

PART I

THREADS OF INFLUENCE: THE LINKAGE BETWEEN FASHION AND ADVERTISING

STYLE ALIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION

There exists a strong link between advertising and fashion. Advertising serves as a means of communication, and at its core, fashion is also a form of communication. When an individual chooses a particular outfit, they are making a conscious decision to express their identity and representation through various styles, clothing pieces or accessories. Consequently, fashion effectively mirrors the characteristics of the human being. Fashion, in its own right, stands as a vigorously promoted industry. The act of choosing a brand serves as a means of outwardly conveying a message, casting individuals as living billboards communicating the narrative spread by that brand at that particular moment in time. (Jimenez-Marín et al., 2021, p. 115).

Advertising, with its substantial influence on contemporary society and culture, shares a notable commonality with the world of fashion. Although distinct in their languages, fashion and advertising paradoxically intertwine. The quest for identity is manifested through the endorsement of a brand. Present-day brands recognize the significance of establishing a strong identity, embracing a personal touch, and evoking the emotions of their audience to be perceived as indispensable. Luxury brands, in particular, aim not merely for immediate product transactions but seek a lasting presence in the consumer's psyche to allure them. Consequently, advertisements weave narratives about a brand, a collection, or a product, intertwining themes of beauty, desire, and myth in concordance with the user, the product, and the brand.

LUX

Upon delving into the intricacies of the luxury fashion sector, it becomes apparent that the interest in advertising and marketing specific to this niche has experienced notable growth over the past four decades. This surge is a direct result of the unprecedented expansion witnessed in the luxury brands industry in recent years. In 2015, these companies boasted an estimated market value of 224 billion euros, demonstrating a substantial annual growth rate of 5% (Jaehwan et al., 2016, p. 459).

If we take a closer look at the existing research on advertising within the luxury fashion sphere, conducted by both scholars and industry experts, we can see a focal point on persuasion. Specifically, the attention lies on understanding consumer motivations and responses to various advertising materials, the processing of these stimuli, as well as exploring behaviors, attitudes, values, and the overall efficacy of advertising efforts (Kohrs, 2021, p. 260).

Let's look for a moment at the motivations that drive consumers to acquire such expensive goods. As expected, people's perceptions of the value associated with these luxury brands can vary significantly from one individual to another. Specifically, the purchase and consumption of luxury products involve a diverse range of motivations, as indicated by emerging literature. Among these motivations, we can highlight: signaling social status and prestige, self-discovery and even the rediscovery of one's identity, belief in the superior quality of these products, hedonism, the need for social conformity and the pursuit of uniqueness (Jaehwan et al., 2016, p. 459).

