on, interior architecture is often uncluttered and transparent, implying 'the essential', 'perfection' or 'harmony'. However, at the same time this design approach brings luxury closer to fashion, the interior style being dominated by an ultramodern, ultracontemporaneous spirit. Calvin Klein, whose boutiques embody this hyperminimalist aesthetic, said at the opening of his John Pawson-designed store in New York, 'I wanted a showcase for what is new and what is modern'. With its refusal of the superfluous, the interior adopts a fashion spirit by being paradoxical: the exhibitionism of purgation and hypermodern austerity. It is the order of the present that wins over the reign of the past.

Alongside minimalism design, one may find boutiques that embody a more dreamlike, experiential, sensory aesthetic. Alexander McQueen and La Perla in New York's Meatpacking District resemble tactile underground caves: curved spaces, sensual labyrinths more or less mysterious. The Carlos Miele flagship, located also on West 14th Street, reveals a vast sculptural installation: voluptuous, almost liquid that smooths boundaries between walls, floors and ceiling. This ethereal, luminous and creamy white space in which mannequins are suspended in the air above a glass-covered ring of light embedded in the reflective floor, creates a dematerialized ambiance highlighting the colour of the clothes. The store achieves a symbiosis of futurism and baroque, of contemporary design and of a fluid aesthetic. In São Paulo, the Clube Chocolate



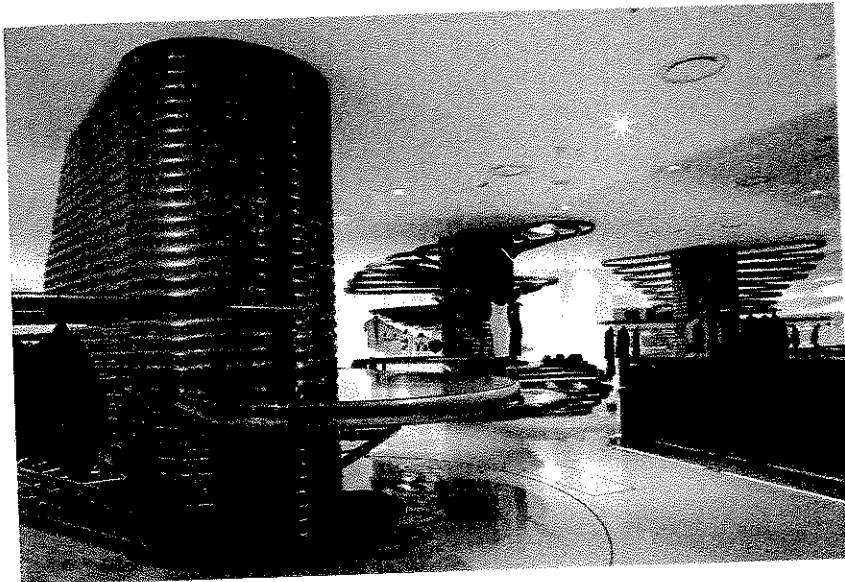
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boutique, which sells labels such as Tufi Duek, mixes white spaces and Brazilian sensuality. Isay Weinfeld has created a small oasis on one of the floors with palm trees, a bar and a spiral staircase in brushed steel that contrasts with rustic walls. In Ron Arad's Y's store in Tokyo in which Yohji Yamamoto's clothing line is sold, clothes are displayed on loop arms that rotate in response to turntables which rearrange the spatial configuration of the store slowly during store hours and quickly once it closes.

Thus, one can see the development of luxury stores no longer marked by the profusion of ornaments but by processes of global scenography, dramatization, sensualization of space. The

expansion of cyberspaces and virtual worlds will probably favour the expansion of a more tactile interior design, providing the pleasure to touch, to feel, to be astonished, to have fun. In the future, ultra-uncluttered stores and stores with a more singular and baroque aesthetics, feminine and polysensorial, will coexist. Even the aesthetics of luxury stores are an illustration of a generalized process of deregulation, heterogenization and pluralism of styles, typical of the hypermodern age.

