The Strategic Use of Art, Architecture and Design in High-End Fashion Retail

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Jessica Bush

Faculty of Creativity and Culture,
Bucks New University
Brunel University

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the role of art, architecture and design in the luxury sector of fashion retail, taking leading high-end fashion brands as case studies. This study addresses how art, architecture and design can be shaped for commercial purposes, to make brands appear exclusive and distinctive.

In the first section, a review of existing literature on art, design, fashion and consumption establishes how this research subject fits within broader debates that centre in these different creative practices.

This research investigates the purpose of displaying works of art in high-end fashion stores and shows how - together with architecture and design - it has transformed retail environments. This study sets out to demonstrate that the introduction of art, architecture and design has been a pretext for fashion retailers to 'conceptualise' their outlets, designing them as sites of experimentation to stimulate and rejuvenate the shopping experience.

This study argues that these creative practices have been presented as symbols of a utopian luxury lifestyle, and have been employed as languages to communicate with brands' target markets. Case studies trace instances of this in the context of globalisation; examples include the representation of French brands in Japan. This study also contends that through their involvement with art, architecture and design, retailers have been enabled to present, with credibility, their commodities as works of art, elevating the status of their brands and maintain the exclusive character of high-end fashion. This was part of a bigger cultural shift in the capitalist first world, which involved a commodification of culture.

Finally, this thesis speculates on the place of art, architecture and design within the future of high-end fashion retail and concludes that, despite the fact that this phenomenon has escaped critical attention, their presence in retail environments plays a key role in shaping the image of contemporary commercial spaces and is characteristic of the growing significance of creativity in late capitalist societies.

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Introduction

This thesis sets out to examine the ways in which art (as the term is used in this thesis), architecture and design have been introduced in retail environments, specifically in high-end fashion shops; and through the analysis of case studies and interviews, reveal why.

This is the first academic study of its kind to specifically examine the use of works of art, architecture and design in retail, with the view to establishing a more sophisticated understanding of where art and retail have become positioned[1].

I make the case that the introduction of art, architecture and design in retail environments is a postmodern, late-twentieth century phenomenon, nourished by consumerism and the pursuit of leisure particular to capitalist ideology. I also maintain the fact that this trend has an urban nature and that it is a party to globalisation. To illustrate this, I consider examples from five of the world's richest countries - Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States - where economic and cultural conditions have favoured the emergence of art, architecture and design in retail. Moreover, as the focus of this research is on high-end fashion outlets, the choice of these countries is particularly relevant as fashion is central to both their economic and cultural life. France and Italy have a long-standing fashion tradition (preceding the middle ages), and although fashion is comparatively new to the other three countries; Paris, Milan, London, Tokyo and New York are now considered as '*fashion capitals*' of the world[2]. It is in these cities that the most striking uses of art, architecture and design in retail spaces have been made, further indicating the urban and global character of this trend.

My arguments centre on a range of different retail outlets, including: 'mono-brand' stores from some of the leading high-end fashion houses (Agnès b, Chanel, Dior, Comme des Garçons, Hermès, Louis Vuitton and Prada) as well as 'multi-brand' department stores (Les Galeries Lafayette, Mitsukoshi, Selfridges and Takashimaya) and concept stores (Colette, 10 Corso Como and Dover Street Market).

[1] Related Ph.D. theses include: Audas, Jane, *Reflections of Modernity: Shop Display 1930 - 1940*, Royal College of Art, London, 2002; and Harrison, Kim Tracy, *The Self-Conscious Chanson: Creative Responses to the Art Versus Commerce Debate*, University of Leeds, Leeds, 2005

[2] Paris, London, New York, Milan and Tokyo have been discussed as *'fashion capitals'* by the following authors: Bruzzi, Stella and Church Gibson, Pamela, *Fashion Cultures: Theories, Explorations and Analysis*, Routledge, London, 2000; Kawamura, Yuniya, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion*, Berg, Oxford, 2004; Kawamura, Yuniya, *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, Berg, Oxford, 2005; and Breward, Christopher and Gilbert, David (eds.), *Fashion's World Cities*, Berg, London, 2006

In chapter 1, I consider the circumstances that sparked the use of art, architecture and design in retail. I set a context for the luxury sector to examine the societal and technological agendas such as globalisation and counterfeiting, which I argue have created a demarcation of the status of luxury. I stress that one of the greatest problems facing high-end fashion brands is the 'inclusive/exclusive' paradox (having to preserve an elitist character, whilst simultaneously producing for the mass market). I then question whether the use of art, architecture and design in this particular context redresses (and enhances) the image of luxury.

Having identified the issues facing the luxury sector, I investigate in chapter 2, how retailers have responded, and how the landscape of retailing has changed. I illustrate how architecture and design have been mobilised to reinforce the cultural values associated with art and, in some cases, legitimise it. I examine how works of art have been integrated within retail environments, and explore the extent to which they are displayed in manners that may be conventional to the presentation of art in cultural institutions. This addresses whether artists operating in retail contexts are 'liberated' from curatorial directives or institutional pressures (for instance, the need to be educational and accessible), and the need to measure success in terms of audience profile and reach. I explain how art functions as a tool to maintain the high status of high-end fashion brands. In this perspective, I attempt to demonstrate that shops have become important marketing platforms for retailers to highlight their brands.

If creativity is used as a tool to redress economic matters, how does it differ from advertising and marketing? Why do retailers use contemporary art frameworks rather than conventional methods of advertising and marketing? In the first part of chapter 3, using artist Sam Taylor Wood's *XV Seconds,* a piece commissioned by the department store Selfridges as a case study, I argue that art codes are used as a visual short-hand and language to communicate with the target consumers of high-end fashion brands. In the second part, I take the issue further by determining the extent to which the use of art, architecture and design as visual languages facilitates communication with consumers beyond cultural and languages barriers by analysing the use of art by French brands in Japan.

Chapter 4 considers the impact of the placement of art, architecture and design in retail on the image and role of high-end fashion brands with regards to culture. Does the juxtaposition between retail and art make high-end fashion commodities appear as works of art too? I explore how much the introduction of art, architecture and design in retail facilitates a pretension that fashion is an art form. I demonstrate how the display of works of art in stores is part of a larger strategy for high-end fashion brands to be associated with highbrow culture.

In Chapter 5, I investigate whether the use of art, architecture and design in retail environments is symptomatic of changes in the cultural sector. This broaches other agendas to do with the relocation of art, notably the convergent positioning of art, fashion and retail as forms of entertainment. I consider if with the introduction of art, architecture and design in stores, retail environments have become assimilated to galleries or museums. I question whether the proximity of art and retail has caused a commodification of works of art.

The final chapter examines the significance of the relationship between art, architecture, design and retail and considers how their introduction has played a role in other trends, particularly the increasing interest in the customisation of commodities. In this context, I reveal how ideas of 'creativity' have become a new symbol of luxury, and suggest that art will continue to figure in the landscape of high-end fashion retail. I also show how art is used alongside architecture and design as a recognisable motif of creativity, in order to attract the creatively-minded, a clientele referred to by Florida as the 'creative class'. I argue that the overt use of creative practices reflects the desire for retailers to position their luxury goods in such a way as to be assimilated into art, in the minds of the customers. To achieve this, retailers have had to create branded spaces where the boundaries between the fields of art, architecture, design and fashion are able to converge.

The appearance of art in stores occurs through a transformation of the retail environment. I show that architecture and design are used simultaneously with art and argue that they are often used to support the use of art by retailers. I show in chapter 2 that architecture and design help signal the display of art in stores and even legitimise it. For this reason, I particularly focus on examining the use of art in retail environments, and show how architecture and design are components of this strategy.

I demonstrate that art is used alongside architecture and design to symbolise creativity in order to attract a creative clientele, also referred as the creative class[3] as further developed in chapter 1. The use of such creative practices reflects the desire for retailers to give their goods more than a luxurious value but a artistic character, and ultimately, for their goods to be assimilated to art. To achieve this purpose, retailers had to build venues where the boundaries between fields such as art, architecture, design but also fashion could merge.

Why target the creative class? Because as defined by Richard Florida and later discussed in chapter 1, this class constitutes the higher strata of a new social order and should be seen in opposition to the service class. The creative class includes people working not only in the

[3] 'The Creative Class', a term coined by Richard Florida in 2004, in Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004

creative sectors, but people who can lead creative lifestyles. Florida remarked that the creative class is materialist and high spending. What is characteristic of this new social order is the drive for independence and individuality, which retailers translate in giving their goods an artistic dimension to ensure originality and go against mass-production.

Art in retail has been, most commonly, taken to mean original windows and in-store display installations. I endeavour to demonstrate that art in retail goes beyond that. Rather, art in retail represents works by established artists that are displayed in retail spaces and that are part of a current preoccupation of high-end fashion labels to elevate their brand image, by drawing fashion closer to art.

I have drawn on an extensive range of primary sources in constructing this study, involving visits to stores, art galleries and museums in the major '*fashion capitals*': London, Paris, Milan, New York and Tokyo. Primary research has included interviews with a fashion designer, in-store gallery directors, artists, retailers, consultants, authors and scholars – all of whom have informed this text. I have also attended conferences, seminars and talks in the academic and cultural sectors to locate the broader context in which my research subject operates. I defend my arguments with the aid of visual references (pictures and videos). I have considered the larger picture by referencing trends in other fields, notably architecture and design. I have fed my research with an extensive examination of secondary sources from a broad range of disciplines (fashion, architecture, design, retail, economics, business, marketing, art and aesthetics, sociology, consumer psychology) and from a wide variety of sources (books, academic journals, newspapers, magazines, specialised and professional press, exhibition catalogues and press releases).

The use of art, architecture and design in retail environments, as already noted, is not new and has played its part in contributing to the culture of consumption through the development of the department store, creating a fascinating history which has been vividly described by authors such as Miller but one which lies beyond the immediate scope of this dissertation. Of course, retailing has continued to evolve since the C19th and in turn, continues to be the subject of critical texts around consumption and contemporary retail practices (see Literature Review). However the current relationship between art, architecture, design and retail is not one that (hitherto) has drawn any sustained comment and so has come to form the focus of this thesis.

However, the historical relationship between these creative practices and retail has not been analysed as an independent topic, although there are plenty of anecdotes of in-store art exhibitions and cultural events in books on the history of shopping, and on department stores

in particular, as will be reviewed in the literature review. For this reason, this thesis focuses on contemporary examples - late twentieth century and early twentieth first century - of the use of art, architecture and design in retail environments as they provide a more elaborate and strategic use of art in retail.

Using the term 'art'

I endeavour to demonstrate that the placement of art, architecture and design in retail is part of a current preoccupation of high-end fashion labels to elevate their brand values, by drawing fashion closer to art.

However, people commonly limit the idea of art in retail to original window displays and dummies. Yet, in this thesis, I intend the word 'art' as representing pieces created by established artists. I do not seek to establish a debate on the definition of art, so for the purpose of this thesis, I have only considered pieces made by artists whose works have been made public by exhibiting in art institutions (public and/or commercial), and have been published and reviewed in specialised art books and press. Some of these artists have won art awards and received grants. I therefore offer no judgement on the status of these artists. They have been identified by cultural authorities, or what I refer to as 'cultural tastemakers': art critics and writers, curators, gallerists, dealers, collectors, etc; professionals working in the cultural sector that I consider as, together, forming the 'art world'. Moreover, as these different bodies operate in a web, artists recognised by one institution tend to be gradually recognised by the others, gaining more credibility. I have adopted an 'institutional' definition of art established by cultural authorities because as the American aesthetic philosopher Morris Weitz explained, these institutions are best suited to define art: *'the practical individual decisions about which objects and which were not art should be made by experts, usually by professional critics'*[4].

The status of works of art placed outside conventional art settings has been challenged as if works of art lost their relevance outside the art preserve. However, this thesis aims to demonstrate that art can exist with credibility in commercial environments, confirming the American curator and author Seth Siegelaub's belief that *'you don't need a gallery to show ideas'*[5] and in turn, influence the perception of retail spaces.

[4] Weitz, Morris in Warburton, Nigel, *The Art Question*, Routledge, London, 2003, pp. 74 - 5
[5] Siegelaub, Seth in Alberro, Alexander, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, MIT Press, London, 2003, p. 38

What is critical to defining elements as 'art' in retail spaces in this thesis is not what the pieces are, or what they are about, but who has made (or conceived) them. I have therefore taken the idea of the artist as author to define any element, or concept as art. So, as far as this thesis is concerned, elements in stores that have been described by artists as part of their artistic output are considered within the frame of this study. I have been more concerned in defining art in terms of concept rather than aesthetic appearance. As Tony Godfrey, author and Director of Research at the Sotheby's Institute of Art, reasoned, '*art is a concept: it does not exist as a precisely definable physical type of thing, as elephants or chairs do. Since it became self-conscious, aware that it was a special category, art has often played with conceptual status*'[6]. Hence, according to this definition, defining art in terms of objects rather than concept would have been reductive and possibly flawed. I have therefore veered away from dictionary definitions of art which have positioned art in a different way[7]; instead, the definition used in this thesis attempts to best reflect the evolution of art in its history and acknowledge contemporary art practices.

Fountain (1917) by Marcel Duchamp has been key to establishing the definition of art used in this thesis. This piece, a standard white porcelain urinal, bought in a hardware store, described by Duchamp as a *'ready-made',* has, according to Steven Goldsmith, American art theorist, '*become the central hurdle over which any attempts to define art must leap'*. Duchamp made no modifications to the item, apart from simply signing it with the pseudonym, *R Mutt,* and displaying it upside down. Through this, Duchamp pioneered the idea that artists did not have to 'create' but could 'conceive' art. What became significant was the fact that Duchamp had chosen the item. As Calvin Tomkins, author and former art critic of *The New Yorker* explained, '*whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view created a new thought for that object*'[8]. This piece radically changed the image and definition of art, by demonstrating that *'anything can be art*'[9], but what matters is the concept of a piece, giving weight to the value of the artist as author. As Roberta Smith, art critic for *The New York Times*, remarked: '*if an artist says it's art, it's art*'[10]. The works of art examined in this thesis share similar characteristics to Duchamp's *Fountain*, most of the pieces examined here are of a conceptual nature, and greater weight should therefore be given to the 'authorship' of the artist.

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[6] Godfrey, Tony in Warburton, Nigel, *The Art Question*, Routledge, London, 2003, p. 73

[7] art (a:t) *n*. 1. a. the creation of works of beauty or other special significance. b. (as modifier): an art movement. 2. the exercise of human skill (as distinguished from *nature*) 3. imaginative skill as applied to representations of the natural world or figments of imagination. 4. a. the products of man's creative activities; works of art collectively, esp. of the visual arts, sometimes also music, drama, dance, and literature. b. (as modifier): an art gallery. See also arts, fine art. 5. excellence or aesthetic merit of conception or execution as exemplified by such works. 6. any branch of the visual arts, esp. painting. 7. a. any field using the techniques of art to display artistic qualities: advertising art. b. (as modifier): an art film 8. journalism, photographs or other illustrations in a newspaper, etc. 9. methods, facility, or knack: the art of threading a needle; the art of writing letters. 10. the system of rules or principles governing a particular human activity: the art of government. 11. artfulness; cunning. 12. get something to down to a fine art. To become proficient at something through practice. {C13: from the old French, from Latin, *ars* craftsmanship}, in Hanks, Patrick (ed.), *The Collins Dictionary of the English Language*, Collins, London, 1995, p. 58

[8] Tomkins, Calvin (1997), in Warburton, Nigel, *The Art Question*, Routledge, London, 2003, p. 2

[9] Torres, Louis and Marder Kamhi, Michelle, *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand,* Open Court, Chicago, 2000, p. 263

[10] Smith, Roberta, in Torres, Louis and Marder Kamhi, Michelle, *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand,* Open Court, Chicago, 2000, p. 11

The radical changes in the preconception of art brought by the Pop Art movement have also influenced the definition of art used here. Following in Duchamp's footsteps, Pop artists used everyday objects to represent the society they lived in; as David Hopkins, author of *After Modern art: 1945 - 2000* explained: '*Pop Art's themes drew back on daily events, that society's contemporary battles, or quasi biblical/ mythological fights, pieces that talk to people*'[11] with themes '*levelling of high and low cultural distinctions'* to the extent that it constituted *'constituted capitalist realism'*[12]. Like Pop artists, the artists examined in this research tend to represent the consumer culture in their work, with themes including shopping, fashion and the quest for identity. Michael Kimmelman, chief art critic of *The New York Times*, explained through the use of such 'popular' themes, Pop Art '*helped to erase all the old dividing lines: between painting and sculpture, painting and photography, sculpture and dance, sculpture and technology. Technology and performance art, not to mention art and life*'[13]. The works of art considered here also share this desire to blur boundaries. The pieces examined in this thesis also mix disciplines: technology, video, photography, sculpture, installations, performance, theatre, dance, and fashion.

I have considered as 'art' in retail, any element created by artists that has been displayed within a store, without excluding any particular art form. Thus, I have described works in a diverse range of media, such as photography, sculpture and video; even examining pieces that could be perceived on the fringes of art, touching upon other disciplines, such as performance and sound art. This display of 'fine arts' rather than 'popular arts' is deliberately used to symbolise highbrow culture and raise the cachet of shopping from a leisure activity to an educational pursuit.