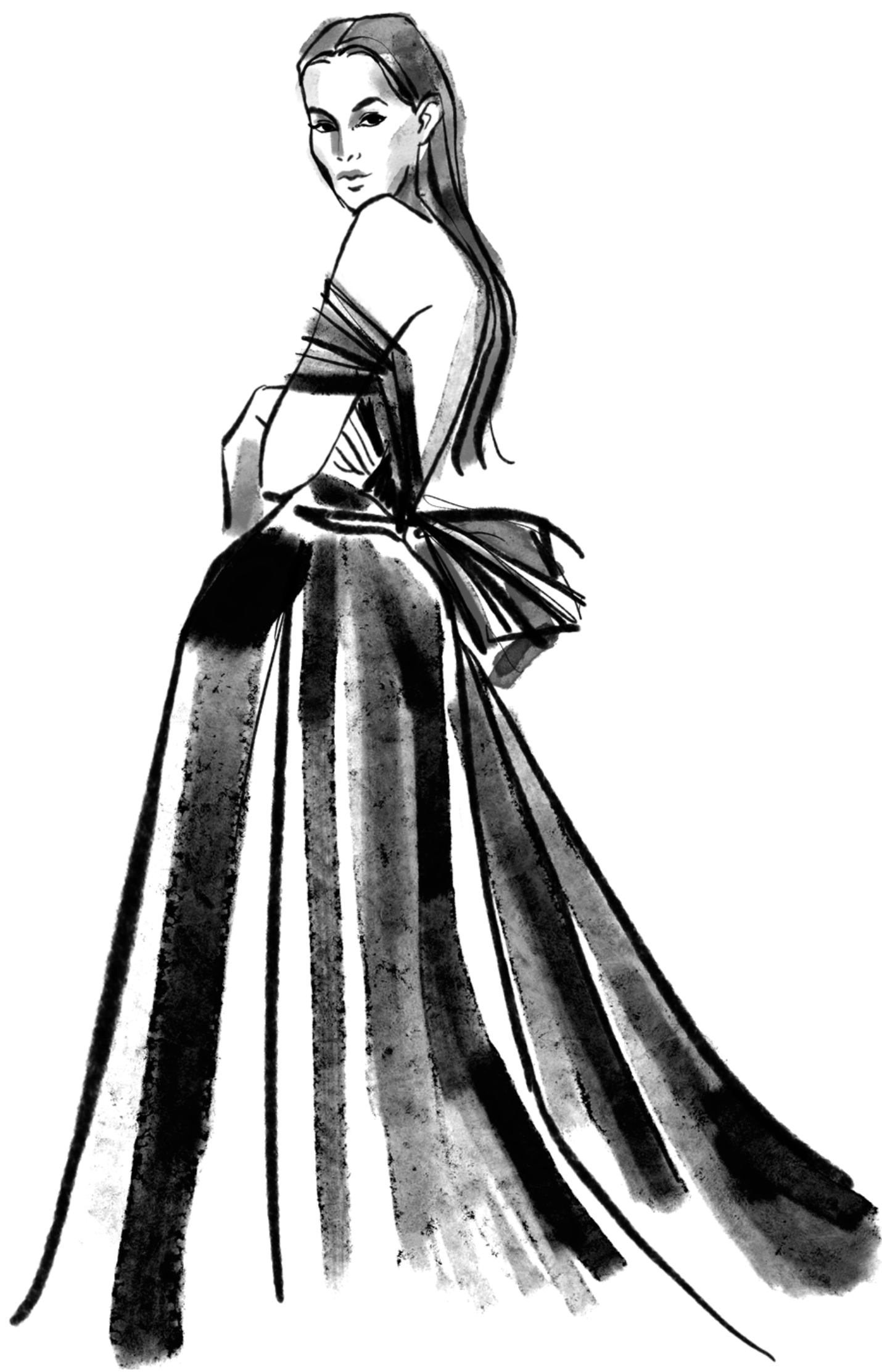
However, despite the diversity of motivations that encourage the consumption of luxury items, it seems that they can be vaguely classified into two types of values that consumers seek following the acquisition of these products. Those are functional and non-

functional. The first category, represented by functional values, appeals to consumers' perceptions regarding the satisfaction of practical needs and the resolution of current and anticipated problems. In the context of luxury brands, these may include the pursuit of superior product durability and the search for a sophisticated design.

The second category is that of non-functional values. These encompass symbolic perceptions of value, enabling consumers to internalize the meanings of these luxury brands to build and express significant aspects of their identity or experiential value perceptions that satisfy their needs for pleasure-seeking. Many researchers categorize the non-functional perceptions as a major motivation for purchasing luxury products, especially among younger consumers. One of the most widespread reasons for these acquisitions is the communication of aspirational meanings regarding specific types of identity and social status (Jaehwan et al., 2016, p. 459).

Therefore, some individuals have a greater appreciation for luxury products and prefer them over regular ones. This inclination arises from their willingness to embrace the meanings and experiences associated with luxury brands, shaping their self-concept based on the alluring traits linked to the personality of the brand they choose. Considering that luxury brands typically possess more distinctive and attractive personalities than common brands, consumers who lean towards the former are more likely to value and take advantage of the opportunity to temporarily boost their confidence through the use of luxury brands. Conversely, there are individuals who do not feel the need to acquire luxury products, as their self-perceptions remain unaffected by the brands they choose. It is more unlikely that their opinions about themselves will be influenced by this type of brand experience (Jaehwan et al., 2016, p. 459).

URY



Fashion can be perceived as an abstract world designed to undergo frequent transformations while simultaneously maintaining a timeless nature, ultimately serving its economic purpose of ensuring consistent sales. Based on this premise, we can assert that the social function of fashion is twofold: it either provides a platform for expressing and showcasing personal identity, or it offers opportunities for experimentation and transformation, potentially leading to subtle or even profound alterations in one's original identity (Barthes, 1967, p. 62).