There are many other signs that reveal the process of aesthetic de-standardization in luxury stores. The Mandarin Duck store on Rue St Honoré in Paris presents its wares as if in



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07 Carlos Miele, New York
 08 Ron Arad, Y's Yohji Yamamoto, Tokyo, 2003

an art gallery. Each display unit has a different form, texture or colour, for example a wall of brightly coloured elastic bands that hold bags in place. Upstairs, the two changing rooms are designed to look like small clearings in a field of pale-green synthetic grass. Two brands, Marni and Comme de Garçons, asked Future Systems to design unusual, unconventional stores for them. The London Marni store resembles an island planted with curved sculpture-like poles on which the clothes are hung. In their blue monochrome surroundings, the clothes and rounded rails are reflected on the polished stainless-steel ceilings. The colours of the walls and floor change with the seasons and collections. The Comme des Garçons store in Tokyo is a space with conical 'cages' and sloping semi-transparent walls lit with artificial blue light. Unique, surprising and unexpected store concepts are springing up everywhere:

Innovation, creation, personification are progressively mixed more and more with the claim of heritage. One of the great tendencies was to develop a unique store concept. This

strategy was put in place by Prada, Dior, Dolce & Gabbana, Chaumet, Ralph Lauren and Gucci. The underlying idea was to reproduce the same atmosphere and the same architectural concept in all stores. However this approach has lost favour because it signals standardization, which is a feature of the mass market. From now on the uniqueness and the individuality of stores are given priority. The purpose is increasingly to astonish buyers, to metamorphize the purchase into an exceptional experience through original, creative architectures that are sometimes rich in contemporary art. From now on, luxury is associated with the exhibited creativity of contemporary art. The logic of continuity converges with variation; permanence unites with difference. It is likely that in the future shopping places will be arranged more and more according to fashion logic rather than patrimonial logic.

Boutiques with an 'arty' image

In the 1980s and 1990s, new points of convergence between art and commerce emerged. Rei



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Kawakubo, Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and later Martin Margiela revolutionized not only fashion creation but also the traditional concept for commercializing it. Inspired by contemporary artistic movements, they opened stores that looked like art galleries. The articles were displayed in a rarefied atmosphere, as though they were exclusive objects or works of art.

Moreover, the stores began to display a growing number of real contemporary works by artists such as Lucio Fontana, Claude Lorraine and Nancy Lorenz in Tom Ford's stores, Garouste & Bonetti for Chanel or Christian Lacroix, André Dubreuil and Ado Chale for Dior. Damien Hirst exhibited his work in the flagship Prada store in Soho. The windows of Calvin

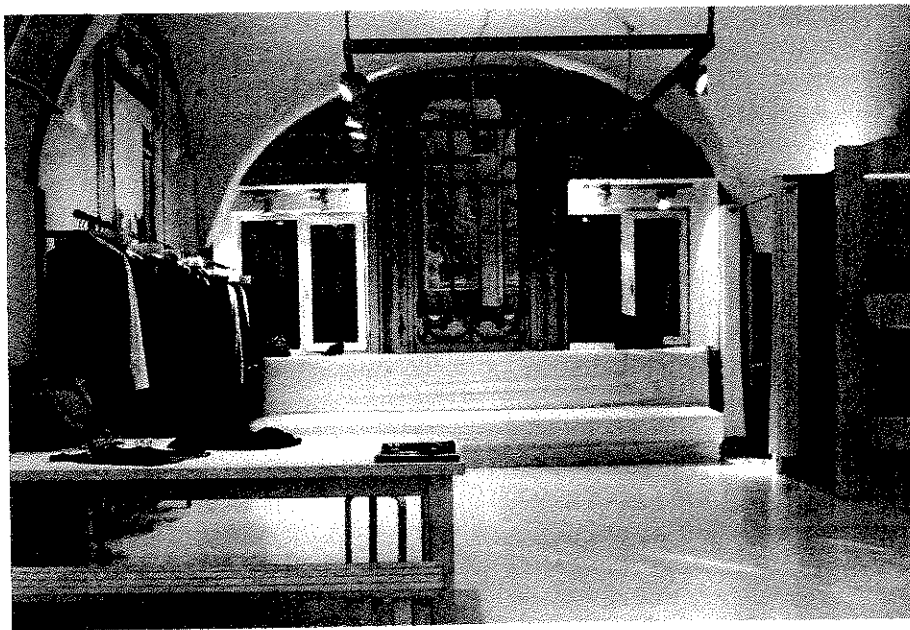
Klein's Madison Avenue store were decorated with Dan Flavin's fluorescent tubes. That minimalist artist's luminous sculptures can also be found in stores in Tokyo, Seoul and Zurich. Dior asked Gotscho to design its window display while Nina Ricci called on Buren, Honegger, Le Gac and Tahara. The Chanel boutique in Hong Kong displayed works by Jean Michel Othoniel, Michal Rovner, Vik Muniz, Joseph Stashkevetch and François-Xavier Lalanne. Numerous artists were commissioned to create works for the opening of the new Vuitton store on the Champs Elysées, including monogrammed walls by Peter Marino, a coloured structure by James Turrell and a fibre-optic video installation by the artist Tim White-Sobieski. An exhibition