I have purposely excluded works by creative practitioners (architects, designers and display workers) as 'art', as they do not work solely within the realm of art. This is why I have not considered pieces made by fashion designers as works of art, as this would have also implied that fashion can be regarded as art, defeating one of the central purpose of this thesis, which is to explain the relevance of the juxtaposition of 'art' with luxury commodities.

I have also chosen to overlook pieces made by some fashion designers which could be regarded as works of art as I am interested in demonstrating the commercial strategy behind the placement of 'art' in retail. For instance, I did not consider the illustrations of Alber Elbaz, Head designer for Lanvin, whose sketches have been exhibited in the Paris Lanvin store as 'art' in retail as these pieces have been not been recognised as works of art by cultural authorities and do not reflect a strategy by Lanvin to be associated with contemporary art.

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[11] Hopkins, David, *After Modern Art: 1945-2000*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 115
[12] ibid., p. 128
[13] Kimmelman, Michael (1997), in Torres, Louis and Marder Kamhi, Michelle, *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand*, Open Court, Chicago, 2000, p. 265

Rather, I have shown the active efforts of brands to commission pieces from established contemporary artists.

I have also acknowledged the fact that some fashion designers have also been accepted as artists, and operate on both the art and fashion platforms. A notable example of this is the work of Hussein Chalayan. An established fashion designer, Chalayan has also frequently exhibited his art and was even invited to represent Turkey, his native country, at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005[14]. Designers Karl Lagerfeld and Hedi Slimane[15] have also exhibited and published their photographic work. Yet, although I do not deny the genuine artistic merit of these designers, it was not relevant to examine their work in this thesis as they are was not displayed within retail environments but also, because these exhibitions and publications were not fulfilling a commercial strategy by their brands to be associated with contemporary art and its symbolic character.

I have also disregarded the work of architects and architectural spaces as 'art' in retail; as explained earlier, architects are not 'artists' and their work have not been recognised as 'art' by cultural institutions. I have examined pieces created by artists that have been integrated within the architectural structures of stores. For instance, I have analysed '*Votre Perte de Sens',* an installation by Danish artist Olafur Eliasson set within an elevator of the Louis Vuitton store in Paris. I have also referred to the work of Belgian artist Jan de Cock who created conceptual and experimental architectural elements for Comme des Garçons, some of which have been used as display units. I have distinguished these pieces from traditional architectural spaces, not only because of the identity of their creator, but because of their conceptual dimension; adhering to a definition of art established by Paul Crowther, author and Professor of Philosophy and Visual Arts at Jacobs University, that: '*any kind of objects or state of affairs can become a work of art if it is designated as such by an artist on the basis of some theoretical position*'[16].

Similarly, I have not considered pieces created by people who work on the fringes of art within the retail sector, notably retail designers and visual merchandisers as producers of 'art' in retail. Window displays, in particular, have been regarded and described by a few authors[17] as constituting works of art. Although I recognise their artistic merit, and I understand that some have been created by artists, I do not consider these pieces as 'art', but merely as commercial pieces. These creations are not publicised and presented as works of art. Moreover, the authorship of these 'artistic' window displays are not acknowledged, their

[14] Hussein Chalayan presented a video installation '*The Absence Presence'* (2005) at the 51st Venice Biennale, in 2005.
[15] Hedi Slimane is the former designer of Yves Saint Laurent Rive Gauche men's line (1997 - 2000) and Dior's Homme line (2001 - 2007).
[16] Crowther, Paul, 'Defining Art, Defending the Canon, Contesting Culture', *The British Journals of Aesthetics*, vol. 44, no. 4, October 2004, p. 364
[17] Portas, Mary, *Windows, The Art of Retail Display*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1999 and Tucker, Johnny, *Retail Desire, Design Display and Visual Merchandising,* RotoVision, London, 2003

creators remain anonymous. In such context, artists work as designers, creating something functional, often without a theoretical reasoning.

Authorship therefore plays a critical role in the definition of art used throughout this thesis. For instance, although the British artist Sam Taylor-Wood has considered *XV Seconds*, commissioned and displayed by Selfridges, as separate to the body of her work, I would argue that her authorship gave it legitimacy as a genuine work of art. In fact, as it will later be demonstrated, Selfridges ensured the status of this commission as art, by fervently presenting (and commissioning) it as art. Furthermore, as the focus of this thesis is on understanding the function of art in retail, I have particularly examined pieces that are presented as art from the view of retailers, as they are the ones initiating commissions, staging exhibitions and developing an 'art strategy'. I believe that by putting an emphasis on retailers' definition of art, the function of art becomes more apparent; works of art have been examined in relation to the brand image and identity with which they are juxtaposed. The placement of works of art in stores implies that there is (or at least, there appears to be) relevance, between the brand and the piece. The definition of art that best summarises the meaning of art used in this thesis has been put forward by Grace Glueck, art journalist, if it is *'intended as art, if presented as such, and... judged to be art by those qualified in such matters'*[18] then it is art.

Art examined in this thesis has been displayed in stores throughout the world and by artists from diverse origins, Japan (Takashi Murakami), Brazil (Vik Muniz), France (Xavier Veilhan, Francois-Xavier and Claude Lalanne,) Israel (Michal Rovner), North America (Tim White-Sobieski and James Turrell), Belgium (Carsten Höller) and Denmark (Olafur Eliasson), demonstrating the global character of this phenomenon. For this reason, a global perspective of art has been taken as I have studied pieces by artists recognised by cultural authorities outside the so-called 'western world'.

Both emerging and established artists have been discussed, although one concern of this thesis is to understand why these artists have been selected by retailers to represent their brands. Works by internationally renowned artists such as Daniel Buren or Olafur Eliasson in retail spaces carry different connotations than pieces by emerging artists such as Michal Rovner or Jan de Cock would in the same environment. The status of artists is inevitably significant in effecting how spaces are read and by implications how brands are perceived.

The findings of this research are intended to reach an inter-disciplinary audiences spanning interest in art, design, marketing and retail. This research, conducted from a design's point of

[18] Glueck, Grace (1989), in Torres, Louis and Marder Kamhi, Michelle, *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand,* Open Court, Chicago, 2000, p. 13

view, does not provide quantitative information on the financial impact of the use of art in retail, which a business or marketing perspective would give on the topic. Rather this research uses a qualitative approach. It seeks to raise issues and questions that other subjects such as sociology, psychology or economics could further explore.

Literature Review

Overview

The subject of placing works of art in retail stores has attracted limited press coverage and has been under-represented in academic study. This is because there is no single discipline to investigate this relationship, as both art and retail cover an umbrella of areas. My positioning of retail poses a challenge for interpretation and analysis in terms of placing this study within existing literature.

The aim of this literature review is therefore to present the context in which works of art have appeared in high-end fashion stores, and introduce the key tenets of this study (existing polemics and 'given' perspectives on the subject). This section also aims to signal older narratives, which can be revised to add new perspectives

From the main body of literature, I have abstracted several themes that surfaced repeatedly, notably: retail, architecture, fashion, art and consumerism. The diversity and broad range of themes addressed here reflect the multi-disciplinary character of this research subject. I have also examined notions of the counterculture, globalisation, celebrity and popular culture and critical practices, using the works of Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Pierre Bourdieu and Guy Debord to define a more theoretical backdrop.

For the purpose of this research, I rely on Roland Barthes' concept developed in *Mythologie*s[19] that elements are both connotative and denotative. I focus on the 'symbolic' and 'sign' value of objects as defined by Jean Baudrillard in the *Systems of Objects*[20]. I argue that retailers display art in shops, exploiting the 'sign' value of art as a symbol of exclusivity. I also use Baudrillard's notion of 'simulacra'[21] to describe how the use of art in shop becomes a 'simulacra' of the luxury lifestyle. I employ Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' developed in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*[22] to describe how the display of art in retail environments can contribute to enriching consumer's knowledge and 'cultural capital' rather than 'material' or 'economic capital'. I also adopt Bourdieu's belief that the appreciation of art is characteristic and has even become a connotation of bourgeois culture, which explains why

[19] Barthes, Roland, *Mythologie*s, Vintage, London, 2000 [first published in 1957]
[20] Baudrillard, Jean, *Systems of Objects*, Verso, London, 1996 [first published in 1968]
[21] Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulacra and Simulation*, University of Michigan, Ann Harbor, 1994 {first published in French in 1981}
[22] Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Routledge, London, 1989 [first published in French in 1979]

retailers use art to symbolise high-class lifestyles. Finally, I refer to *The Society of the Spectacle*[23] written by Guy Debord, in which he argued that the mass media and the capitalist system have contributed to transforming society's into a 'spectacle' in which social life is replaced with mere representations. I consider this theory in relation to high-end fashion, which I argue focuses on a 'perceived' reality of the world and functions on developing 'representations' of luxury, beauty and fame. These different theories share common beliefs that elements can be used as symbols and therefore have double meanings.

Broadly, the subject of this research falls within the study of retail design, encompassed within studies of environmental or spatial design. Retail design has tended to cover all aspects of the design of a store, ranging from the external appearance, such as the facade and signage, through to internal components, such as the display, lighting, graphics, furniture, layout and decoration. It is this last element of retail design that the use of art has been seen to fall under. What this research aims to demonstrate is that original works of arts displayed in high-end fashion shops go beyond being used as a decoration, rather retailers have displayed works of art as marketing tools, to transpose the spirit of a brand in visual forms. Retail design goes beyond creating the physical space in which the goods are sold; the first concern is economic rather than aesthetic.

Placed in stores, works of art take on several functions. Beyond aesthetic utilities, works of art are essentially turned into commercial tools. Art can express or strengthen the brand image, define the clientele, position the status of the product and distinguish the company and its outlets from its competitors.

Although store design has always been a concern, some commentators have considered retail design as a novel sector compared with other creative practices such as architecture and domestic interior design. Retail design has not yet been 'formally' defined. For instance, the 1995 *Dictionary of Retailing and Merchandising*[24], a dictionary dedicated to this field had no entry for the term 'retail design'. An extensive range of dedicated books and journals[25] has been published on this sector only since the late 1990s, rather than presenting it from an architectural perspective (as it had previously been the case). As the retail and merchandising sector grew, so did its coverage. The late 1990s was the period in which most critical writings on retail design were published, so their analysis of the current sector is superficial, demonstrating that there are gaps to be filled. Still, it has helped give the subject a professional and academic legitimacy as a subject area in its own right, worthy of public interest.

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[23] Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Zone Books, New York, 1995 [first published in 1967]
[24] Rosenberg, Jerry. M, *Dictionary of Retailing and Merchandising*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Chichester, 1995
[25] Key journals and magazines covering retail design include: *Display & Design Ideas, In-store, R.E.D, Style Guide*, *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, and *VM+SD.*

While numerous academic studies have examined shopping environments and consumer behaviour, no study has specifically examined the presence and use of works of art in retail. It is this gap in the knowledge, which motivated this research. However, the use of music within retail environments has been analysed repeatedly - most notably by Tia DeNora and Sophie Belcher[26] who reviewed prior studies and gave an insight on how stores make their music policies and what factors help them make such decisions. They demonstrated that music is used by retailers to signal target clientele and brand image, and to *'structure the temporal dimensions of the retail environment over the day, week and year'*[27]. Music is therefore branded and turned into an extension of the brand image and serves a function, part of a commercial strategy. This strategic use of music demonstrates that seemingly anodyne elements of retail environments have a purpose, which lead me to believe that works of art displayed within stores could also have a predetermined function, which I assumed also contributes to shaping the brand atmosphere in the shop environment.

The brand image itself has been the focus of academic studies conducted from different perspectives, mostly from the fields of consumer psychology and marketing. In her study of store image in the UK fashion sector, Grete Birtwistle contrasted consumers and retailers' perceptions of stores[28]. She demonstrated that for retailers, store image represents *'their most significant communication with their target customers'*[29]. In some respects, this confirms that stores have a complex role of conveying brand messages to consumers. Birtwistle observed a relationship between positive perception of store-image and financial performance[30]; a store that is perceived as 'agreeable' from the customer's point of view has a direct link with the number of visits made to stores within a given period[31]. Art could be used as means of improving store image and thus, ensure consumer loyalty.

Madeleine Pullman and Michael Gross developed these similar conclusions as they examined the *'ability of experience design elements to elicit emotions and loyalty behaviors'*[32]. They also found that store design can influence consumer loyalty and consequently, sale performances. Pullman and Gross concluded that there is a correlation between store design and consumers *'emotional connection'* with stores. Due to the difficulty of measuring emotions, Pullman and Gross focused on 'basic emotions', such as 'comfort' and 'fun', although admitting that more complex emotions may interplay in such situations[33]. They highlighted the difficulty in studying retail environments due to the complexity and multiplicity of interactions occurring

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[26] DeNora, Tia and Belcher, Sophie, "When You're Trying Something On You Picture Yourself in a Place Where They Are Playing This Kind of Music" – Musically Sponsored Agency in the British Clothing Retail Sector', *The Editorial Board of the Sociological Review,* 2000, pp. 80 – 101
[27] ibid., p. 80
[28] Birtwistle, Grete., Clarke, Ian and Freathy, Paul, 'Store Image in the UK Fashion Sector: Consumer Versus Retailer Perceptions', *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, vol. 9, no. 1, January 1999, pp. 1 - 16
[29] ibid., p. 13
[30] ibid., p. 14
[31] ibid., p. 2
[32] Pullman, Madeleine. E and Gross, Michael. A, 'Ability of Experience Design Elements to Elicit Emotions and Loyalty Behaviors', *Decision Sciences*, vol. 35, no. 3, Summer 2004, pp. 551 – 578
[33] ibid., p. 555

in retail environments as between consumers and retailers, and amongst consumers. Works of art could be used as other 'design elements' to stir positive emotions, and make stores 'fun' to improve the consumer experience.

However, most academic studies that examine retail environments were conducted on an exploratory level, and should be considered as the first steps toward understanding how retail environments operate and how consumers behave in such settings. The exploratory nature of these studies also demonstrated that retail environments have only relatively recently been deemed worthy of academic focus.

Otto Riewoldt explained in *Retail Design*[34] that the apparition of retail design occurred as a result of the growing significance of leisure in the late-capitalist societies. As shopping became a form of leisure pursuit, stores had to be turned into places of entertainment which according to Riewoldt could be ensured through the incorporation of a 'novelty' factor in store design: '*the dialectic between the recognition factor and the surprise factor in the design of retail spaces and showrooms is becoming increasingly important to ensure a balance between continuity and regeneration*'[35]. What Riewoldt evoked as the '*recognition factor*' is the manner in which stores can express the identity of brands. Facilitating recognition is key to Riewoldt's definition of retail design: *'as the direct mediator of the brand experience, the retail spaces must themselves be branded. Right down to the smallest detail, they are effectively designed to communicate a distinctive message and emotional identity'*.[36] In other words, stores must be designed as an expression of brands, instantly recognisable, but at the same time, challenging and surprising to attract new consumers.

Riewoldt, one of the key writers on retail design, did not discuss the presence of art in stores. He recognised the 'artistic' character of displays, a perspective held by many other authors who have examined the subject. Martin Pegler, Professor of store planning and visual merchandising at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, also suggested that art inspires retail design, '*for decades past, and probably for decades to come, display designers have and will find inspiration in the art and sculpture of past and present*'[37]. However, with over fifty years of experience and the publication of more than seventy books on retail design and visual merchandising, he has so far not formally recognised the case of art in retail, and has only acknowledged it in the form of artistic window displays.

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[34] Riewoldt, Otto, *Retail Design*, Te Neues Publishing Company, London, 2000
[35] ibid., p. 10
[36] ibid., p. 11
[37] Pegler, Martin, *Store Windows: N° 11*, Visual Reference Publications, New York, 2000, p. 10

Mary Portas, former marketing Director of the London department store Harvey Nichols in the late nineties, considered the presence of art in retail to be limited within shop windows. In *Windows: the Art of Retail Display*[38] published in 1999, Portas described shop windows as *'art of the high street*[39]*'*. In the chapter 'Is it Art?' Portas argued, with the support of illustrations of 'artistic' window displays, that in some cases, windows displays of some high-end fashion stores could be read as genuine 'works of art'. To give more weight to her argument, she cited renowned artists who have made window displays such as Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, Salvador Dali and Andy Warhol. Yet Portas only raised the issue; the question of whether there is 'art' in stores was left unanswered.

Like Portas, Johnny Tucker considered 'artistic' window displays as representing the occurrence of art in high-end fashion stores. In *Design, Display and Visual Merchandising*[40]*,* Tucker described the purpose of such creative – and what he believed to be 'artistic' - efforts as a part of a commercial strategy, to give depth to a brand: *'sales and bottom line performances are by far the most important outcome of retail design, display and visual merchandising (VM), but there's a lot more at play here. Lifestyles are promoted, stories are woven, eye-catching, head-turning, even stomach-churning, material is used to give life and a depth of cultural meaning to that essentially bland word, the brand*[41]*'*. In other words, artefacts and artistic elements are used to form a visual language and have the ability to communicate messages to consumers.

The 'artistic' character of shop windows has been considered in several dedicated journals such as *Creative*, *Fashion Windows*, and *Inspiration*. These reviews have also contributed to developing the credibility of the artistic character of shops windows. Yet, these sources do not acknowledge 'genuine' works of art, but only consider artistic elements.