ABSTRACT

WORLD

Taking into account that the fashion market, particularly in the realm of luxury brands, is a distinct privilege accessible to only a small segment of society, we can characterize it as a specialized market where advertising must align precisely with the consumer profile. Hence, advertising in the luxury fashion industry demands a unique communication approach compared to that employed in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industries such as food, beverages, and cosmetics. Consequently, it becomes crucial not only to tailor the brand's communication tone to the target audience but also to carefully select the appropriate media channels. While social media and online versions of magazines have gained prominence recently, it's noteworthy that traditional media, such as print in magazines, business publications, or in-flight magazines, continues to play a significant role. Another significant distinction between the fashion industry and other

markets is evident in the budget allocated for marketing and advertising. "In the case of a luxury brand, around 5-15% of the budget is spent on traditional advertising (such as TV advertising, print advertising, in-store or outdoor advertising, online ads, and so on), and this can increase to over 25% when including PR events, sponsorships, and promotions. In a typical fast-moving consumer goods industry, encompassing all the activities mentioned above, such expenses rarely exceed 10%, usually remaining around 5% of the brand's annual budget" (Gliniecka, 2016, p. 2). It's obvious that when addressing a niche market, the communication and marketing strategy must be adapted to its unique characteristics. Due to financial barriers limiting their clientele, fashion brands can operate in a more abstract manner, with the pragmatic elements such as pricing or distribution being of lesser importance.

THREE ADVERTISING STYLES

Three advertising styles can be discerned in the fashion industry: the grotesque style, the idealized style, and the sublime style. The grotesque style, considered the most controversial method in fashion advertising, features peculiar images typically carrying negative connotations about their nature, perceived as a departure from the normal or the conventional. Over the past four decades, the use of the grotesque style has become remarkably widespread, as incorporating images with a strong impact becomes necessary to sustain the audience's attention on an ad without text for an extended period (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010, p. 371).

The idealized style stands out as possibly the most prevalent approach in fashion industry advertisements, characterized by aspirational images. This style is intricately tied to the notion of cultivating a positive brand image, with persuasion deriving from this particular aspect. As a conventional and secure method in fashion advertising, it avoids placing the brand image in a contentious position, unlike the grotesque style, for example. However, a drawback of employing this style is the potential for advertisements to become repetitive, potentially diminishing their ability to consistently capture and hold the audience's attention (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010, p. 371).

There is a common misconception that the idealized style and the sublime one share similar meanings, but this is not the case. While the idealized style is unrelated to the grotesque style, the sublime style can incorporate elements of the grotesque. In the realm of luxury fashion advertising, to evoke the sublime experience for a consumer, involving a narrative journey, the advertisement may require elements from the grotesque style. This is due to the fact that the grotesque serves a similar purpose for the advertising image as pathos does for written narratives (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010, p. 380).

ONCE UPON

A distinctive avenue for persuasion lies in narrative transportation. However, as initially conceived, it is unlikely to manifest as a response to advertisements, where persuasive intent is overt, and consumer resistance can be anticipated. When examining fashion advertisements, one can illustrate how narrative transportation might be a plausible response if specific aesthetic properties are present, particularly when incorporating grotesque imagery. Studies indicate that audiences engage with various ads to take action, identify, feel, or be transported. The reality is that the aesthetic qualities of ads elicit different forms of viewer engagement, and different images can lead to either narrative transportation or immersion. The routes of persuasion, transportation, and immersion operate by heightening the brand experience rather than prompting brand evaluation. For persuasion to occur, there must be 'a story that raises unanswered questions, presents unresolved conflicts, or describes an activity not yet completed; characters may encounter and then resolve a crisis' (Phillips & McQuairre, 2010, p. 370). All these elements provide the audience with the chance to enter the story's

world and undergo alongside the characters those events they couldn't experience in real life, hence deeming them implausible. The more significant the narrative transportation within a story, the stronger the belief that the assertions shaping that story's world are true, as there will be progressively less critical scrutiny of the ideas informing that storytelling world. An aspect widely accepted by many researchers studying the phenomenon of advertising in the luxury fashion realm is that consuming fashion images and products can be inherently satisfying. The pleasure of transforming one's identity through clothing is a continuation of the joy derived from engaging with inspirational photographic images. Apparently, the enjoyment extends beyond merely wearing and trying on clothes to looking at images of other individuals dressed in different ways, as this encourages fantasies and the desire to escape from reality. Considering the playful potential of fashion advertisements, a more extensive variety of ways of engaging with these materials can be expected compared to those for mundane products, such as personal hygiene items, for example.

A TIME...

AESTHETICS

When delving into the realm of luxury fashion advertising, it's essential to underscore the significance of aesthetics in crafting materials that wield a powerful impact on the audience. The initial infusion of aesthetic concepts into consumer research originated primarily from literary theory, coinciding with the period when literary ideas permeated the psychology of reading. Subsequently, researchers shifted their focus to visual aesthetics and design, scrutinizing elements that compose the aesthetic form, such as unity or prototype.