was held on the top floor, with projects and works by contemporary designers including Shigeru Ban, Andrée Putman, Robert Wilson, Sylvie Fleury, Ugo Rondinone and Bruno Peinado. Boutique openings have become spectacular artistic events. On 9 October 2005, at the inauguration of the Vuitton Champs Elysées store, American artist Vanessa Beecroft staged a performance with some twenty young models, nude except for G-strings and high-heeled shoes, artfully arranged on the shelves among the trunks and designer bags.

In the universe of total marketing, the traditional separation between art and fashion has disappeared. The hypermodern period coincides with the erosion of compartmentalization and the cultural hierarchies of previous periods². Hyperfashion represents the synthesis of architecture and fashion, the fusion of avant-garde and luxury, and the blending of culture and commerce. The new luxury boutiques look like art galleries,³ and art galleries in turn are acquiring more of a fashion image. The fashion store 'does art' and avant-garde exhibitions

'do fashion'. The universe of boutiques has appropriated the language of art and speaks in terms of 'concepts'; it presents 'installations' or 'happenings'. Similarly, numerous contemporary art works appear futile or derisory, just like 'products': in sum, they resemble the superficiality of fashion.⁴ This cross-fertilization or hybridization of fashion and contemporary art is one of the characteristics of the new configuration of hypermodern stores.

Just as artists no longer disdain the lure of fashion – they are frequently inspired by it – so fashion continues to bring artistic creation into its selling space. When clothes are simple, the artistic image and transgressions become ways of enhancing fashion and providing it with a new aura. This aura confers a magnetism and prestige that is threatened by contemporary life styles, with the current ascendancy of comfort and the disintegration of the traditional culture of the bourgeoisie. Whereas in the past Andy Warhol declared 'I am a commercial artist', now commercial luxury brands endeavour to become 'artists'. They entrust the design of



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- 09 Comme des Garçons, Tokyo, 1999
- 10 Maison Martin Margiela, St. Petersburg

some of their products to artists and expose avant-garde works, thereby generating a new proximity between the artistic and commercial space. The era of revolutionary art is over. Now even artistic 'subversion' is used for commercial ends. While contemporary art functions as a consecration-communication instrument for the major fashion brands, fashion is focused on staging contemporary art in its stores, using it as a window for creativity in motion.

Contemporary art is promoted not only in the stores. Through their foundations (in the case of Cartier, Vuitton, Prada), the major fashion houses are committing large sums of money to support artistic creation or to organize exhibitions. For instance, the Prada Foundation has renovated an industrial building in Milan and exhibited artists such as Dan Flavin, Walter de Maria, Sam Taylor-Wood, Carsten Höller and Mariko Mori. The Foundation also finances a number of architectural and film projects such as the restoration of Italian movies from the 1950s and 1960s. In 2006 Bernard Arnault announced the creation of the Louis Vuitton Foundation for Artistic Creation, to be housed in a Franck Gehry-designed building in Paris. Hermès sponsored HBOX, an installation designed by Didier Faustino and Benjamin Weil, which is a mobile screening hall that presents video works by various artists. The installation was exhibited in Paris's Pompidou Centre and will travel to various museums across Europe, Asia and America. In 2008, Chanel launched a travelling exhibition called Mobile Art, featuring works by fifteen artists who have reinterpreted Chanel's iconic quilted bag. The works are arranged in a curvilinear pod designed by the architect Zaha Hadid. This type of investment provides a good image for the brands⁵ by removing the artificial and superfluous image from luxury. Today more than ever, brands need to communicate and establish their artistic legitimacy, and art gives them this effort a cultural boost.