In *New Retail*[42] published in 2000, Next store designer Rasshied Din showed that retail design had not only *'turn*(ed*) the retailer's objective into a three-dimensional reality*[43]*'*, but had enabled the retail sector to adapt and respond to the economic and demographic changes in western society. Din attributed the establishment of a *'new retail'*[44] as a reaction by retailers and designers to the process of globalisation and the explosion of competition. He described retail design as being '*a means of helping a retailer to develop and produce a strategy to reposition his product, enter new markets or sustain market share*[45]*'*.

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[38] Portas, Mary, *Windows, the Art of Retail Display*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1999
[39] ibid., p. 6
[40] Tucker, Johnny, *Retail Desire, Design Display and Visual Merchandising*, RotoVision, London, 2003
[41] ibid., p. 7
[42] Din, Rasshied, *New Retail*, Conran Octopus Limited, London, 2000
[43] ibid., p. 12
[44] A view shared by Raul Barreneche who wrote in 2005 'new Retail', updating Din's survey of the retail sector: Barreneche, Raul. A, *New Retail*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 2005
[45] Din, Rasshied, *New Retail*, Conran Octopus Limited, London, 2000, p. 12

To achieve this economic function, Din defined the retail designers' task as combining *'elements of psychology, ethnology and ergonomics with the retailer's knowledge of the market to develop an interior which is most likely to fit the consumer profile'*[46]. These multiple influences, together with the appreciation of consumer psychology, marketing and retail economics, are central to the establishment of what Din understood to be '*new retail*', which forms the retail landscape examined in this thesis.

This advent of a 'new retail' could be perceived as an outcome of the focus on the 'experiential' as put forward by Bernd Schmitt in *Experiential Marketing: How to get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate to your Company and Brands*[47]. In this text, Schmitt showed how there has been a major shift in approaches to advertising and marketing. Products are no longer marketed on features-and-benefit approach (unique selling proposition), but rather, on their more emotive 'experiential' characteristics. Christian Mikunda[48] and Otto Riewoldt[49] also showed, through an analysis of new retail concepts, that stores were developed to emphasise the experiential and facilitate the consumer experience. Flagships stores, in particular, have been developed as 'theme parks' so that brands can be 'experienced'. This adds value to the commodities offered. As this research shows, the use of art in retail is part of a drive by the high-end fashion sector towards the experiential. Works of art are used to enhance consumer's experiences and make shopping more participative.

The focus on consumers' experiences goes against theories on consumption held by Marxists, neo-Marxists and the Frankfurt school - notably Theodorno Adorno, Marx Horkeiner, Herbert Marcuse[50] - that consumers are manipulated and 'persuaded' by retailers into buying goods. Schmidt's belief that the focus is now on consumers' experiences changed the perspective that consumers are passive. Rather the focus on consumers' experiences proposes that consumption is about empowering consumers, allowing them to make their own decisions. It also shows that retailers are in fact influenced by consumers' decisions and develop their goods and services accordingly. This comes as an evidence that people are not submissively buying. They need incentive, and works of art may be displayed within stores as influential factors. Works of art should be therefore seen as enhancing the consumer experience.

In fact, if most of the authors cited above recognised the influence of art on retail in terms of artistic elements in the display effort, none acknowledged its greater set of associations. These include the numerous art foundations and awards set up by retailers, the purposely-dedicated

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[46] Din, Rasshied, *New Retail*, Conran Octopus Limited, London, 2000, p. 11
[47] Schmitt, Bernd. H, *Experiential Marketing: How to get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate to your Company and Brands*, the Free Press, New York, 1999
[48] Mikunda, Christian, *Brand Lands, Hot Spots & Cool Spaces: Welcome to the Third Place and the Total Marketing Experience,* Kogan Page, London, 2004
[49] Riewoldt, Otto (ed.), *Brandscaping: Worlds of Experience in Retail Design*, Birkhauser, Berlin, 2002
[50] Zoltán, Tar, *The Frankfurt School: the Critical Theories of Max Horkheimer and Theordor W Adorno*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., Chichester, 1977

in-store exhibition spaces, or simply, the extensive and frequent collaborations between artists and retailers both in and outside of the display effort. Numerous high-end fashion brands, such as Louis Vuitton, Prada or Agnès b, have been actively supporting contemporary art by opening art galleries, sponsoring awards and exhibitions. However, the review of retail design and appraisal of 'artistic' window displays suggests that efforts have been particularly prominent in high-end fashion retail. Only few brands outside the fashion industry were used to illustrate the contemporary image of retail. In fact, most of these brands were in retail sectors closely linked to fashion, such as cosmetics and jewellery. The links between architecture (or retail design as an expression of interior architecture) and fashion retailing have led some authors to suggest that fashion retail has developed its own architectural expression, which is why this research focuses on the use of art in the fashion context.

In the timeframe of this study, two authors, Eleanor Curtis and Neil Bingham, specifically examined fashion retail. In *Fashion Retail*[51], Curtis described high-end fashion stores, such as the Prada 'Epicenters' and the Comme des Garçons stores in New York and Tokyo. The author presented the efforts made by these companies to make the shopping experience unique through bold architecture. Echoing Riewoldt, Curtis argued that the design of original and creative stores occurred as '*an act of distinction',* with the capacity to fight competition by making the store stand out: '*the context of these commissions is one of design overload: we are bombarded with design in our everyday lives and brand names struggle to keep afloat amongst this sea of competition. Architecture must create the narrative that grabs the customers' attention and lures them into the world of the brand*'[52]. Curtis also viewed the drive for distinction in fashion retail as part of a commercial strategy: '*these economic factors and the need for brand differentiation have had considerable impact on the brand's policies, and are not to be overlooked in determining the relationship between fashion and architecture*'[53]. The analysis of high-architecture is essential to understanding the use of art in retail. Like art, architecture appears to be used as a means of communicating to consumers.

In *The New Boutique: Fashion and Design*[54], Bingham found that the establishment of a '*new retail*' was specific to the fashion sector. According to Bingham, the blurring of fields, distinctive to the fashion sector, gave rise to new retail conventions: '*today, as the boundaries between retail, fashion, art and architecture become increasingly blurred, the hottest fashion designers and fashion houses are working with architects and artists of exceptional talent and international reputations; together, they are reshaping the world of fashion architecture*'[55]. This blurring of boundaries which reflects the multi-disciplinary nature of fashion, also enables the acceptance of art in a commercial context.

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[51] Curtis, Eleanor, *Fashion Retail*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., Chichester, 2004
[52] ibid., p. 10
[53] ibid., p. 11
[54] Bingham, Neil, *The New Boutique: Fashion and Design*, Merrell Publishing, London, 2005
[55] ibid., p. 10

The knowledge of the common features between fashion and architecture is essential to the understanding of the importance of architecture in fashion retail. In *The Fashion of Architecture*[56], Bradley Quinn discussed the similarities between fashion and architecture. Quinn argued that both fashion and architecture were, in their origins, used as a means of sheltering: *'fashion has not always been so distinct from architecture. In the long journey of human existence, clothing first provided the body with wearable shelter, with architecture manifesting as a framework to support the animal hides and panels of fabric that became roofs and walls'*[57]. Quinn explored the influence of architecture on fashion, a perspective different from other commentators who have tended to examine the relationship between these disciplines by focusing on the influence of fashion on architecture[58]. Quinn described fashion as being largely influenced by architectural trends: '*the shapes of fashion, in their extensive range of historical styles and streamlined modernism, are seldom independent of the architecture around them. As doorways widened during the regency period, skirts reached delirious proportions as their hoops and panniers extended to unprecedented widths'*[59].

Whilst illustrating the similarities between architecture and fashion, Quinn had to consider the art realm as most often, collaborations between architects and fashion designers occur within the art framework[60]. Quinn acknowledged that the blurring of boundaries between fashion and architecture appeared as an artistic expression: '*it is mainly perceived that the meeting place of fashion and architecture occurs in the art context*'. In particular, Quinn examined the practice of British artist Lucy Orta, who has experimented with textiles and created 'wearable pieces of architecture'.

Quinn demonstrated that fashion designers who had trained as architects contributed to expanding the links between fashion and architecture: '*renowned designers Pierre Cardin, Roberto Capucci and Gianfranco Ferré are also trained architects, and they make clothing according to architectural principles rather than following the rules of tailoring'*[61]. Quinn suggested that fashion designers opened high-architecture shops and showrooms to reflect their interest for architecture. A notable example of this is Japanese designer Rei Kawakubo, founder of Comme des Garçons[62]. Married to British architect Adrian Joffe, Kawakubo incorporates architectural concepts into the design of some of her pieces, and is concerned in making her stores architecturally challenging. In fact, as it will be revealed in chapter 2, the fashion designers that are most concerned in creating architecturally challenging stores are also those most involved with art.

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[56] Quinn, Bradley, *The Fashion of Architecture,* Berg Publishers, London, 2003
[57] ibid., p. 2
[58] ibid., p. 9
[59] Quinn, Bradley, *The Fashion of Architecture,* Berg Publishers, London, 2003, p. 1
[60] ibid., p. 6
[61] ibid., p. 4
[62] ibid., pp. 49 – 50

This showed that there are close links between fashion and architecture, art providing, perhaps, the best platform to express these links. Quinn identified the relationship between architecture and fashion with space, arguing that architecture and fashion are both about 'watching' and 'being watched': '*both fashion and architecture presume the presence of a public that watches and must be watched*[63]'. This is a characteristic also shared by other 'visual images', notably art, as visual images, including fashion and architecture, have the ability to communicate conceptual ideas into visual forms.

In *Fashion as Communication*[64], Malcolm Barnard argued that fashion is able to communicate messages, confirming that fashion, like art and architecture are about 'being watched'. Barnard described fashion as primarily concerned with communicating identity, 'f*ashion, dress, clothing are ways in which people communicate, not only things like feeling and mood, but also the values, hopes and beliefs of the social group of which they are members*'[65]. In *The Language of Clothes*[66], Alison Lurie argued that, beyond communicating messages, fashion constitutes a form of language, each item clothing functioning as vocabulary. One could argue this function is similarly shared between art and architecture, which also operates as a shared visual 'language'.

Another common function between fashion and architecture is its ability to communicate a social code. Yuniya Kawamura saw the connection between fashion and art occurring on a social level. In *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*[67], she reasoned that *'like art, fashion is social in character, has a social base and exists in a social context'*. Both architecture and fashion can signal the presence of particular groups. Fashion not only signals allegiance to certain groups, but shared values. Yuniya Kawamura demonstrated that fashion can enable acceptance and belonging to groups, through her analysis of Japanese teenage girls and the subcultures established through fashion styles[68]. Books on the theory of subcultures such as Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*[69] have also expressed the idea that fashion can help strengthen ties between people and forge a sense of community. Groups as the hippies or punks wore clothes that were not popular with the cultural mainstream, and led them to be marginalised. However, this alternative dress style confirmed their membership and gave them the recognition from their subcultural community.

This belief that fashion demonstrates and at the same time enables acceptance amongst groups has been largely discussed by fashion theorists and sociologists. Georg Simmel[70] developed in 1904, a theory of *'emulation'*, or what is now known as the trickle-down process of

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[63] Quinn, Bradley, *The Fashion of Architecture*, Berg Publishers, London, 2003, p. 20
[64] Barnard, Malcolm, *Fashion as Communication*, Routledge, London, 1996
[65] ibid., p. 36
[66] Lurie, Alison, *The Language of Clothes*, First Owl Books Edition, New York, 1981
[67] Kawamura, Yuniya, *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, Berg, Oxford, 2005, p. 33
[68] Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, pp. 784 - 801
[69] Hebdige, Dick, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, Routledge, London, 1971
[70] Simmel, Georg, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, The University of Chicago press, London, 1971 [first published in 1904]

the diffusion of fashion. Simmel argued that people used fashion to gain social acceptance by adopting the fashion styles of members of the higher social strata.

In his survey of cultural preferences, Pierre Bourdieu demonstrated that beyond fashion, culture is an expression of social distinctions, '*art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social differences*'[71]. Hence, it can be claimed that fashion plays a part in perpetuating social inequalities or divisions. Fashion can expose gender, social class, and origin, creating associations with certain groups, and (inevitably) exclusion from others. In this study, art as a symbol of 'bourgeois' culture is used to signal the exclusive character of high-end fashion.

The presence of works of art in high-end fashion stores could be perceived as an expression of the blurring of boundaries between art and fashion. The debate as to whether fashion is art, and whether art can be fashion has been fuelled by both sectors; fashion designers have produced conceptual almost non-functional pieces that could be perceived as art installations, and artists have created works of art that borrow from fashion. The advantage for fashion retailers in having fashion assimilated to art is to give fashion a higher quality other than ordinary designer objects. In *Design Discourse,* Victor Margolin explained the distinctions between art and design: '*designed objects declare a status other than fine art. The attitudes and values asserted are different, for the designed object declares that it is fit for use, whereas the work of fine art asserts a freedom from specialised utility*'[72]. This '*freedom from specialised utility*' distinguishes works of art, making them the '*ultimate consumer product*'[73] as described Leon Golub. In *Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread*[74], Barbara Bloemink and Joseph Cunningham reflected on the differences between works of art and design objects. Bloemink and Cunningham demonstrated that some works of art could be considered as designed objects due to their utilitarian character and because of the techniques and material used. Nevertheless, this text argued that functional objects made by artists remain works of art. Views on the differences between art and design have been essential in understanding why art has been displayed in high-end fashion stores. According to Margolin, the essential difference between these two disciplines is that '*design focus is on user rather than viewer*'[75]. This argument justifiably implies that the act of 'viewing' is distinct from the act of 'using', and that 'users' and 'viewers' are different. Users are concerned with fulfilling a task. Users are active, lead by their own initiatives. Viewing on the other hand is passive. In other words, works of art are to be displayed for the purpose to be 'viewed' rather than 'used'.

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[71] Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Tate*, Routledge, London, 1989, p. 7
[72] Margolin, Victor (ed.), *Design Discourse: History, Theory, Criticism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1989, p. 107
[73] Golub, Leon (1990), in Buck, Louisa and Dodd, Philip, *Relative Values or What's Art Worth?* BBC Books, London, 1991, p. 18
[74] Bloemink, Barbara and Cunningham, Joseph, *Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread,* Merrell Publishers Limited, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, London, 2004; accompanying the 'Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread' exhibition, National Design Museum, Smithsonian institution, New York, 10 September 2004 – 27 February 2005
[75]Margolin, Victor (ed.), *Design Discourse: History, Theory, Criticism,* University of Chicago Press, London, 1989, p. 16

Stephen Greenblatt[76] explained that the display of works of art implies a concept of 'resonance' and 'wonder'. Resonance representing *"the power of the displayed object to reach out by its formal boundaries to a larger world to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a view to stand*'; and wonder: '*the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention*'[77]. The concept of 'resonance' and 'wonder' implies that the display of works of art requires a particular approach, art institutions allow 'viewers' to accept that anything (even the most conceptual pieces such as Martin Creed's *Work No 88* (1994), a ball of squashed white paper) in such settings is art, enabling pieces to be understood and read on a conceptual level. The particular approach given to the display of works of art in art institutions implies that stores offer a distinct degree of 'resonance' and 'wonder', at least to the extent that objects displayed in such environments are viewed as purposeful, dedicated to 'users' rather than 'viewers'. This thesis attempts to examine how the approach of displaying works of art in stores can be developed to offer the same level of 'resonance' and 'wonder' as ensured in art institutions.

The relationship between fashion and art has been traced as far back as the Renaissance according to Alice Mackrell in *Art & Fashion: The Impact of Art on Fashion, and Fashion on Art*[78]. She examined the links between these two disciplines following the history of art and fashion, and found that artistic movements such as Impressionism, Art Nouveau and Surrealism had corresponding fashion styles, which lead her to conclude that the two sectors have co-existed in a relationship of reciprocal and mutual inspiration. Mackrell focused her analysis on the influence of fashion on art and described the work of artists such as Gustav Klimt and Sonia Delaunay who have created patterns and produced garments.

Before Mackrell, Richard Martin had already examined the similitude between art movements and fashion styles, specifically in examining Cubism[79] and Surrealism[80]. However, unlike Mackrell Martin insisted that art and fashion are absolutely distinct: '*one is right to be sceptical of the supposition that art and fashion are made of, animated by, or heading towards the same aims and criteria. Fashion is irrevocably commercial; its system is somewhat different from the system and culture of art*[81]. This comment underlines the fundamental reason why fashion is not accepted as art.