Presently, attention is directed toward the design elements of products and how consumers react to these facets. In the contemporary landscape, the emphasis has shifted from aesthetic theory per se to the consumption of culturally defined aesthetic objects, similar to works of art. Some experts posit that advertising agents can be seen as artists; hence, their creations can be analyzed using the same aesthetic categories applied to works of art. Consequently, we could assert that fashion advertising images can be comprehended using terms and concepts derived precisely from visual aesthetics (Phillips & McQuairre, 2010, p. 371).

As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, the dynamics of advertising in the luxury fashion industry differ significantly from other domains. Fashion, particularly in the realm of luxury, represents a somewhat abstract subject and caters to distinct categories of individuals. These individuals not only boast a high financial status but also possess a specific culture and visual education that attracts them to such objects and images. Consequently, advertising in the fashion industry must effectively communicate the brand's image and the artistic vision of the designer in ways that resonate with this particular audience profile. Now, it becomes imperative to analyze the pivotal role of fashion publications in this system.



FASHION MAGAZINES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Fashion magazines hold sociological interest due to two interconnected aspects of their production. Firstly, they function as both cultural products and commodities. In this regard, they share commonalities with other forms of media, including art, film, newspapers, radio and television programs, as well as the broader realm of fashion. As cultural products, magazines exist within the framework of a cultural economy. They deliver illustrated narratives, stories, and experiential and behavioral models, particularly within the realms of fashion and beauty. These narratives reflect the ideal self of the reader, offering a mirror for reflection and action. Simultaneously, as commodities, magazines are outputs of the publishing and printing industries, serving as pivotal channels for advertising and the promotion of specific items, notably clothing, jewelry, cosmetics, and perfumes. Similar to general women's magazines, those focused on fashion are deeply enmeshed in the mechanisms of global capitalist production and consumption (Moeran, 2006, p. 728). Secondly, the production

dynamics of magazines, akin to other so-called "creative" industries, exhibit a distinctive characteristic termed as a "multiple audience" property. This stems from the dual audience appeal, targeting both readers and advertisers, imposing a necessity for magazine editors to cater to these two primary groups. Consequently, this results in a non-typical content structure within the magazine, challenging the notion of a "purely" cultural product. Moreover, financial peculiarities surround the domain of fashion magazines. Publishers publicly emphasize readership numbers as an indicator of success, emphasizing the cultural content as the primary selling point. Paradoxically, it is the advertising revenues that sustain a publisher's business and contribute to profitability. Circulation figures are strategically inflated through various tactics, such as discounted annual subscriptions, aiming to attract advertisers. Therefore, magazine editors effectively sell their readership to advertising agencies, while advertisers promote their products to the readership (Moeran, 2006, p. 728).

GLAMOUR



Fashion magazines are integral components of the fashion industry, employing numerous enchanting practices to allure their readers into desiring, if not purchasing, all those "bewitched" objects and products. "These practices consist of textual and visual spells" (Moeran, 2017, p. 3) implemented by editors, photographers, stylists, designers, makeup and hair artists employed by fashion magazines, as well as by fashion houses and advertising agencies. These "professional magicians" stand behind the fantasy, seduction, and transformation that characterize the fashion and beauty industry. Together, they create a distinct worldview, almost unattainable ideals that enchant, captivate, and hypnotize readers of these magazines, who feel completely absorbed by the mysterious aura surrounding the fashion industry.

Speaking of magic, there exists a word that stands above the rest, a term that, upon hearing or uttering it, immediately transports us into the realm of fashion and the narratives spun by fashion magazines. That word is "glamour." Its roots trace back to an ancient Scottish term, "gramyre," signifying magic, enchantment, or spell. Emerging in the English language in the early 19th century, it has consistently been employed when alluding to a captivating image—a constructed, staged reality that entices consumption. The intricacies of how glamour operates remain elusive (Gundle, 2006, pp. 3-4) as fashion magazines' role in overcoming this uncertainty, typically through one of two methods.

Primarily, these publications utilize a language that directly or indirectly evokes the magical realm, found in the titles of fashion stories and their vocabulary (alchemy, allure, aura, enchantment, captivation, charm, fairy, illusion, sorcery, and spells). These expressions, coupled with images reminiscent of paintings, consistently manage to captivate readers eager to escape the stressful reality of everyday life.