Architecture, fashion and communication

Why do we need more, larger, more expensive and more creative boutiques? Undoubtedly the purpose of these new fashion showcases is to increase sales by displaying all the brand's goods. But given the growing importance of

communication in the fashion universe, the stores also have a new role. The increased number of brands on the international scene has resulted in intense competition, and hence a greater need to assert brand identity. In the hyperfashion system, it is the products' image as much as their style that creates the brand. Developing a style by means of novelty is no longer enough. Now vast advertising campaigns are required, and the retail space must be controlled from beginning to end in order to reinforce the 'narrative' and readability of the brand and to create a clear, distinct and expressive brand image. Architecture, interior design and works of art are increasingly used as outstanding instruments for reasserting the identity and image of a luxury brand.

Without doubt, these 'artified' stores have succeeded in generating the required visibility with their strong, media-hyped image. They contribute to *over-codifying the brand* and creating what can be called a *hyperbrand*, which is prestigious and generates media interest, as well as being well-known and recognized by the vast majority. Creating and selling luxury goods by means of collections is no longer enough. The brand itself must be turned into a spectacle and be over-signified via these collections, aided by a high-profile artistic director, a style, a ubiquitous logo and advertising images, as well as by the stores and windows that conspicuously display the brand's creativity. In luxury, as well as in the mass market, the imperatives of image, show business and communications dominate marketing policies.⁶ In this way the ties between art and fashion are strengthened.

Art lends itself 'naturally' to this communication function insofar as its 'gratuitous' quests, its visionary and symbolic aspects, and its relationship with the order of meaning and 'essential qualities' automatically endow it with prestige, hauteur and social recognition. But it succeeds all the better because it has, in turn, become an intrinsic part of 'fashion' and hence communication. Fashion only 'uses' artists when the artists need to build and strengthen their own image through the media. The era of the impoverished artist is over. The hypermodern age has witnessed an extraordinary boom in the contemporary art market, with rising stars and astronomic prices paid for works by

artists with an international following — not to mention the Kunst Kompass, numerous art fairs and the success of events such as the biennales and Nuit Blanche. By building bridges with art, fashion not only benefits from the 'spontaneous' aura of the artistic works; it also reflects the newfound fame of the star artists and the ensuing media hype. Fashion and art are united in the same aim, namely to win all in the communication universe of the star system.

The imperative of communication in the world of fashion and luxury is vital, not only because financing demands outstanding marketplace performance in all geographic areas, but also because it targets a far broader range of social classes than previously. In the past, unambiguous, hierarchical and unanimous aesthetic references made the communication function subordinate to the fashion industry. That system has been disrupted, meaning that doubts and individual fears are now affecting aspects of consumption that were previously self-evident because they were organized by class traditions. The importance of communications in the world of luxury and fashion is a response to the rise of individualistic principles, the hypermodern uncertainty created by the fragmentation of class-related references. The less lifestyles are structured by social order and a sense of class belonging, the more brand logic is essential. When fashion is fragmented there is a need for benchmarks and guideposts that are 'recognized' by the media or established by prices. When the standards of 'good taste' become blurred, brands serve to reassure the buyer. With increasingly hesitant and insecure hyperconsumers, all-out communications campaigns are vital.⁷

Hyperstores and experiential consumption

The stores' investment in architecture and design far exceeds the mere marketing requirements of high-profile communications. The staging of sales outlets is now an integral part of a multidimensional strategy geared to creating a 'tactile', sensitive and emotional connection with the consumer — what Kevin Roberts calls a 'lovemark'.⁸ To achieve this in the luxury sector, it is not only necessary to diffuse dream images of 'superior' life styles and aesthetics, but increasingly to dramaturgically enact store

concepts, with tangible scenographies that appeal directly to the senses of the consumers and produce an immediate *experience* of the brand. The new retail policy goes far beyond the imperatives of increasing sales; it is part and parcel of emotional branding, which by addressing affect, feeling and experience⁹ seeks to gain the loyalty of the increasingly less faithful, mobile hyperconsumer.