Fashion is highly dependent on commercial demands and criteria, and only very few designers can escape this commercial reality when creating new pieces. And although Martin

[76] Greenblatt, Stephen, 'Resonance and Wonder', in Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven. D, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Smithsonian Installation Press, London, 1991, p. 42
[77] ibid., p. 42
[78] Mackrell, Alice, *Art & Fashion: The Impact of Art on Fashion, and Fashion on Art*, B. T Batsford, London, 2005
[79] Martin, Richard, *Cubism and Fashion*, Harry N Abrams, Inc, New York, 1998
[80] Martin, Richard, *Fashion and Surrealism*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1996
[81] Martin, Richard, *Cubism and Fashion*, Harry N Abrams, Inc, New York, 1998, p. 153

acknowledged that there are 'crossovers' between fashion and art, he argued that none of these 'crossovers' justify or demonstrate that fashion can be perceived as art:

> We have, in fact, been assaulted of late with a politically correct and intellectually irresponsible claptrap that art and fashion should be mingled and merged, at least on the plane of exhibition. Then, curators and would-be curators show us the usual suspects, which invariably include a few utopian tokens of fashion or a few crossover works by artists making clothes...[82]

However, authors such as Chris Townsend and Florence Müller did not share this view. Both believed that the boundaries between art and fashion are blurring. In *Rapture: Art's Seduction by Fashion since 1970*[83] (the catalogue for an exhibition held at the Barbican gallery, London), Townsend examined the relationship between art and fashion and described the practices of artists such as Rebecca Horn, Joseph Beuys, Jeanne-Claude and Christo who have been experimented with textiles and incorporated fashion techniques in their work. His analysis focused on art and fashion since the 1960's. Townsend reviewed how fashion imagery has been incorporated into the themes of contemporary art. He used the painter Frank Moore as an example with the piece *To Die For* (1997), commissioned by Versace, representing a critique of fashion through the myth of Medusa represented by the model Kate Moss. Townsend explained through this example fashion models have become the 'faces' of consumer culture. The theme of fashion has been a pretext for feminist artists to question the representation of gender and sexuality, and the role of women in society. For instance, Jenny Holzer photographed women in 'sexy' attires, wearing t-shirts printed with statements such as '*abuse of power comes as no surprise*' (written in her iconic graphic style). Cindy Sherman has, in her fashion-inspired self-portraits, put herself in different situations and attires. This served to demonstrate that clothing can communicate messages on different registers. Using Holzer and Sherman as examples, Townsend questioned whether fashion photography can be considered as art and concluded that this genre of photography can be perceived as the most expressive outcome of the juxtaposition of fashion and art. Indeed, fashion photographers such as Helmut Newton, Deborah Turbeville and Corinne Day have been acclaimed by both the fashion and art sectors.

In *Art & Fashion*[84], Müller focused on the contemporary relationship of fashion and art. Müller examined the relation between art and fashion from the fashion perspective, describing how the fashion sector had been borrowing art methods, curatorial techniques, conventional of museums and art institutions to arrange and display products. Müller observed that the 'reunion' of art and fashion occurred in terms of production, and also in the consumption of fashion, the presentation of clothing as work of art during catwalk shows and in stores. Müller described how catwalk shows have been borrowing from the art performance genre, becoming 'happenings' of their own. She illustrated this argument with the description of a Helmut Lang

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[82] Martin, Richard, *Cubism and Fashion*, Harry N Abrams, Inc., New York, 1998. p. 153
[83] Townsend, Chris, *Rapture: Art's Seduction by Fashion since 1970*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2002; accompanying the 'Rapture: Art's Seduction by Fashion since 1970' exhibition, Barbican Gallery, London, 10 October - 23 December 2002
[84] Müller, Florence, *Art & Fashion*, Thames & Hudson Ltd., London, 2000

ready-to-wear show, which had taken place in the courtyard of the Louvre, a symbolic juxtaposition. She also described how established artists have been creating sets and invitations cards for catwalk shows including Keith Haring (for Vivienne Westwood) and Gerard Garouste (for Adeline André). However, Müller failed to evoke the placement of original works of art within stores.

Fashion has been regarded by critics as having its own geography, rites and cycles; and increasingly, it appears to be merging with those of the 'art world'. In *Fashion's World Cities*[85], a collection of essays edited by Christopher Breward and David Gilbert, it was argued that the fashion industry operates within a network of global cities[86], separate from the global financial market[87]. The geography of the stores used as case studies in this thesis is significant as their locations can convey messages. As I go on to argue to argue in this thesis, proximity to 'art hotspots' or 'creative quarters' enables brands to become associated with the creativity of these areas. Proximity to art galleries and museums can also reinforce links with art. More than Breward and Gilbert[88], I argue that fashion having its own geography but a case of fashion brands honing pre-existing creative reputations that come from specific regions.

Understanding the location of stores requires consideration of the concept of 'globalisation'. Sociologist Saskia Sassen referred to cities of both the financial or fashion world as being 'global cities'[89]. However, Sassen distinguished two forms of globalization: 'economic globalization' and 'cultural globalization'. She described the effect of globalisation as creating a duality between the national and global. This duality creates a multiplicity of identities as immigration has diluted the meaning of citizenship, and raised questions around identity and community. Anthropologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse went further by claiming that this duality established '*third cultures*', causing a '*creolization of global culture*' and the development of an '*intercontinental crossover culture*'[90]. This is true in that for international brands such as Chanel, this phenomenon can be observed in the multiple images and identities on a global scale (see chapter 3).

Paul Du Gay defined globalisation as being *'about the dissolution of the old structures and boundaries of national states and communities. It is about the increasing transnationalization of economic and cultural life, frequently imagined in terms of the creation of a global space and community in which we shall all be global citizens and neighbours'*[91]. So according to Du Gay there is a state before and

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[85] Breward, Christopher and Gilbert, David (eds.), *Fashion's World Cities*, Berg, London, 2006
[86] Paris, Milan, London, New York and Tokyo are considered as the fashion capitals of the world, Breward, Christopher and Gilbert, David (eds.), *Fashion's World Cities*, Berg, London, 2006
[87] Saskia Sassen described *'the major international financial and business centers'* as *'New York, London, Tokyo, Paris, Frankfurt, Zurich, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Sydney, Hong Kong, among others. But this geography now also includes cities such as São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Bangkok, Taipei, Bombay, and Mexico City'*, in Sassen, Saskia, *Globalization and its Discontents*, The New Press, New York, 1998, p. xxv
[88] Breward, Christopher and Gilbert, David (eds.), *Fashion's World Cities*, Berg, London, 2006
[89] Sassen, Saskia, *Globalization and its Discontents*, The New Press, New York, 1998
[90] de Mooji, Marieke, *Global Marketing and Advertising - Understanding Cultural Paradox*, (Second ed.), Sage Publications, London, 2005
[91] Du Gay, Paul, *Production of Culture: Cultures of Production: Culture, Media and Identities*, Sage Publications, London, 1997, p. 12

after globalisation. Whereas Martha Van Der Bly reasoned that globalisation occurred in a progressive manner so that the beginning of globalisation cannot be exactly determined. Van Der Bly argued that globalisation should be seen as either a process or a condition. However, either approach to the study of globalisation makes its analysis complex:

> The very basic idea of defining globalization as a process implies that it intrinsically refers to an outcome situation that lies in the future, which is by definition immeasurable and indefinable. This implies that the possibilities of the concept as a research framework for empirical research are restricted, and one needs to turn to the discipline of futurology to find appropriate research methods, such as scenarios, trend analysis, chaos theory, simulation games or mathematical modelling (see, for example, Malasaka, 2000)[92].

Van der Bly demonstrated that globalisation is also multi-dimensional, rather than '*one dimensional*'[93]. She showed that globalisation goes beyond the 'one dimensional' view that only the West influences the rest of the world, often referred to as 'the McDonaldization of society', a term coined by George Ritzer in 1996. Van Der Bly argued that there 'multi-dimensional' influences to globalisation, creating heterogeneous cultures: the '*hybridisation*' of cultures such as the '*sushi-nation*', which Bly described as an '*infiltration of eastern practices such as yoga, food like sushi, Buddhism, or tai-chi into the western hemisphere*'[94].Uri Ram illustrated the creolisation of culture in a study of McDonald's in Israel[95]. He discussed the polemics between 'homogenizers' and 'heterogenizers' and explained '*while both homogenization and heterogenization are dimensions of globalization, they take place at different societal levels: homogenization occurs at the structural-institutional level; heterogenization, at the expressive-symbolic*'[96]. Unlike other commentators, Ram offered a two-way approach to the concept of globalisation. He considered '*globalisation* (is) *only a single vector in two-way traffic, the other vector being localization*'[97]. In other words McDonald's transformed the local customs by offering American food and adapted its range to satisfy local demand. So Israeli customers were able to transform McDonald's, ultimately by creating a '*third culture that belongs neither to one nationality nor the other, but constitutes rather a transnational culture*'[98]. This I have discovered is also true of luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton who adapt their products to suit the demand of local markets (see chapter 1).

In *The Inspired Retail Space: Attract Customers, Build Branding, Increase Volume*[99], Corinna Dean suggested that what is occurring in retail design follows changes that have already taken place in bar and hotel design. Dean argued that retailers drew their inspiration from the catering and hotel industry to transform stores into retail experiences. However, Dean argued that the

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[92] Van Der Bly, Martha C. E., 'Globalization: A Triumph of Ambiguity', *Current Sociology*, vol. 53, no. 6, November 2005, p. 883
[93] ibid., p. 883
[94] ibid., p. 888
[95] Ram, Uri, 'Glocommodification: How the Global Consumes the Local - McDonald's in Israel', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 1, January 2004, pp. 11 – 31
[96] Ram, Uri, 'Glocommodification: How the Global Consumes the Local - McDonald's in Israel', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 1, January 2004, p. 14
[97] ibid., p. 21
[98] ibid., p. 22
[99] Dean, Corinna, *The Inspired Retail Space: Attract Customers, Build Branding, Increase Volume,* Rockport Publisher Inc., Gloucester, 2003

establishment of a *'new retail'* began with the creation of concept stores, *'a growing sector of the retail market'* which she described as *' the antithesis to the megastore or mall'*[100]. In this context, Dean asserted that the new retail occurred with the growing 'cultural' role taken by brands: '*fashion houses are moving beyond selling luxury brands to performing a new role in contemporary culture'*[101]. She illustrated this with a description of so-called 'blockbuster' retrospectives of high-end fashion brands, such as Armani and Versace in leading public cultural institutions such as the Guggenheim museum in New York and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Dean also observed that this 'rapprochement' between high-end fashion brands and cultural institutions led fashion stores to be designed as cultural institutions. Dean pointed out that '*one has only to look at the retail adjuncts to any museum or public gallery to witness the interdependence of the two'*[102]. This belief, that cultural institutions and retail spaces are merging, has long been debated and is widely attributed to the American artist Andy Warhol (1928-1987): '*when you think of it department stores are kind of like museums*'[103]. This study aims to demonstrate that not only department stores can be assimilated to museums, but other high-end fashion flagship and concept stores can also be compared to galleries. For Dean, the convergence of the cultural and retail sectors are symptomatic of the consumer society, '*it has been said that retail spaces are becoming indistinguishable from art galleries the implication being that consumerism and culture are merging*[104]'.

Riewoldt described how retail designers have been inspired by art practices: *'presenting products as artefacts and marketing them as original creations has been a tried and trusted formula in fashion and interior design since the late 1980's, or even earlier. (...) Since then, boutiques and shops have presented themselves as galleries, venues of elegant emptiness and supercool minimalism. Recently the analogy has been taken further, designers have consciously reached for museum – style stereotypes, shutting everyday items in glass cases*[105]'. Indeed, since the nineteenth century, department stores have been commonly described as being part of a 'higher order' in comparison to other retail spaces, through the display of cultural artefacts. Stephen Bayley[106] wrote in the late 1980s that the creation of the department store transformed shopping into what it is now perceives as a leisure and social activity; '*the store revolutionized the process of buying, turning it into a cultural activity, rather than a reflexive response to the demands of subsistence'*[107].

Michael Miller's *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store* for example was to offer a memorable exploration of how the department store of the late 19th century was to transform shopping into the kind of leisure and social activity that characterises it today.

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[100] Dean, Corinna, *The Inspired Retail Space: Attract Customers, Build Branding, Increase Volume,* Rockport Publisher Inc., Gloucester, 2003, p. 52
[101] ibid., p. 8
[102] ibid., p. 52
[103] Buck, Louisa and Dodd, Philip, *Relative Values or What's Art Worth?* BBC Books, London, 1991, p. 153
[104] Dean, Corinna, *The Inspired Retail Space: Attract Customers, Build Branding, Increase Volume,* Rockport Publisher Inc., Gloucester, 2003, p. 52
[105] Riewoldt, Otto, *Retail Design*, Te Neues Publishing Company, London, 2000, p. 62
[106] Bayley, Stephen (ed.), *Commerce and Culture: from Pre-industrial Art to Post-industrial Value,* Penhurst press Ltd., Tunbridge Wells, 1989
[107] ibid., p. 5

Miller drew his inspiration from Émile Zola's description of a fictional department store in *The Ladies' Paradise*[108] - said to be closely modelled on Le Bon Marché, Paris's first department store (the largest single department store in the world before 1914)[109]. Brian Nelson (in the introduction to the English translation of Zola's novel) describes how Zola's imagined department store constituted *'a symbol of capitalism, the experience of the city'*[110], but an experience that was nonetheless a pleasurable and social.

A number of ingredients went into the making of this new store environment. Architecture and design were key. Department stores were designed by the leading architects of their time - Le Bon Marché for example was designed by Louis Auguste Boileau and Gustave Eiffel in 1876 and Selfridges in London was designed by Daniel Burnham[111] in 1909. Architecture was used to transform these shops into monuments within their city's architectural landscape.

This ambitious approach to retail was not limited to department stores. The planning and design of shopping malls particularly in the U.S.A also made use of high-architecture to attract new customers[112]. Architect Rem Koolhaas describes in the *Harvard Guide To Shopping*[113] how historically such stores and malls have been venues where new architectural innovations such as escalators, elevators and air-conditioning were first introduced. By enabling the masses to experience new technological innovations in their stores, brands could also be regarded as championing innovators. Koolhaas argued that retail architecture had in fact driven innovations that are now commonplace in other specialised architectural and design fields. The significance of these innovations in regards to this thesis is that they reflect retailers' ambition to make stores a social environment. By combining convenience with the allure of technology and innovation, retailers could make it possible for consumers to spend longer amounts of time - and money – in store.

Art is another important ingredient of retailers' strategy to transform stores into more than mere spaces where goods could be sold. The introduction of art into stores has been used to provide an impression that the space, goods and brand have a cultural dimension. Bill Lancaster noted in his study of department stores[114] that many of the first department stores

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[108] Zola, Émile, *The Ladies' Paradise*, Oxford World's Classics – Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995

[109] Introduction by Nelson, Brian, Zola, Émile, *The Ladies' Paradise,* Oxford World's Classics – Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. ix

The establishment of the Bon Marché as a grand magasin was followed by that of the bazaar de l'Hotel de Ville in 1854, les Grands magasins du Louvre (usually just called le Louvre) in 1855, au coin de la rue in 1864, au Printemps in 1869, La Belle Jardinière in 1866-7, La Samaritaine in 1869, and Les Galeries Lafayette in 1895. There were parallel developments of course in the united states and England – Macy's in New York, Marshall Field in Chicago, Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, Selfridges's in London.

[110] Introduction by Nelson, Brian, Zola, Émile, *The Ladies' Paradise,* Oxford World's Classics – Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. x

[111] Architect of the Flatiron building in New York and Union Station in Washington, D.C

[112] Malls have also been designed by leading architects. For example, Tadao Ando designed the Omotesando Hills shopping complex in Tokyo, 2005 and Toyo Ito designed the VivoCity mall in Singapore, 2007.

[113] Koolhaas, Rem., Chung, Chuihua Judy,. Inaba, Jeffrey and Leong, Sze Tsung (eds.), *The Harvard Guide to Shopping*: *Projects on the City 2,* Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002

[114] Lancaster, Bill, *The Department Store: a Social History*, Leicester University Press, London, 1995, p. 16

established themselves as cultural sites by being regular exhibitors at international fairs such as L'Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889. Department stores were also often modelled on how goods were displayed in these fairs. Lancaster wrote that this process of imitation reached full circle when French journalist, Maurice Talmeyr, described the 1900 Paris exposition as a cross between Le Louvre or Le Bon Marché[115].

As with the cultural tourism of world trade fairs, shopping became an activity which centred on social interaction and visual stimulation. To capitalise on this, retailers put a greater emphasis on experimentation within the shopping space, introducing variety to prevent environments becoming familiar and stale. Consumers' behaviours changed – shoppers were described as *'restless idlers'* by Walter Benjamin[116] and *'flâneurs'* by French poet Charles Baudelaire[117], who thought that window-shopping comprised a seductive and compelling activity in its own right.

Works of art (sculptures and paintings by recognised artists) were placed in stores with the purpose of attracting and entertaining consumers. Most of the grand department stores not only in Paris or London but also in the U.S and Japan had opened art galleries early in their history[118]. In his biography of the founder of Selfridges's, Gordon Honeycombe for example described Harry Gordon Selfridge's view of his store in the following terms: *'a department store should be a social centre, not merely a place for shopping. It should be a meeting place for shopping'*[119]. Selfridge was dedicated to establishing his department store as one of the leading tourist attractions in London[120]. He organised regular social events in his store and even exhibited all the pictures that had been rejected by the Royal Academy for their summer show because of *'lack of wall space in Burlington house'*[121]. This perhaps best illustrates how, by being involved with art, architecture and design, stores could assume some functions of dedicated and purposely built cultural centres. In Selfridge's case this was also part of a strategy to ensure that the store itself was given greater prominence than the goods[122].