Secondly, another tactic employed by fashion magazines to alleviate uncertainty is the use of names to reinforce their performative language and images. Names anchor meanings by translating them into terms of other significances, making a name a potentiality not only to represent our reality in a less challenging form but also to provide confidence in situations with a high degree of uncertainty. "Fashion magazines participate in naming processes in two ways: by creating equivalence between concept and form in the rhetoric of fashion and by bringing together names from different domains in the minds of readers" (Moeran, 2017, p. 6). Fashion magazines also elevate fashion designers to celebrity status by showcasing who wears what, made by whom, for what occasion, where, and with whom.

KEEP FALLING FOR

Functioning as intermediaries between fashion producers and the consuming public, these magazines serve the purpose of educating their readership on why fashion holds significance in their lives. They showcase the latest trends and designs, introduce influential figures, and provide details on where the featured items can be acquired. Essentially, these publications play a role in legitimizing fashion and the broader fashion industry within the cultural context. "Fashion magazines establish meaningful connections between seemingly independent elements; they breathe social life into them by constructing a fictional world; they heighten participants' awareness of the fashion domain they operate in and offer historical and aesthetic structure in a realm where products, given their seasonal nature and potentially chaotic abundance, might otherwise go unnoticed" (Jimenez-Marín et al., 2021, p. 123). Through these endeavors, a fashion magazine contributes to shaping a collective understanding of what "fashion" represents, acknowledging that occasional aesthetic aspects like elitism, trends, and the fear of falling behind prevailing taste authorities may also come into play (Moeran, 2006, p. 736). Hence, the production and reception of fashion are two interlinked processes, encompassing both communication and organizational aspects in terms of both production and consumption. The "creative act" of fashion design remains in a constant state of flux, subject to the influences of consumer attitudes and the dynamics within the fashion industry (Moeran, 2006, p. 736).

These factors play a role in determining the feasibility of various innovations within the field. Designers rely on mediators and interpreters to ensure that their work is accurately understood, and this understanding subsequently translates into consumer purchases. The perception of fashion emerges as a result of social collaboration between those constituting a "community of faith," rooted in shared convictions, and those engaged in the creation of both haute couture and prêt-à-porter. One could posit that this shared belief system serves as the guiding force in the intricate fashion landscape. Employees of fashion magazines are the ones who spread the "word," presenting and interpreting designers' collections season after season, giving these ideas a sense that readers can grasp, removing all the strangeness that accompanies novelty. They reconcile what may initially induce confusion or already seems familiar, creating continuity between past, present, and future trends. Their duty is not only to appreciate new stylistic trends but also to recognize new discoveries, reassessments, and reinterpretations of styles that have been misunderstood or belong to the past. While designers create actual fashion items, fashion magazines craft the stories that sell them. In this process, editors manufacture mythical characters from designers and fashion houses they promote, as well as other members of the fashion world. This leads to a situation where collections may be judged not solely on their intrinsic value but also by the names they are associated with (Moeran, 2006).

FASHION

FASHION EMERGENCY



Fashion magazines are essential for the audience as they play a crucial role in guiding readers through the chaos of seasonal collections presented in fashion capitals like New York, London, Milan, and Paris. They serve as a bridge, transforming fashion from abstract concepts and aesthetic discussions into wearable clothing suitable for everyday life and meeting practical needs. However, this doesn't imply a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, fashion magazines cater to diverse audiences, each with distinct preferences shaped by factors such as culture, lifestyle, age, and prevailing gender norms. Advertising in the luxury fashion industry is intricate and differs from the advertising approaches

used in other industries. Consumers of luxury apparel are individuals with specific economic, social, and cultural status, holding serious expectations for both the products that tempt them and the way these products are promoted. These consumers have distinct motivations compared to regular consumers, willingly paying substantial amounts for clothing pieces that truly represent their image. Consequently, brands must exert considerable efforts to capture their attention. To entice individuals with particular tastes into desiring a specific product, advertisers must employ storytelling to transport them into the fantastic universe of luxury fashion.

CONCLUSION

In the ever-evolving landscape of the luxury fashion market, where trends come and go, the collaboration between fashion magazines, advertisers, and designers becomes a dynamic force. However, the heartbeat of this industry lies in the art of storytelling. Through carefully crafted stories, brands not only showcase their products but also construct a narrative that evokes aspiration and desire. Storytelling transcends other advertising techniques; it becomes a powerful tool that connects the essence of luxury fashion with the minds of consumers. In the next part, we will delve into the intricate craft of storytelling, exploring how it shapes the image of luxury fashion brands and influences consumer perceptions.

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