Spectacular architecture, the aesthetics of the place itself — complete with bars and restaurants, art exhibitions and avant-garde design — make megastores attractive places to visit and linger in, places for procuring pleasure and a host of other sensations. This is their role in what specialists call 'fun shopping', or 'retailtainment', as conceived by 'experiential' marketing. The megastore is a continuation of the innovations ushered in by the nineteenth-century department store, and is devoted to transforming shopping into a pleasurable lifestyle experience. In the new store concepts, the focus is on transporting the consumer emotionally and making the retail store the cult locus for a cult brand. Even luxury sells experience in the hyperconsumer society (and no longer merely social status), blending prestige, glamour, beauty, sensation and art. This is how a hyperbrand or a *brand cult* is created. The aim is to transform consumers into 'fans' of the brand itself. They must not only buy in the stores, but convince their network of friends to buy that brand's products as well.

Sanctify, aestheticize, glamourize

Monumental architecture, combined with the theatricality and artialization of stores, is often interpreted as a way of creating a 'magical' atmosphere, and a place to consecrate the brand universe. We are told that the luxury store is the new venue for acquiring a 'mystical' culture in which the experience of transcendence and the sacred serves to 're-enchant' the secular world of hypermodern consumption. According to Twitchell, consumers visit the 'temples' of luxury in a sort of state of grace, in silent humility and devotion. The act of purchasing becomes 'the'.¹⁰ It is a confessional and redemptive rite that reinforces the feeling of belonging to a community of faithful.¹¹ Thus we see two conflicting processes in the hypercon-



11 Louis Vuitton, Champs-Élysées, Paris

sumer society: the secularization of religion and the sanctification of secular consumption.¹² We would like to explain why we do not find this concept satisfactory.

We will not deny the fact that this 'sanctification' process is at work in the historic luxury stores. In Paris these include the Chanel store on Rue Cambon, the Cartier store on Rue de la Paix, Hermès on Faubourg St Honoré, Chaumet on Place Vendôme and Dior on Avenue Montaigne.¹³ In these exceptional places the consumer experience requires – at least in the minds of the artistic directors of those brands – a mystical and quasi-religious touch. But how does this logic fit in a place without historic roots and character? Here, the youthful, spectacular, 'hip' window displays and rhythmic music (disco, funk, rap) do not so much 'sanctify' the stores as transform the brands into stars by *glamorizing* them.

Some observers claim that the design of the Sephora stores is based on cathedral architecture, with naves, pillars and fonts. According to Lev Manovich,¹⁴ the glass cages

suspended from the ceiling of the New York Prada store (by Koolhaas) in which the clothes are presented, symbolize the religious relics of saints in churches. How can we justify such analogies for a recreational show, an interior 'display case' or installation for public view? The narrow showcases, above eye-level for once, in which mannequins appear to be in a lift shaft, are typical of *fashion*, not a religious style. There is no content here, only playful artifice. It is a spectacle of glamour, a shallow hymn for reproducing the typical atmosphere of a *fashion picture-shoot*. There is none of the imposing, eternal immobility of sacred icons here, but rather the rapid transformation of commercial space and the light mobility of *décor* and images. Here we are not so much arousing veneration as surprising and seducing consumers, provoking their complicity and enthusiasm, as during a fashion show. It is a case of designing high quality aesthetic spaces that reproduce a specific atmosphere, one of *excellence or elite exceptionality*.