The desire for retailers to establish stores as cultural sites has led many authors to consider the differences between establishments and, especially towards the end of the twentieth century, similarities between the two. Bayley reasoned that *'the gap between shops and museums is closing – shops are becoming more 'cultural'. (...) Once separated only by the availability of their contents (for sale in the stores, only for display in the museums), new attitudes and new technologies tend to erode this*

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[115] Lancaster, Bill, *The Department Store: a Social History*, Leicester University Press, London, 1995, p. 16
[116] Benjamin, Walter, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Eiland, Howard and McLaughlin, Kevin, Belknap Press, London, 1999
[117] Baudelaire, Charles, *The Flowers of Evil*, trans. C. F. MacIntyre, New Directions, New York, 1994
[118] A picture and sculpture gallery was opened at Le Bon Marché in 1875, which lead Zola to describe his fictitious store as having a reading-room, and art gallery and Japanese section 'attracting all the artistic clientele of the city', in Zola, Émile, *The Ladies' Paradise*, Oxford World's Classics – Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 234
[119] Honeycombe, Gordon, *Selfridges: Seventy-Five Years. The Story of the Store: 1909 – 1984*, Park Lane Press, London, 1984, p. 26
[120] Lancaster, Bill, *The Department Store: a Social History*, Leicester University Press, London, 1995, p. 39 - 40
[121] Honeycombe, Gordon, *Selfridges: Seventy-Five Years. The Story of the Store: 1909 – 1984*, Park Lane Press, London, 1984, p. 38
[122] Lancaster, Bill. The department store. A social history. Leicester University Press, London, 1995, p. 74

distinction between merchandise and collections'[123]. Art within retail has developed more significantly since 1990. Authors such as Mary Portas even believe that it is essentially '*the same idea but filed under different headings: department store, art gallery*[124].

In *The Value of Things*[125], Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska also compared shops to museums by investigating the resemblances between the British Museum and Selfridges. They argued that although they have different economic drives and goals, these institutions share the same organisational logic which they described as: '*the encyclopaedic desire to render the whole world understandable: classified and displayed for the visitor to consume*'[126]. They claimed that art and commerce are merging as art is leaving the public sphere and entering commercial environments, as governments in most late-capitalist countries have levered their predominant control and support of the arts, encouraging the privatisation of culture. Cummings and Lewandowska explained that art and retail are finding inspiration in one another to solve their financial difficulties:

> The department store and the museum are also undergoing a radical transformation – they may even be heading towards a convergence. As they are succeeded by out-of-town shopping complexes, or their convenience challenged by the rapid point-and-click of e-business, stores are being encouraged to reinvent themselves as places in which the ruthless forces of commerce are obscured behind an image of public service and spectacle. Product displays translate into changing exhibitions as everything is cloaked in subtle nostalgia, repositioning the store as a tourist destination akin to other cultural sites. In turn, as a result of significant shifts in both public subsidy and the nature of visiting audiences, museums are having to aggressively market and license their collections, histories and buildings as a 'brand[127].

By imitating art institutions, stores become more 'comfortable', drawing away from an apparent pressure or duty to purchase, justifying the activity of browsing. These activities offer alternative reasons to shop, and encourage consumers to stay in the retail space, which from a managerial perspective is key, as the longer people stay in shops, the more likely they are to make a purchase[128]. Customers are also more likely to return, or mention an 'entertaining' store to their friends.

In *Fashion Brands*: *Branding Style from Armani to Zara*[129], Mark Tungate chose not to consider fashion from a theoretical perspective but as a large-scale commercial industry. Tungate demonstrated how fashion is linked to other business sectors, notably the popular press and media. In tracking processes, Tungate reviewed the entire fashion cycle, from the manufacturing process, to the advertising, presentation (catwalks, fashion weeks) and the

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[123] Lancaster, Bill. The department store. A social history. Leicester University Press, London, 1995, p.5
[124] Portas, Mary, *Windows, the Art of Retail Display*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1999, p. 14
[125] Cummings, Neil and Lewandowska, Marysia, *The Value of Things*, Birhauser, London, 2000
[126] ibid., p. 19
[127] Bayley, Stephen (ed.), *Commerce and Culture: From Pre-industrial Art to Post Industrial Value*, Design Museum / Penhurst Press Ltd., Tunbridge Wells, 1989, p. 8
[128] '*Our studies prove that the larger a shopper remains in a store, the more he or she will buy. And the amount of time a shopper spends in a store depends on how comfortable and enjoyable the experience is*', Underhill, Paco, *Why We Buy the Science of Shopping*, Thomson, London, 2003, p. 33
[129] Tungate, Mark, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page, London, 2004

review (fashion press). This constellation of sectors necessary for the creation and spread of fashion characterises what I later describe as the 'fashion world'. Tungate also addresses the rising status of fashion designers, whose popularity forges their ability to be recognised as 'artists' in their own right. In this perspective, designers are no longer anonymously working for fashion houses. They are themselves a brand. Their personalities are publicised and give cachet to their collections. This 'personification' of the brand has favoured the appearance of art in retail, as some art-aficionado designers have sought to reflect their passion in their production, including in the presentation of their stores. For instance, texts such as *Comme des Garçons*[130] by France Grand and *Rei Kawakubo and Comme des Garçons*[131] by Deyan Sudjic have been essential to this thesis in gaining a perspective on Rei Kawakubo's interest in art, and how she has been particularly active in displaying art in her stores and appropriating art methods for her retail approach.

The concept of fame has also been significant. Luxury retailers rely on the celebrity of their designers, 'brand ambassadors' (public spokespeople), '(st)architects' and the artists whose work is exhibited in stores. Even the products themselves which if they enough of a reputation become brands. Chris Rojek saw fame as a consequence of consumer culture, explaining that: '*capitalism mobilizes desire. Celebrities humanise desire*'[132]. Rojek also found that, in fact, celebrities have become products themselves:

> Celebrities replaced the monarchy as the new symbols of recognition and belonging, and as the belief in god waned, celebrities became immortal. The market inevitably turned the public face of the celebrity into a commodity. Celebrities are commodities in the sense that consumers desire to possess them[133].

Art critic Matthew Collings described the rise level of fame of contemporary artists, notably of the so-called '*yBas*'[134] (young British artists*)*. Collings argued that artists' social lives can contribute to their actual acceptance or marketability of their work. Artists have become public personalities, appearing on the cover of glossy magazines, modelling for commercials, and endorsing products (as Tracey Emin for *Bombay Sapphire* Gin advertising campaigns). In *The Tastemakers*, Rosie Millard offered an account of the British art world. She described the importance of fame in relation to art and remarked that artists who were once '*reclusive, elusive and often disdainful of their audience*'[135], have now become celebrities in their own rights. Millard illustrated her argument with the description of private views as real social events: '*this is the new style of contemporary art event, where the avant –garde mingle with high society. It will be referred to in both the highbrow art magazines and the high-profile glossies*'[136]. Louisa Buck and Philip Dodd

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[130] Grand, France, *Comme des Garçons*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1998
[131] Sudjic, Deyan, *Rei Kawakubo and Comme des Garçons*, Rizzoli, New York, 1990
[132] Rojek, Chris, *Celebrity*, Reaction Books Ltd., London, 1999, p. 189
[133] ibid., p. 13
[134] The *yBa*s represent a certain number of artists, (such as Dinos & Jake Chapman, Mat Collishaw, Tacita Dean, Tracey Emin, Anya Gallaccio Damien Hirst, Gary Hume, Michael Landy, Sarah Lucas, Steve McQueen, Chris Ofili, Marc Quinn, Fiona Rae Georgina Starr, Gavin Turk, Sam Taylor-Wood, Gillian Wearing, Rachel Whiteread, and Jane and Louise Wilson), who, in the mid-nineties revolutionised the British Art scene.
[135] Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: U.K Art Now*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001, p. 4
[136] ibid., p. 8

also questioned whether the social life of artists plays a role in the value of their work. Buck and Dodd argued that like other 'entertainers' (such as singers and actors), artists promote their work by attending social functions and events: '*it is no coincidence that many of America's leading artists, including Francesco Clemente, Julian Schnabel, and inevitably, Andy Warhol have shown their work in nightclubs*'[137]. In the same way, public figures outside of the 'art world' are invited to private views to ensure publicity: '*exhibition openings at major contemporary art galleries are often dominated not by serious clients, but by large crowds of young, fashion-hungry-party goers*'[138]. Because of this, the art world opens up to people who otherwise would not comment on this sector and ensure that the works of art presented can be seen as 'cool'.

David Marshall saw the rise of the celebrity culture as correlated with the importance of visual images in contemporary culture. Marshall explained that celebrities and their image become symbols as the symbolic of poster images of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara as having been '*more vocal than the actions of the revolutionary*'[139]. In *Practices of Looking*, Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright added that visual media had in fact taken over: '*over the course of the last two centuries, western culture has come to be dominated by visual rather than oral or textual media*[140]'. In that sense, the concept of *'non-places'* identified by John Urry foresees that places have lost their time and geographical influence, are visual places[141]. The advantage of visual media in comparison to verbal media is the ability for visual media to have simultaneous and different meanings. Roland Barthes argued that visual images have two levels of meaning: denotative and connotative[142]. Denotative meaning is the physical reality of an element or object and the connotative meaning represents the symbolic meaning of an object. Barthes used 'wine' as an example, its denotative meaning is that it is an alcohol, and its symbolic or connotative meaning is that it can be used to characterise 'Frenchness'[143]. This is an argument I pursue in this study as I reason that retailers focus on the connotative meaning of art when displaying it in retail environments. Art is presented as a symbol of the luxury lifestyle.

American sociologist David Riesman argued that celebrity culture and brands convey specific images, which are important for consumers and their quest for identity and individualism: '*the product now in demand is neither a staple nor a machine, it is a personality*'[144]. Art comes as part of a scheme by retailers to enhance the perception consumers have of their products, and of what these products can do for them.

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[137] Buck, Louisa and Dodd, Philip, *Relative Values or What's Art Worth?* BBC books, London, 1991, p. 73
[138] ibid., p. 73
[139] Marshall, David. P, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*, University of Minnesota, London, 1997, p. 17
[140] Sturken, Marita and Cartwright, Lisa (eds.), *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 1
[141] Urry, John, *Consuming Places,* Routledge, London, 1995
[142] Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, Vintage, London, 2000
[143] ibid., p. 30
[144] Riesman, David, 1969, quoted in Baudrillard, Jean, *Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, Sage Publications, London, 1998, p. 88

In *Celebrities,* a review of international advertisements using celebrities, Bill Cranfield reached the conclusion that, '*we have moved from the basic need of consuming products to the consumption of the perceived qualities that these goods convey. These intangible assets are ideological rather than intrinsic and though they have their roots in prevailing social value systems, they are reinforced by advertising*'[145]. In this sense, in some cases, the use of art in retail exploits the celebrity status of artists. Vittorio Radice, former chief executive of Selfridges (1996-2002) explained in an interview with Millard that the fame of the artists displayed in the store represented a key element of their selection: *'it is a totally visual culture. (...). Everything is conveyed by the image. (...). So of course, art has become the medium of choice, because people understand it. They see the artist as celebrity. They know these people. (...)*[146]. So, artists' fame is exploited to create a sense of familiarity. The fact that consumers recognise them could also facilitate their understanding of the work exhibited.

The use of art in retail has been influenced by the strategic use of art by western governments. Governments are using art to solve societal problems, promote regeneration (public art projects), support education (there are a number of project in schools using art as method of facilitating learning) and improve the environment for the sick and aged people (art is been placed in hospitals and retirement homes). In this context, why should it should surprise, that retailers have also come to believe that art can help redress their problems, and improve their environment?

The changes that have occurred within late-capitalist societies have affected the relationship between art and commerce. In less than two centuries, sparked off from the industrial revolution and the wide application of the capitalist economic system, the image of society has irreversibly been altered, turning the population into mass-consumers.

The presence of art in retail leads to a re-evaluation of the function of shopping. Shopping at the beginning of this new millennium has become one of the most popular leisure pursuits. Stores have become meeting places, and retailers have strived to make shopping entertaining and educational. The placement of works of art in stores transforms the shopping experience into a fresh and innovative occupation, while adding a new dimension to the brand image and product value.

Critics of the corporate world such as Kalle Lasn, founder of *Adbusters*[147] and author of *Culture Jam: the Uncooling of America*[148] and Naomi Klein[149] argue that consumers are manipulated into buying goods and enjoying to shop. However, the promotion of these perspectives relies on

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[145] Cranfield, Bill (ed.), *Celebrities*, IDN Magazine, Hong Kong, 2002, p. 2
[146] Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: U.K Art Now*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001, p. 31
[147] *Adbusters* is an 'anti-capitalist' magazine which publishes spoofs of famous advertisements to criticises consumption.
[148] Lasn, Kalle, *Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America*, Eagle Brook - William Morrow and Company Inc., New York, 1999
[149] Klein, Naomi, *No Logo*, Flamingo, London, 2001

inherently capitalist corporate communication systems (publishing and mass-media channels). Remi Abbas went as far as saying that the counterculture fuels capitalism *'most anti-globalisation supporters are actually internationalists, Klein is both a critic of capitalism and one who benefits from it. Her first book, No Logo, was a critique of big business that became big business. Rather than radical, Klein's success appears to be classic capitalist appropriation of anything remotely counter-cultural'*[150]. Indeed, anti-consumerist and anti-mainstream movements cannot function outside the capitalist system since the start of the twenty first century. Critics of corporate culture such as Klein and Lasn rely on industries sustained and run by corporations to put their messages across, notably the publishing and broadcasting industries. Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter argued in *The Rebel Sell*[151], that the counterculture does not subvert the mainstream but seeks to become a substitute for it. Even products launched as 'subversive' such as the 'blackspot' shoes produced by *Adbusters*, leather-free and eco-friendly trainers with no visible logo apart from a distinctive 'white spot', have become mainstream.

In *Art in the Age of Mass Media Art,* John Walker suggested that it is inevitable for art not to be tainted by the consumerist reality of the capitalist ideology. Unsurprisingly, advertising, new technologies, and the internalisation of consumption have influenced contemporary art practice. This research might well be witnessing the birth of a new form of public art - a '*retail art'* - a commercially driven and functional art which will be illustrated in the analysis of *XV Seconds* by the British photographer Sam Taylor-Wood. Commissioned by Selfridges as the largest photograph ever made, *XV Seconds* depictured a cast of celebrities and models, posing in clothes available at Selfridges to celebrate the glamour and ideals of the store. Are we witnessing overt product placement in art? This raises one of the research's fundamental questions: does an artwork, once taken inside the retail environment, loses its essence, and fully embrace the shop's message? Can works of art be seen under the same light if displayed in a shop, surrounded by products and logos? Can works of art remain impermeable to the power of a commercial brand?

Similar questions have been raised in books, which have considered the function of the placement of art. In *Art and the Power of Placement*, Victoria Newhouse discussed the power of the placement of art in different settings[152]. She exposed the differences between works of art placed in public cultural institutions, public outdoor sites, offices and residential locations. She examined in detail the influential power of the lighting, the frame, the positioning of works of art. However, she did not discuss the placement of works of art in stores, which once again demonstrates that the placement of art in retail has been overlooked.

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[150] Klein, Naomi, *No Logo*, Flamingo, London, 2001, p 43
[151] Heath, Joseph and Potter, Andrew, *The Rebel Sell: Why the Culture Can't be Jammed*, Harper-Collins, London, 2004
[152] Newhouse, Victoria, *Art and the Power of Placement,* The Monacelli Press, Inc., New York, 2005

From this literature review, it appears that although authors have acknowledged the blurring of boundaries between art, fashion and architecture, none have directly examined the presence of art in retail. The close relationship between fashion, architecture and art is behind the appearance and legitimisation of the use of art in high-end fashion retail. The aim of this research is to define and deconstruct key cases where practitioners and techniques previously associated with art have been used as a vehicle to sell goods in retail spaces. Ultimately, I aim to demonstrate why this has become a contemporary phenomenon. There are many critics of the use of art by retailers, most often artists, who believe that it is 'selling out' or diluting the integrity of the practice. Texts on art have overall ignored art in retail altogether. Some critics essentially believe that works of art displayed in retail environments only serve as mere decoration.

Methodology

The objective of this section is to explain the methodology used in this thesis.

I combined analyses of both primary and secondary sources to examine this research subject. I conducted interviews of key players (journalists, artists, fashion designers, retailers and gallerists) and observations of leading high-end fashion stores and art institutions to make sense of the role of art in high-end fashion stores. These primary sources were developed to verify arguments made by theorists addressed in reviews of secondary sources.

Due to the multi-disciplinary and contemporary character of this research subject, I examined a wide range of secondary sources to construct my arguments. I reviewed arguments made by academics, theorists and cultural commentators, and supported them with examples of contemporary trends found in the popular press, such as newspapers and magazines. As my thesis investigates the use of art in retail, it was also necessary to support arguments with analyses of visuals such as maps, photographs and graphs.

A similar format was used by Celia Lury in *Consumer Culture*[153]. In this text, Lury combined analysis of both primary and secondary sources to examine consumer culture. Lury conducted interviews and observations which she also supported with visuals. She examined a wide range of secondary sources to construct her arguments, from books to newspaper and magazine articles, from both the academic and popular press.

Due to the cross-disciplinary character of this study, my research covers diverse sectors, from fashion to architecture and art. This is why my approach to the subject is taken from a wide angle. In *The Rise of the Creative Class*[154], Richard Florida took a similar perspective to demonstrate the existence of a 'creative class'. In this text, Florida reviewed contemporary trends and phenomena in diverse areas such as science, technology and economics. Like Lury, Florida combined analyses of primary and secondary sources, mixing interviews, reports and observations.

[153] Lury, Celia, *Consumer Culture*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1997
[154] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004

Closer to my research subject, Claudio Mores used similar methods in *From Fiorucci to the Guerrilla stores: Shops Displays in Architecture, Marketing and Communications*[155], to demonstrate through the analysis of stores of leading global high-end fashion brands that store design is part of brands' marketing strategies. Mores' arguments were essentially 'visual' and therefore used an extensive range of illustrations to support them.

Unlike Mores, I focus on the role of works of art in high-end fashion stores. For this reason, I chose to specifically examine specific works of art and their relation to a brand. In particular, I dedicate the first part of chapter 2 to the analysis of *XV Seconds,* a high-profile piece created by the artist Sam Taylor-Wood, commissioned for and displayed in the London department store, Selfridges. To analyse this work and show the commercial function behind this commission, I chose to 'read' this work of art as constituting a text, as have done John Berger[156], Judith Williamson[157] and Katy Myers[158] in their respective work.

In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger considered our relationship with visual images, how we look and interpret them. Berger conducted his analysis of visuals from a 'deconstructive' approach on two levels. First, Berger considered the aesthetical character of an image, noting physical components, such as the medium, dimension, colour, lighting, technique and perspective. On a second level, Berger interpreted the narrative, describing the subject matter, characters and settings depictured. When relevant, he commented on the authors, describing their practices and biographies. Finally, he made comparisons to differentiate, or on the contrary, assimilate images with others.

Berger's method of interpreting visual images was pertinent to the multi-disciplinary character of this thesis. It was effective for the interpretation of both works of art and advertisement, crossing the bridge between commercial and 'non-commercial' pieces, between highbrow and lowbrow. Berger argued that works of art and advertisements are seen and therefore examined in similar ways because of their creative nature. He explained that advertisements borrow the 'language of art': '*there are many direct references in publicity to works of art from the past. Sometimes a whole image is a frank pastiche of a well-known painting*'[159]. Nevertheless, Berger – and as this thesis has attempted - established a clear distinction between the two formats: '*yet, despite this continuity of language, the function of publicity is very different (...). The spectator-buyer stands in a very different relation to the world from the spectator-owner*'[160]. Indeed, as Berger explained the identity of the viewer is key, and is particularly important in the context of this thesis. The works of

[155] Mores, Claudio. M, *From Fiorucci to the Guerrilla stores: Shops Displays in Architecture, Marketing and Communications*, Marsilio Editori-Fondazione Pitti Discovery, Venice, 2006
[156] Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, BBC / Penguin books, London, 1972
[157] Williamson, Judith, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, Marion Boyas publishers Ltd., London, 1978
[158] Myers, Kathy, 'Towards A Theory of Consumption: Tu – a Cosmetic Case Study' in Robertson, George (ed.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, 1996
[159] Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, BBC / Penguin books, London, 1972, p. 134
[160] ibid., p. 141

art examined here are taken out of the conventional settings of art institutions, and are therefore more likely to be viewed by people who have no knowledge of art. In other words, the location of these works of art has changed from public institutions to commercial settings and the identity of viewers have also been transformed, from public institution visitors to ordinary consumers.

Berger's method was used to reflect the ambivalent character taken by works of art in stores: displayed as 'art', but used as part of commercial strategies, works of art are turned into hybrid advertisements. In this context, Berger's method is ideal as it is polyvalent, is used to interpret '*visual images*' and not only works of art. Another advantage was that Berger's method was impartial. Berger did not 'judge' visual images but interpreted them. Similarly, the purpose of this thesis is not to consider whether works of art in terms of aesthetic, but to understand their purpose in retail spaces.

However effective, Berger's method had some limits for the purpose of this research. Berger did not examine with great depth the messages communicated through the images he studied. For this reason, Judith Williamson's method of 'decoding' advertisements, developed in *Decoding advertisements: Ideology and meaning in Advertising*[161] was used to interpret the messages communicated through the works of art displayed within high-end fashion stores.

In this text, Williamson '*decoded*' the meaning within advertisements, and '*how*' they communicated messages: *'we can only understand what advertisements mean by finding out how they mean, and analysing the way in which they work. What an advertisement 'says' is merely what it claims to say; it is a part of the deceptive mythology of advertising to believe that an advertisement is simply a transparent vehicle for a 'message' behind it'*[162]. To achieve this, Williamson examined the signs used in advertisements. For her, '*a sign is quite simply a thing – whether object, word, or picture – which has a particular meaning to a person or group of people. It is neither the thing nor the meaning alone, but the two together. The sign consists of the signifier, the material object, and the signified, which is its meaning. These are only divided for analytical purposes: in practice a sign is always thing-plus-meaning*[163]. As explained in her definition of signs, Williamson focused on the perspective of the viewers as they are the ones interpreting, these signs having meaning and relevance for them. However, Williamson did not provide contextual information on the advertisements she analysed. She did not take into account the identity and history of the companies involved and only 'presumed' who the target audiences were. Yet, these are important elements to consider. For this reason, I also borrowed from Kathy Myers' method of analysing

[161] Williamson, Judith, *Decoding advertisements: Ideology and meaning in Advertising*, Marion Boyas publishers Ltd., London, 1978
[162] ibid., p. 17
[163] ibid., p. 17

advertisements[164]. Unlike Williamson, who examined a great number of advertisements, Myers focused on one case study, the marketing campaign for *Tu*, a range of cosmetics developed by Woolworth's. By focusing on one case study, she was able to provide information on the context of the campaign and explain the reasons behind the approach selected. Indeed, Myers described the financial situation of the company, presented its difficulties, position in the market, strengths and weaknesses and key competitors.

Myers also positioned her analysis of the *Tu* marketing campaign in relation to its target market[165] as observed by Myers, the identity of the target market influences the campaign, the '*young twenties' image would necessarily need to be reflected in the adverts produced*[166]'. Understanding the target market enabled a good interpretation of the campaign, and reflected the intentions of the retailer, as in this case, Woolworth's who was hoping to gain a new and younger clientele. Like Myers, I give information on the identity of the companies and provided profiles of their clientele, shedding the light on for whom the works of art are intended. Yet, having limited access to brands' financial information and brand strategies, I could only make assumptions on what the target markets were.

However, none of these authors considered the role of locations of visual images in their analysis. Berger only noted that as *the Virgin and Child with St Anne and John the Baptist*, a painting by Leonardo da Vinci gained market value, the National Gallery in London chose to display it individually: *'The National Gallery sells more reproductions of Leonardo's cartoon of the Virgin and Child with St Anne and John the Baptist, than any other picture in their collection. A few years ago it was known only to scholars. It became famous because an American wanted to buy it for two and half million pounds. Now it hangs in a room by itself. The room is like a chapel. The drawing is behind bullet-proof Perspex'*. Berger believed that the increased market value gave the painting a new meaning: *'it has acquired a new kind of impressiveness. Not because of what it shows – not because of the meaning of its image. It has become impressive, mysterious, because of its market value'*[167]. However, I strongly believe that the painting took on different meanings essentially by being placed in new settings as a response to the perceived increased value, with a 'spiritual' character, influencing visitors to consider the piece as 'sacred'. Hence, in this study, I intended to focus on the location of works of art as I believe that settings play a key role in communicating messages. Connotations can be enhanced: low light for intimacy, glass cases symbolising fragility, security devices signalling high market value, etc.

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[164] Myers, Kathy, 'Towards A Theory of Consumption: Tu – a Cosmetic Case Study' in Robertson, George (ed.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, 1996
[165] In this case, young women (between the ages 19 - 30), in the middle-income bracket.
[166] Myers, Kathy, 'Towards A Theory of Consumption: Tu – a Cosmetic Case Study' in Robertson, George (ed.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 172
[167] Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, BBC / Penguin books, London, 1972, p. 22

Similarly, Myers did recognise that the context in which images are viewed, can transform their meaning: '*the way we perceive the Tu model, the pleasure derived from looking at her, would vary depending on whether the image appeared in a porn magazine, a family photo, or a fashion magazine*'[168]. I have also taken into account the products to which works of art are juxtaposed. Pieces are not coincidentally placed next to products. It is completely intentional, because as Berger remarked, '*the meaning of an image is changed according to what one sees immediately beside it or what comes immediately after it. Such authority as it retains, is distributed over the whole context in which it appears*'[169]. So if luxury goods are placed next to works of art, then it is likely that the works of art will be read as part of the luxury lifestyle they connote.

The methods used in this thesis are diverse and indicate the multi-disciplinary nature of the research subject. The combination of analyses of primary (interviews and observations) and secondary sources (analyses of wide ranging sources, from academic books to articles from the popular press), I have ensured that I can best reflect on what is currently happening in high-end fashion retail. I gave an emphasis to the visual character of this study, by examining photographs taken during site visits, released from the brands and artists, and from online blogs and webzine. The interest from such 'popular' sources reveals the contemporary character of the use of art in retail and demonstrates that this trend is part of the zeitgeist.

[168] Myers, Kathy, 'Towards A Theory of Consumption: Tu – a Cosmetic Case Study' in Robertson, George (ed.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 184
[169] Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, BBC / Penguin books, London, 1972, p. 29

1. The Role of Limited Editions in the Face of Mass-Market Access to Luxury

The luxury goods market has been simultaneously affected by a number of issues: the internet and online shopping, globalisation, the growth in volume of counterfeited goods and the rising influence of emerging new markets (notably India and China) which have provoked a radical transformation of the working definitions of luxury. If once luxury implied expensive commodities that are rare and precious, it now represents almost the opposite: mass-produced goods, often with more value in the brand name than in the production costs. The presence of works of art in high-end fashion stores reflects a need for retailers to 'redress' the image of luxury and signal the high-class character of their goods.

The aim of this chapter is to consider how such societal changes have affected the definition and function of luxury, and have pushed high-end fashion retailers to employ art as part of a strategy to re-establish the high status of their brands and products. In the first part of this chapter, I argue that the identity of consumers of luxury goods has been transformed, affecting distinctions between members of different socio-economic groups. In the second part, I argue that this revision of the ownership of luxury has altered its function; more than a symbol of wealth, luxury has been developed as a sign of creativity. In this context, I demonstrate that high-end fashion retailers have used art and its creative symbolic character as a signifier of success and wealth to elevate the perceived value of their commodities and uphold social distinctions.

a. Brand Extensions and the *'Leasing Culture'*: the End of the Linear Flow of Fashion Dissemination

Significant social changes have occurred in the past decades that have contributed to a radical reshaping of luxury both in term of production and consumption. In terms of production, there has been a trend for high-end fashion houses to become more accessible in an attempt to reach the mass-market. Retailers have introduced "diffusion" ranges which are up to 40 percent cheaper than their main collections[170]. These more affordable and lower-quality collections are aimed at mass-consumption, as the youth-oriented Jeans lines (Versace Jeans Couture, Gaultier and Kenzo Jeans) or the "secondary" lines of major fashion brands: Miu Miu

[170] Groom, Avril, 'The Collection Conundrum', *How To Spend It* (Magazine), *The Financial Times* (Weekend supplement), 17 - 18 June 2006, pp. 68 - 69

(by Miuccia Prada) or Marc (by Marc Jacobs, who built his reputation as the head designer for Louis Vuitton). This strategy has been furthered by the Italian designer fashion label, Giorgio Armani, who has launched multiple lines such as: Armani Privé, the most expensive haute couture line; Giorgio Armani, less expensive but less exclusive prêt-à-porter line; Emporio Armani, the "premium" diffusion line, Armani Jeans and Armani A/X, "secondary" and licensed diffusion lines produced for the mass-market and Armani Junior, directed at the youth and teen market[171].

It has also become a conventional venture for high-end fashion houses to expand their brands outside the traditional sphere of fashion. Brand extensions include a wide diversity of products: accessories (from leather-goods to eyewear), sportswear, home furnishing, cosmetics and fragrance. Income from these mass-market products has become a vital income stream for fashion houses, and represents for many, their most profitable earnings. A study conducted by Mintel, cited in Mark Tungate's text *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, reasoned that perfumes and cosmetics account for 37 percent of global sales of luxury goods, whereas clothes and leather goods only amount to 42 percent[172]. These figures illustrate that brand extensions have given mass-market access to high-end fashion labels. The popularity for brand extensions has pushed fashion houses to extend the diversity of their products. They have also offered more opportunities for consumers to 'buy into' and identify with high-end fashion brands.

Since the 1990s, high-fashion houses have become such powerful brands that they no longer only sell tangible goods, but 'branded' experiences. To create greater customer involvement, brands have begun to offer new services: opening restaurants (as the high-class Armani Nobu restaurants), hotels (brands such as Bvlgari, Salvatore Ferragamo or Versace have opened hotels or have been working with major hotel resorts[173]) or spas (as 'La Bulle' by Kenzo, a luxury day spa in Paris). In many respects, the Armani flagship store in Milan reflects the extent to which brands have evolved. Closer to a department store, the outlet offers all Armani lines, including a home furnishing department ('Armani casa'), a *parfumerie* ('Armani Profumi'), a technology section ('Armani Sony gallery'), a café ('Armani Caffé'), an art gallery ('Armani arte'), a florist ('Armani Fiori'), a bookstore ('Armani Libri') and a *patisserie* ('Armani Dolci').

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[171] Friedman, Vanessa, 'There Are Other Ways to Get Attention', *The Financial Times*, 23 September 2006: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/f036cea0-4a10-11db-8738-000079e2340.html> (last accessed 22 July 2007)
[172] Tungate, Mark, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page, London, 2004
[173] Anderson, Gordon. T, 'Want a Suite with that Suit?', *CNN*, 12 November 2004: <http://money.cnn.com/2004/11/04/pf/goodlife/designer_hotels/index.htm> (last accessed 9 March 2007); and Banay, Sophia, 'From Haute to Hotel', *Forbes*, 14 September 2006: <http://www.forbes.com/2006/09/13/hotel-fashion-designers_life_travel_cx_sb_0914haute.html> (last accessed 9 March 2007)

Furthermore, high-end fashion houses have also become more accessible to a wider public through the creation of limited collections in partnership with high-street labels and at high-street prices. The Swedish high-street retailer, Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) is most often credited with initiating this approach with the launch in 2004 of a 'Karl Lagerfeld for H&M' line, followed by collaborations with Stella McCartney in 2005 and Victor & Rolf in 2006. High-end fashion brands have also signed collections for popular sportswear labels. Adidas invited Yohji Yamamoto and Stella McCartney to create mass-produced lines; Comme des Garçons produced items for Speedo and Fred Perry; Yamamoto also devised a range for Dr. Martens and Mandarina Duck. Such collections have been very popular, even with the existing high-end fashion customers of these fashion houses, and have dramatically helped raise mass-awareness of high-end fashion brands, and ultimately encouraging consumers to purchase authentic products.

Globalisation is another important factor of the change in the production and consumption of luxury. As consumers become more mobile, with the decrease of airfares and the reduction of travel times, fashion trends have spread to become more of a global phenomenon. However, the globalisation of trends is not entirely consumer-driven, but actively shaped by high-end fashion brands who have engaged in the internationalisation of their brands, opening outlets abroad and making original local marketing campaigns[174]. However, as I illustrate in chapter 3, there can be an apparent clash between the domestic and international image of brands, creating differences in the customer identity. For instance, Louis Vuitton was conceived and marketed as a French brand but has become so popular with Japanese consumers (in Japan and whilst travelling abroad) that Louis Vuitton has become associated with Japanese consumers rather than French. To satisfy a global market, there has been an increase in the production of commodities so that luxury is no longer geographically limited but widely available. For instance, Prada has grown from being a national-centric brand to becoming a global brand with a presence in the major 'fashion cities'[175]. Furthermore, retailers have adapted the design of their commodities to fit with the preferences and tastes of these new consumers. Louis Vuitton, for example, created collections of bags adorned with Manga style illustrations of 'cute creatures' by the Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, which appear to target Japanese markets, known to be very keen for such *kawaii* (Japanese for cute) characters; as perhaps the most famous example of this is Sanrio's 'Hello Kitty'.

The different patterns of consumption of high-end fashion in the world show that luxury can be perceived distinctively in different regions. In emerging markets such as China and India, which have experienced recent and significant restructuring of their social orders, luxury has

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[174] Moore, Christopher. M., Fernie, John and Burt, Steve, 'Brands Without Boundaries: The Internationalisation of the Designer Retailer's Brand', *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 34, no. 8, 2000, pp. 919 - 937

[175] *'Today, the company owns 122 Prada stores around the world (another 19 are franchises); when you add in Prada's other brands, those numbers rise to 307 and 143, respectively'*, cited in Guyon, Janet, 'Prada Steps Out to Fuel a Bold Expansion Plan, the Italian Fashion House is Going Public. Can Prada Pull It Off? The Answers Depends Largely on Hypercontrolling CEO Patrizio Bertelli', *Fortune*, 1 October 2001: <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2001/10/01/310925/index.htm> (last accessed 17 June 2006)

become a very important tool to demark social class. Luxury marques have therefore been widely adopted to establish social distinctions, so that at this early stage of experience with high-end fashion, consumers in these regions have preferences for brands that have logos or labels that are more easily recognised by others[176]. In such countries, high-end fashion is no longer perceived as unattainable; and with such diverse range of lines at different prices, high-end fashion brands have almost become inescapable. For instance, Radha Chadha and Paul Husband, authors of *The Cult of the Luxury Brand*: *Inside Asia's Love Affair With Luxury,* found that in Tokyo up to 94 percent of women in their twenties owned a Louis Vuitton branded accessory; 92 percent owned a Gucci, 57 percent owned a Prada and 51 percent owned a Chanel[177]. Such brands would not have been so accessible if they had not launched diffusion lines and extended their production by making cheaper and more readily affordable sub-lines.