Of course by investing in art the luxury brands

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distinguish themselves from the run-of-the-mill consumer universe. They also cater to the new requirements of the hedonistic consumer who is increasingly drawn to the situational, atmospheric, multisensorial experience, who wants to take that imaginary journey that some stores provide. The 'artifying' of the stores enables consumers to live an entire experience, to feel unexpected and polymorphous pleasures, such as the aesthetic delights of the store, the enjoyment of shopping in an exclusive context associated with the happy few, the gratification of self-enhancement, and the discovery of surprising, strange and unusual works of art – in short, the shopper feels improved by the experience. At a time of emotional hyperconsumption, the store no longer wants to be reduced to its purely functional content. It must itself be a source of aesthetic, narcissistic, cultural and sensory experiences, and must provide global shopping pleasure.¹⁵ As the dynamics of individualization become more entrenched, demand becomes increasingly marked by a desire to taste the pleasures of 'useless impressions' that Valéry described. When consumption is no longer structurally status-enhancing, distinguished by the imperative of signifying its place in the social hierarchy, there is an increase in the incessant search for hedonistic and perceptible experiences, for renewed and surprising emotions which contemporary art, amongst other things, is able to provide. That is why the act of purchasing must be rich in aesthetic and cultural emotions. That is the reason for artifying the stores. In the age of hyperconsumer capitalism, *homo consumericus* is less *homo religiosus* than ever; he is *homo aestheticus*, avid for new sensations and experiences.

Like being a movie

In truth, the new fashion stores are inspired by cinema far more than by churches. Nearly all the stores are equipped with large screens that endlessly replay the latest catwalk events. These screens are set into interior walls and even placed outside some stores such as Dior's on the Avenue Montaigne in Paris. In Tokyo the façade of the Chanel building is transformed every night into a giant screen that broadcasts videos of the brand's creations and the work of artists such as Michal Rovner from dusk to 1 a.m. In

Hong Kong, Peter Marino has also covered the ten-floor high façade of the Chanel boutique with an LED screen. That is the brand's star image, not a 'religious' one. Here, long-time luxury blends with the rhythm of the screen, the logic of heritage combines with the extreme mobility of the images, and brand's lastingness fuses with the mindset of a Hollywood movie.

The relationship with the cinema deserves to be pursued, for the 'movie style' has invaded the contemporary world. We live in a period of global screens, of 'cinematographization', not only of our own multiple screens (advertising, video-clips, sporting events, reality shows, Second Life) but of persons, places and scenery. Everywhere the real world grows closer to its celluloid image, with its aesthetic and emotional impact. The 'cinema spirit' has three concepts: to create stars (the store must make the brand into a star), produce hyper-shows (remarkable architecture, logos, design and dream-space) and provide entertainment (shopping as showtime). All three are found in luxury stores, which increasingly resemble film sets.¹⁶ The cinema aesthetic, with its extreme and spectacular scenography, has taken hold of commercial space, which in turn has become part of a filmed dream. Shopping-showtime has shifted to a higher gear, with music, sound systems, décors, lighting, screens and vast spaces. The new boutiques seem to have been lifted straight out of a film. They imitate the magic universe of the cinema.

During the golden age of Hollywood people fantasized about the stars because of their beauty and luxury apparel. Today every woman in a luxury store wants to feel that she is a star and be transported into a spectacular Hollywood film. The hyperconsumer society does not sanctify its stores; it endeavours to create an enchanted movie atmosphere, rather like the ecstatic scene in 'Pretty Woman' when Julia Roberts selects one expensive outfit after another in a Beverly Hills boutique. Now people go to luxury stores to live their lives in a show or a film – just like a movie star.



12 Chanel, Beverly Hills,
California

1. In 1977, Vuitton had two stores. In 2006, 345 were managed by the brand. Between 1994 and 2005, the number of Dior stores in the world rose from 22 to 200. In the early 2000s, the Hermès group opened up to 25 boutiques per year world wide. In 2006 the Hermès retail network consisted of 237 stores, 133 directly controlled by the brand. In the same year, Gucci was managing 219 of its own stores. There were 21 Bottega Veneta boutiques when the company was bought by the PPR group in 2001; at the end of 2007 there were approximately 110.
2. Just as the major luxury brands exhibit artists, so the museums exhibit luxury brands. Vuitton opened a store for the duration of the retrospective devoted to Takashi Murakami in the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) from October 2007 to February 2008.
3. In 2008, the name Richard Prince was displayed on one of the Vuitton store windows on the Champs Élysées during an exhibition of that artist's work.
4. Gilles Lipovetsky, 'Art and Aesthetics in the Fashion Society', *The Power of Fashion* (Arnhem: ArtEZ Press, 2006).
5. The media impact on the Cartier Foundation is an important source of visibility since it represents 25% of all Cartier's press coverage worldwide.
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