Greater accessibility has undoubtedly raised consumers' awareness of high-end fashion. This enhanced brand awareness has facilitated the marketing of brands as consumers have a better recognition and understanding of them. To some extent, this mass-awareness can also be a tool to fight the popularity of counterfeits. If consumers can recognise and differentiate high-end fashion brands and their signature items, then they are also more likely to distinguish fakes from real goods; and as Thorstein Veblen had anticipated as early as 1899: '*so soon as the counterfeit is detected, its aesthetic value, and its commercial value as well, declines precipitately*'[178]. This is still valid today. Goods that are not authentically sanctioned by the brands – obvious counterfeits – are perceived as cheap, and offer low social stigma. However, paradoxically, the fake market has bolstered high-end fashion brands in that they have generated (unpaid for) publicity, and have even stimulated the market for the real licensed items. The attention and need for authenticity is translated in the use of art in retail environments as works of art symbolise originality and authenticity, unlike the mass-produced items they are juxtaposed to.

Consumer credit has also become an important factor in making luxury goods more accessible for the masses. In an age where consumers are encouraged to take advantage of the 'credit/debit culture', consumers are encouraged to spend beyond their means using store cards, credit cards, overdraft facilities and loans. This signifies that consumers of 'inferior social classes' could purchase, through credit facilities, commodities that only the higher strata could afford. This changes the image of consumers of luxury goods, driving the elite to search for items that not only reflects their position in society, but their high-class lifestyles that consumers of the lower-strata cannot experience. Works of art are placed in high-end stores to symbolise the high-class lifestyle of the elite as the high-profile and internationally renowned works of art as displayed in high-end fashion stores could only be seen in public art institutions or part of the most exclusive private art collections.

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[176] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand*: *Inside Asia's Love Affair With Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006
[177] ibid., 2006, p. 1
[178] Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957 [first published in 1899], p. 169

The internet has also motivated the consumption of luxury goods. Kris Frieswick in 'Buy Now, Sell Later'[179] observed that the success of online auction houses such as eBay stimulated a quicker turnover of luxury items. In the past, luxury goods would have been saved and passed on to close relatives as heirlooms. Celia Lury[180] described an extension of this phenomenon, where consumers effectively "curate" their personal family histories through artefacts. However, luxury goods are now bought often as short-term investments and sold on the internet at the start of new seasons. Daniel Nissanoff, author of *Futureshop: How The New Auction Culture Will Revolutionize The Way We Buy* argued that online auctions have initiated a '*leasing culture*' in the luxury sector: '*we're evolving into a more efficient, temporary-ownership society, in which we buy things with the expectation that at some point, we'll trade up, similarly to how we own cars*'[181]. Comparisons to the North American automobile market are particularly relevant as this sector offers a good model of the "leasing culture". Like American car owners, consumers of luxury commodities now consider their purchases as investments, preferring to buy expensive goods that would have better resale values than low or mid-range items.

To some extent, a "leasing culture" has weakened what Marx described as the *'fetishism of commodities'*[182], which was relevant in creating a sense of added-value in to the luxury sphere. Nissanoff asserts that consumers do not collect but stock commodities to sell them later. In this context, commodities are not kept for long-term use, like cars, but are preserved with great care in order to maximise their resale values. Nissanoff believed that: *'on average if you're savvy and they only have a few scuffs on the bottom, you can get as much as 80% of the original value and use the proceeds to buy your next round of clothing*[183]*'*. This has dramatically transformed consumers' attitude to luxury; with a better access to luxury commodities, a greater number of consumers can afford to follow the fast-changing fashion trends, revolutionising the dissemination of fashion. The leasing of luxury commodities implies two key changes from conventional models of the diffusion of fashion, affecting the identity of the proprietors of luxury. Whereas traditional models of disseminating fashion resulted in different scales of authenticity and quality as trends disperse, the "leasing culture" does not necessarily produce the same linear forms of dispersion. Consumers of all strata can therefore obtain items with the same degrees of authenticity and quality, which is why high-end fashion retailers are also producing high-class collections so that high-class consumers of the higher strata can distinguish themselves from others.

With the advent of the "leasing culture" in high-end fashion, and the credit facility which give consumers of the lower social strata access to luxury, ownership of luxury goods is the importance of the source is translated into being able to be the person the 'closest' to the origin of a fashion trend. In other words, consumers want to be the most subsequent owners

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[179] Frieswick, Kris, 'Buy Now, Sell Later', *Intelligent Life*, Summer 2006, pp. 114 – 115
[180] Lury, Celia, *Consumer Culture*, Polity Press, Oxford, 1997
[181] Mustafa, Nadia, '10 Questions: Daniel Nissanoff", *Time* (Magazine), Style & Design supplement, Spring 2006, p. 24
[182] McLellan, David (ed.), *Karl Marx: Capital, an Abridged Edition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 42 - 50
[183] Mustafa, Nadia, '10 Questions: Daniel Nissanoff", *Time* (Magazine), Style & Design supplement, Spring 2006, p. 24

of items. In the *System of Objects*, through the example of antique collectors, Jean Baudrillard explained how the quest for authenticity *'reflected in an obsession with certainty – specifically, certainty as to the origin, date, author and signature of a work'*[184]. So, the fewer owners there have been, the more valuable the items are.

The '*trickle-down'* logic (often attributed to Georg Simmel in 1904[185]) views fashion as part of a process of imitation (or emulation). Trends initiated by the upper-strata of the social order are then gradually adopted by the middle and, subsequently, the lower classes. This theory proposes that the lower strata imitate trends set by the upper-strata to receive acceptance from these higher social orders. However, as trends are now more readily adopted by a wider spectrum of society, the upper strata has tended to adopt new styles to distinguish themselves. A new fashion cycle begins, as Simmel observed; '*the fashions of the upper stratum are never identical with those of the lower; in fact, they are abandoned by the former as soon as the latter prepares to appropriate them*'[186].

Still the '*leasing culture'* does not affect the belief that fashion is status making or aspirational. However, the changes it provokes, along with the new developments in production of fashion, signify that the elite no longer exclusively initiate trends. *'Leasing'* does not follow the '*trickle-up'* (or '*bubble-up*'[187]) flow of trends. Instead, it suggests that high-end fashion is no longer diffused by the elite but by middle or lower-class fashion connoisseurs or professionals who are able to spot trends at an early stage and circulate commodities for a profit. Nissanoff described how online auctioning had given younger people (technology-savvy and more likely users of online auction sites) greater access to luxury goods. He explained that these consumers buy expensive goods on speculative terms, charging them on their credit cards to sell them later. Indeed, Frieswick cited a study conducted by eBay in 2006 which found that 700,000 people had been able to make a primary or secondary income by selling items on their auction site[188]. This fits with the common stereotyping of young people after 2000, students or youth living with their parents, time-rich/cash-poor, able to queue for long hours or even days to purchase 'must-have' goods on the day of release, with the intention to sell on for a profit. This was the case during the launch of designer collections for H&M (the Karl Lagerfeld and Stella McCartney for H&M lines) or the hyped Apple iPhone in 2007 where, as

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[184] Baudrillard, Jean, *Systems of Objects*, Verso, London, 1996, p. 76
[185] 'Fashion', in Simmel, Georg, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, The University of Chicago press, London, 1971, pp. 294 – 323 [originally published in *the International Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 1, October 1904, pp. 130 – 155]
[186] ibid., p. 296
[187] The bubble-up theory (coined by George Field in 1970, cited in Kawamura, Yuniya, *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, Berg, Oxford, 2005) describes the appropriation of 'street' fashion - created by members of the lower or middle-classes - by high-end fashion producers who redesign it, initially for upper-class consumers and subsequently for mass-consumption. For example, the final collection of the American designer Marc Jacobs for Perry Ellis in 1993, was inspired by a 'street trend' the 'Grunge' style, sported by the followers of the 'Grunge' Seattle music subculture. Jacobs' take on this style gave it credibility in the fashion industry and then to the masses of consumers who later adopted it.
[188] Frieswick, Kris, 'Buy Now, Sell Later', *Intelligent Life*, Summer 2006, p. 115

journalist Claire Adler wrote about this phenomenon at the time, *'within hours, the same goods were changing hands on eBay with a 100% mark-up'*[189].

This pattern of rapid selling-on is a new model of the disseminating fashion, which resembles the circulation of works of art in the contemporary art market. Similar to high-end fashion commodities in the online auction culture, works of art tend to be 'spotted' by people with flair, often as investments, and then sold at higher values and also usually through auctions. However, the current diffusion of high-end fashion differs to the extent that rather than inflating like the values of works of art, the sell-on value of fashion commodities decreases with time and use.

Leasing is in fact more like a '*trickle across*' model (described by Charles King in 1963[190]), which positions fashion as being simultaneously adopted by consumers of different socio-economic backgrounds. This also tallies with Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* model (1999)[191], which positions trends as '*social epidemics*'. According to Gladwell, trends circulate amongst social groups in the way infectious diseases spread. 'Infectious people' (social networkers) at the centre of social hubs spread trends to other groups until the trends have reached maximum potential for 'contamination', in other words, becoming mainstream. Leasing in high-end fashion is similar to the extent that trends simultaneously 'infect' people of different social classes.

However, unlike other fashion diffusion models, the continual sell-on and circulation of the same luxury goods means that the same authentic products are passed on rather than imitation. This, I would argue, increases the temporal nature of high-end fashion trends. By making fashion available to a larger number of people, the online auction cycle has been a catalyst and extended the pace at which fashion trends are diffused. As new trends are more quickly adopted, new styles are also more hastily developed so that fashionable people can distinguish themselves from others and remain at the height of fashion. In other words, the rapid circulation or apparent '*leasing culture*' has provoked a revision of the traditional cyclical movements followed by the fashion industry. To keep up with the changing demand, fashion houses regularly produce items or 'mini' collections outside of the conventional biannual seasonal collections.

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[189] Alder, Claire, 'Street Smart', *Intelligent Life*, Summer 2006, p. 16
[190] King, Charles (1963), cited in Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 804
[191] Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Difference*, Little, Brown and Company, London, 2000

The internet therefore offers a platform for luxury items to be sold and purchased anonymously by a greater diversity of people and it is appears that consumers across the social order choose to buy products this way. According to a 2006 survey, against original beliefs, high-quality counterfeits are most often purchased by original consumers of luxury brands, high-spenders that can afford to buy the genuine articles, suggesting that there may be such pressure for members of the elite to follow trends and wear luxury pieces that they resort to buying commodities the cheapest ways possible[192]. For example, journalists Clay Chandler and Cindy Kano reported that in Japan, housewives whose husbands were made redundant were still buying luxury goods to maintain the appearance of affluence and keep their social standing[193]. In such situations, the anonymity of the internet allows consumers to maintain their lifestyles in a cost-efficient way.

In making high-end fashion more accessible, retailers may have widely increased their turnover, but they have jeopardised the long-term image of exclusivity of their brands, and the luxurious character of their goods. The image of luxury has radically changed since 1900, when Simmel wrote that only objects that have valuable qualities can be considered as such: '*an object does not gain a new quality if I call it valuable; it is valued because of the qualities that it has*'[194]. Today, the opposite situation seems to have emerged. Luxurious products have become as valuable as consumers (are led to) perceive them to be. As luxury brands become accessible for mass-consumption, brands no longer evoke exclusivity and lose their elitist character. This is the *'inclusive/exclusive'* paradox of high-end fashion.

High-end fashion brands are popular because they appear to be exclusive.. In the *Philosophy of Money,* Simmel described how scarcity plays a key role in determining the value of a product: '*if economic values are regarded as being determined by supply and demand, supply would correspond with scarcity and demand with utility. Utility would decide whether the object is in demand at all and scarcity the price that we are obliged to pay*'[195]. Consumers therefore pursue commodities that are rare to make them feel exclusive; yet, their very interest for such products drives them to be reproduced in greater quantities to the extent that they become common and lose their appeal. To prevent such situations, high-end fashion retailers have attempted to make their brands appear more elitist by producing exclusive collections. High-end fashion retailers have made the access to these collections more restricted to give items more value, as Simmel observed: '*objects are not difficult to acquire because they are valuable, but we call those objects valuable that resist our desire to possess them. Since the desire encounters resistance and frustration, the objects gain a significance that would never have been attributed to them by an unchecked will*'[196].

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[192] Sherwood, Bob and Parker, George, 'Fakes Attract Well-heeled as Crackdown Planned', *The Financial Times*, 27 April 2006, p. 3
[193] Chandler, Clay and Kano, Cindy, 'Recession Chic', *Fortune,* 29 September 2003, pp. 26 - 27
[194] Simmel, Georg, *The Philosophy of Money*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982 [first published in 1900], p. 60
[195] ibid., p. 91
[196] ibid., p. 67

Following this principle, the exclusive collections developed by high-end fashion brands are available from limited retail outlets and in many cases, sold before their official release to the best clients. The sales principles of these exclusive collections mimics the sales of tickets to events by public art institutions. The Royal Opera House in London, for instance, only makes tickets readily available to the public once the best seats have been offered to corporate sponsors, and then to the different levels of 'the friends of the Royal Opera House'. Therefore, in the same way that retailers have produced second tier collections, more accessible for a 'general public', retailers have also launched higher-class collections with different degrees of exclusivity, to satisfy consumers of different social ranks and their need for distinction.

Haute couture represents the highest degree of exclusivity. Made in very small quantities and at very expensive prices, such collections are only targeted at the upper-tier of consumers. To satisfy the highest spending consumers, high-end fashion brands also offer tailor-made products. Louis Vuitton, for instance, produces custom-made items, from personalised trunks with customers' initials to unique and made-to-order items usually requested by 'V.I.P.' clients, such as Japanese ceremonial tea services[197] or a 'boom-box' holder, as ordered by the American film-director Sofia Coppola[198] (see *fig. 1*). These individual items fall under the traditional definition of luxury: items that are rare and precious. Access to these items is particularly restricted. Only a few consumers can hope to be offered the opportunity to make such orders, and because of these restrictions, objects become more desirable. Then there are the demi-couture or more high-priced designer lines, usually available only from selected retail outlets.

Limited editions can also have an important degree of exclusivity, but all depends on the number of items produced. Adler found that limited editions do not always mean that items are produced in limited quantities[199]. In fact, because of this, one could talk of a mass-exclusivity. Of course, limited editions can be highly exclusive, Lauren Cochrane reported that Prada has launched a limited edition handbag for which the *'limited tag is no token title'* as '*even a city like London will be allotted only one*'[200]. Stores compete to be sole stockists of such exclusive items to elevate their importance and exclusiveness. For instance, Harrods succeeded in being the only outlet in London to sell the Chloé 'Elvire' bag in 'Midnight python' and the 'Stam' suitcase by Marc Jacobs in a patent grey[201]. Hermès, the French high-end fashion house produced a limited edition of its Birkin bag, Baby Birkin, priced at £42,000[202]. Such high prices do not deter customers. The waiting lists for these items to be made available

[197] Hata, Kyojiro, *Louis Vuitton Japan: the Building of Luxury*, Assouline, Paris, 2004, p. 63
[198] Coppola, Sofia (guest ed.), 'Vogue par Sofia Coppola', *Vogue* (France), December 2004, p. 34
[199] Alder, Claire, 'When Exclusive Means Many', *Intelligent Life*, Summer 2006, pp. 46 – 47
[200] Cochrane, Lauren, 'Mission Just Possible', *O:* (The Observer's fashion supplement prepared by *Tank*), Summer 2006, p. 59
[201] Bagner, Alex, 'Elusive Exclusive', *Wallpaper*, November 2007, p. 119
[202] Price of a 2004 baby Birkin bag (named after the British actress and singer Jane Birkin) as quoted in Cochrane, Lauren, 'Mission Just Possible', *O:* (The Observer's fashion supplement prepared by *Tank*), Summer 2006, p. 59

fig. 1: This Louis Vuitton bag incorporates an '*Acoustic Wave Music System*' by Bose. It was made to order for film director Sofia Coppola, by Coppola's friend and LV designer Marc Jacobs. Louis Vuitton occasionally stretches its range with made-to-order pieces because they can represent celebrity marketing opportunities (by association).

demonstrate that consumers are particularly keen on purchasing limited editions[203]. Rather than making the 'retail experience' easier, customers made to work to obtain their goods seems to heighten pleasure. It is also a way for brands to 'control' access to their most exclusive items and stimulate a shared sense of social stigma, and reassert the exclusivity of their brands. Therefore, at the high-end of the market, the appeal of limited editions could be seen as a reaction to mass-production and the easy accessibility of luxury.

From all this, it follows that as luxury is more widely accessible for mass-consumption, with a growing choice of brands, legal and illegal copies swamping the market, consumers have become brand conscious and more demanding. According to Berndt Schmitt, consumers are increasingly seeking 'branded experiences'[204]. They not only want the tangible commodities luxury brands can offer, but also the intangible, social benefits associated with these products. However, the mass-consumption of luxury has had important implications, engendering a review of the function and meaning of luxury, and a reconsideration of social distinctions. Consumers that want to demark themselves as trendsetters or belonging to the higher-social strata, seek items that are exclusive: more expensive, available in limited quantities and therefore less likely to be worn by the masses. However, with the changes in the diffusion of fashion, a new symbol of social distinction between consumers has emerged, creativity has become a sign of consumers' individuality, and above all, wealth.

With brand extensions, luxury brands can now operate simultaneously at the low and high-end of the market. The internet has had a major impact in the way luxury fashion goods move through the market. On the one hand, *'leasing culture'* has offered a new flow, which is no longer determined by a linear top-down approach; the movement of goods is too quick for cash-rich/time-poor consumers to get 'first pick'. Brands have designed ways to manipulate access to limited-edition goods which helps to maintain a stigma of exclusivity. By making the acquisition of limited editions difficult, the experience of purchasing gives added-value to the product. The harder it is to get, the greater the demand (which translates to premium sell-on value). In terms of where this fits in this thesis, I will seek to demonstrate that displaying works of art in store is part of a strategy to heighten the high-end character of luxury brands. Works of art displayed in high-end fashion stores therefore have the function of signalling the exclusive character of luxury brands.

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[203] Morton, Camilla, 'Mission Just Possible', *O:* (The Observer's fashion supplement prepared by *Tank*), Summer 2007, p. 65
[204] Schmitt, Bernd. H, *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate to your Company and Brands*, The Free Press, New York, 1999

b. Creativity as a Symbol of Luxury and Individuality

One could argue that the enjoyment of owning luxury objects can be more 'valuable' than the exchange value of the commodity itself. In the *Philosophy of Money,* Simmel explained that the benefits enjoyed by the 'wealthy man' are key to the enjoyment of his possessions: *'the wealthy man enjoys advantages beyond the enjoyment of what he can buy with his money. (...) One can observe everywhere all manner of a small privileges being granted to the purchaser of expensive goods and to the first-class traveller; privileges that have as little value as has the friendly smile of the merchant with the more expensive goods that he is selling'*[205]. Such additional privileges offer luxury commodities a sense of added value and it is this preferential treatment that '*tips*'[206] consumers to purchase luxury goods. Simmel compared these consumer experiences with those of first and second-class 'streetcar' passengers. While first class passengers had little physical comfort beyond that of the second-class passengers, their advantage was '*the right to join the exclusive company of those who pay such a higher price in order to be separated from the second-class passengers'*[207]. In other words, being in possession or in the space of luxury, in its tangible or intangible form, entails social more than material privileges. Luxury commodities can have little material value; what makes them valuable is the social experience they allude or give access to. Customers have access to the same brand but to a varying extent, as in the opera house (discussed earlier), where consumers across the social spectrum can enjoy the same performance, but levels of experience differ. Consumers can pay a premium for the best 'designed' experience - best views, greater comfort, and consumables.

The high-end fashion experience is evolving like the opera house, with different levels of entry for the same core product. The mass-consumption of luxury has not devalued luxury, but made it more complex. Consumers are no longer distinguished between those who have access to luxury and those who do not. As luxury becomes more accessible, retailers have had to, implicitly, establish their own 'class levels' by producing wider ranges with an escalating scale of service, so that consumers could own pieces from a same brand, but (as with the opera performance) the value of the service shapes their experience of the brand. Most high-end fashion brands, such as Chanel and Armani, have 'V.I.P.' rooms, to make shopping a unique experience for they term their most valued customers.

This change of focus from the retailed object to service quality has been motivated by consumers' desire to get 'the brand experience' which by association levers social standing. By consuming luxury items, consumers are not only seeking more comfort or better quality but, as Simmel described, linking a brand's social position with that of its consumer. As I noted

[205] Simmel, Georg, *The Philosophy of Money*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982, {first published in 1900}, p. 217
[206] Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Difference*, Little, Brown and Company, London, 2000, pp. 7 – 9
[207] Simmel, Georg, *The Philosophy of Money*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982, {first published in 1900}, p. 218

earlier in this chapter, the consumption of luxury goods - high-end fashion in particular - has a significant social dimension. People purchase luxury goods to secure association with higher social strata (Simmel recognised that the notion of value, particularly luxury, is a judgement, embedded and dependent of its social context, objects only have value if they are recognised as valuable in the eyes of others).

The consumption of luxury is charged with social meaning, but is also deeply symbolic. French philosopher Guy Debord viewed material possessions as symbols; he argued that people purchase goods for their 'symbolic' value rather than their actual 'use-value'. Debord described this '*generalized shift from having to appearing: all effective "having" must now derive both its immediate prestige and its ultimate raison d'être from appearances*'[208] as characteristic of our contemporary society, which he referred to as '*the society of the spectacle*'. This 'shift' from '*having*' to '*appearing*' is particularly evident in the case of luxury brands, which are founded and popularised not only the aspect or performance of their products, but on the reputation of their brand names. Baudrillard argued that this 'sign' or 'appearance' value of such commodities was overtaking the validity of their use or utility value[209]. Yet, it is this symbolic character attached to commodities, that gives them the power to express social distinctions. Luxury is a symbol of an elitist lifestyle and members of the lower-strata purchase luxurious commodities with the belief that the ownership of such items can enable them to receive acceptance amongst the high-class social circles, and that this acceptance could eventually grow into legitimate belonging. Retailers have therefore focused on developing a social dimension for their brands so that consumers can feel part of a group, belonging to the brand community. Some brands have developed systems of membership, opened clubs, special sales sessions, invitation-only events, etc. The more exclusive these events are, the more valuable the brand appears to be in terms of social benefits. With the development of such social networks and agendas, the brand takes on a new role; beyond offering goods, it gives the impression that it is necessary to consumers' social lives. The display of art in retail environments is used as part of this strategy. The social events developed around works of art displayed, i.e. private views or performances, involves the attendance of people outside the 'fashion world', and give brands the opportunity to stimulate social networks that fashion-related events could not previously offer. The social events enable the constitution of a creative community.

In the *Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida argued that, in our contemporary society, creativity represents the key to success and drives the economy. He described how creativity has been pursued across all industries, from automobiles to fashion, maintaining that c*reativity (...) is now the decisive source of competitive advantage*[210]. Florida's premise that '*we now have an*

[208] Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Zone Books, New York, 1995, p. 16
[209] Edwards, Tim, *Contradictions of Consumption: Concepts, Practices and Politics in Consumer Society*, Open University Press, London, 2002, p. 18
[210] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 5

economy powered by human creativity'[211], fits the argument established throughout this thesis. Art is being employed by high-end fashion retailers as the highest expression of creativity, to infuse their brand image with the positive marks and values associated with creativity and, more importantly, to appeal to members of the 'creative world', which Florida described as the new shapers and leaders of the contemporary social order. Florida suggested that popular culture was at the end of the traditional class systems and was now subject to the development of a social order based on creativity. Considering the workforce, he opposed the '*creative class*' to the '*service class*', with the implication that most workers aspire to belong to the '*creative class*'. This growing common belief that members of the creative sector are influential and leading social trends has been discussed by a number of authors, notably Rosie Millard in the *Tastemakers*[212]. Millard described the rising status of artists in English society and reasoned that creative professions have a mass-appeal. In the UK, the number of fine art students going to college each year has nearly tripled since 1981, far outstripping the general rise in student numbers[213]. Julian Stallabrass also observed this trend in his book *Art Incorporated*: '*if despite the small chance of success, the profession of artist is so popular, it is because it offers the prospect of a labour that is apparently free of narrow specialization, allowing the artist, like heroes in the movies, to endow work and life with their own meanings'*[214]. In other sectors, people have shown to prefer jobs that can give them more flexibility and independence.

The importance of creativity is demonstrated in the apparition of global '*creative quarters',* cities or regions which have benefited from the creativity of their inhabitants to stimulate the local economy. Stallabrass suggested that local governments were actively involved in bringing this creative character to local areas by creating biennales and other cultural or sporting events:

> Governments are well aware that cities increasingly compete on a global scale against one another for investment, the location of company headquarters, and tourism. The most successful cities must secure, along with economic dynamism, a wide variety of cultural and sporting fixtures. The biennale is merely one arrow in any would-be global city's quiver – or, as often, in one that aspires to that status – drawing in a particular class of tourist (some of them extremely wealthy) and hopefully entertaining those residents who have the power to leave.[215]

Florida also stressed that the economy tends to be motivated in regions where creative people reside; '*access to talented and creative people is to modern business what access to coal and iron was to steelmaking. It determines where companies will choose to locate and grow, and this in turn changes the ways cities must compete*'[216]. High-end fashion retailers who have opened their new stores in areas populated by studios, art practitioners and workshops, have exploited these new cultural hotspots. Hence, capitals now have new poles; traditional business and shopping districts are

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[211] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 4
[212] Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: UK Art Now*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001
[213] Stallabrass, Julian, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 113
[214] ibid., p. 3
[215] ibid., p. 36
[216] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 6

now accompanied by new cultural sectors, home to the creative industries. Current examples of such 'creative quarters' are: the meatpacking district in New York, Le Canal Saint Martin in Paris, Hoxton in London and Aoyama in Tokyo.

In effect, the growing economic turn to creativity and creative practitioners, includes people who were once excluded from the 'economic top table':

> Capitalism has also expanded its reach to capture the talents of heretofore-excluded groups of eccentrics and nonconformists. In doing so, it has pulled off yet another astonishing mutation: taking people who would once have been viewed as bizarre mavericks operating at the bohemian fringe and setting them at the very heart of the process of innovation and economic growth[217].

In the last decade, governments have realised the positive value of creativity for the economy. In the UK, the use of creativity, art as its highest form of expression, was part of a strategy to enhance the economy during the early years of the '*New Labour*' government in the late-nineties. A '*Creative Industries*' task force was set up in 1997 and included representatives from the music, fashion and advertising industries. A '*Creative Forum for Culture and the Economy*', a think tank for corporate sponsorship and the arts was also established. This was part of the part of plan to build a 'Creative Britain'. This emphasis on creativity is still a current concern as shown in a recent government which described the British government's determination to nurture and celebrate the nation's creative talents[218], with the ultimate goal of enhancing the economy.

This reflects how there has been a shift from 'material' to 'creative economy' a term coined by Richard Florida[219]. In this new economy, people with creative skills are nurtured and valued. According to Florida, members of the 'creative class' are not necessarily 'creative' but their professional occupations offer them greater freedom and scope for individuality than people in the 'service class' who work in '*low-end and low-autonomy occupations in the so-called service sector of the economy*'. Florida described these latter jobs as '*de-skilled*' or '*de-creatified*', as workers have no autonomy and must follow templates, as he illustrated with the description of fast-food restaurant workers or call-centre operators[220]. However, the service class (as defined by Florida) represents one of the fastest-growing job categories in the United States, the positions of janitors, cleaners and waiters alongside computer support specialists and system analysts. Florida envisaged that the service class would continue to grow as '*a response to the demands of the creative economy*[221]'. Furthermore, the nature of creative work requires members of the creative class to work '*long and unpredictable hours*' making them dependent on the service

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[217] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 6
[218] anon., 'Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy', The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, February 2008: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/CEPFeb2008.pdf> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
[219] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004
[220] ibid., p. 71
[221] ibid., p. 71

class, which as Florida described, now represents '*a growing pool of low-end service workers to take care of them* (the creative class*) and do their chores*'[222].

Differences between creative and non-creative employments can also be found in terms of dress codes. Florida described '*The No-collar Workplace*'[223], which maps the difference between the service and creative class, where service workers have to follow a dress code, from uniforms to suits, whereas creative workers are free, and in some cases even encouraged, to wear what they wish. Florida presented the differences in dress codes as a contemporary evolution of the distinctions between white and blue-collar workers. This change in dress codes manifested itself particularly in the diversification of styles in menswear. The end of the constraint of having to conform to a dress code has '*complicated the lives of men who once thought they were immune to fashion gaffe's*'[224] or as Florida put it, '*no more simply grabbing a dark suit and tie from the closet in the dark early-morning hours*'[225]. The absence of having to conform has given workers more spectrum for them to express their individuality and creativity, which is what they are valued for in their works and lives. Florida noted that the changes in dress codes reflect the diversification of the workforce. The dress code of the creative class is not about being casual, but not having to conform; as observed Florida, some will wear ties and shirts, others polo shirts while others wear baggy jeans and sandals. Vanessa Friedman, a former *Vogue* magazine journalist, described how the senior staff wore a more relaxed and creative dress code than the younger employees who felt they had to dress-up to be taken seriously[226]. In the same way, Florida contended that the values of the creative class had stimulated changes in dress codes, office environments had also been redeveloped to stimulate creativity and respect the lifestyle of creative workers. New office designs reflect '*an adaptation to the rise of creative work. Its core principles and practices are spreading because they are efficient, in the sense of being well suited to mobilizing talent around creative tasks. This workplace integrates elements of the flexible, open, interactive model of the scientist's lab or artist's studio more than machine model of the factory or the traditional corporate office*'[227].

Instead of neat rows of desks and ordered shelves as would have been found in traditional offices, new office designs are adapted to the nature and demands of creative work. Workspaces have been designed to incorporate 'chill-out' areas where workers can take breaks. This is essential, as creative workers do not work according to the standard 9 - 5 office hours. They often work longer hours and at unconventional times, usually until late and during weekends, which is why under such conditions, the barriers between work and living spaces need to come down so workers can feel just as comfortable and 'at home' than at work. Also due to the increasing numbers of employees working from home, office cubicles are being

[222] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 71
[223] 'The 'No-Collar Workplace', in Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, pp. 116 -128
[224] Pristine, Terry (2000), cited in Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, pp. 117 – 118
[225] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, pp. 117 -118
[226] Friedman, Vanessa, 'Subjected to Becoming the Object', *The Financial Times* (Weekend), 17 - 18 March 2007, p. 7
[227] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 117

abandoned and replaced with multi-functional and multi-user workstations which people can share. For instance, the offices built for the advertising agency 10 in Antwerp by the experimental architectural practice known as FAT[228] (Fashion Architecture Taste), provide a good example of Florida's '*creative working environment*'. The architects have been concerned in developing an office environment that respects the creative nature of advertising, by incorporating into the design of the offices some 'chill-out' areas to stimulate the creativity of the workers (see *fig. 2)*.

While Florida centred his analysis on the workplace and workforce, particularly within the business and financial sectors, his views have resonance for the retail sector. I would argue *'The Rise of the Creative Class'* appears to underpin many of the current changes in this fashion retail. For instance, Miuccia Prada has claimed that creativity was central the Prada business philosophy, '*business to serve creativity*'[229] which has been particularly evident in the design of its most recent outlets (as explored in the next chapter). Similarities can be found between how offices and shopping environments have evolved. Store designs have been conceived with the same concern and respect for the lifestyle of the creative class as in offices. Stores, high-end fashion stores in particular, have moved from being neatly ordered (and colour arranged), for which Benetton stores where synonymous, to more anarchic themed retail experiences, see *fig. 3* and *4* contrasting the retail interior of a Zara shop (a high-street chain) with the 'ad-hoc' displays of Dover Street Market, a high-end concept store (further discussed in chapter 2). It has become more common for stores to go against traditional retail conventions; products are no longer arranged by colour or genre but assumed 'lifestyle' groupings. Such a reshape of retail displays has been adopted by high-end fashion brands, so that stores that follow retail conventions are more likely to be lower-end fashion chains.

In the same way that the office design of 10 in Antwerp marries notions of antagonist 'work' and 'play', stores are designed as polyvalent spaces. Shops have therefore become places where consumers can simultaneously shop, relax, learn and be entertained. To attract members of the creative class, retailers have endeavoured to develop their stores as creative shopping environments. For this reason, retailers have displayed works of art, favoured as the highest expression of creativity. Retailers, as will be shown, have attempted to 'commodify' the lifestyles of their target consumers and appear to be persuaded that art is a shared interest of the members of the creative class.

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[228] FAT was established in 1995 in London and is run by Sean Griffiths, Charles Holland and Sam Jacob.
[229] Golsorkhi, Masoud and Lock, Isaac, 'The Reluctant Mogul', *O:* (The Observer's fashion supplement prepared by *Tank*), Summer 2007, pp. 56 – 59

fig. 2: The offices of this Belgium advertising agency company, 10 (designed by FAT), resemble a children's playground rather than a typical workplace, by incorporating elements alien to offices such as Astroturf. The thinking that led to this is not the sole province of the office; similarly, fun and distracting elements are used to reinvigorate the retail environment.

fig. 3: Interior of a UK Zara outlet. Note carefully displayed colour-coordinated items, in contrast to the interior of the high-end fashion store Dover Street Market (below).

fig. 4: Interior view of Dover Street Market:: the presentation and arrangement of items seem ramshackle, yet the chaotic style reinforces its creative character of the store and its products.

Robert Bocock in *Consumption* stated that '*the question who am I? is one which is as likely to be answered in terms of consumption patterns as it is in terms of an occupational role by many people in western capitalism*'[230]. There are many factors to justify this emphasis on possession. Florida observed that members of the creative class do not like to be defined by their professions. Jobs, he argued, are perceived as incidental as people change careers more frequently. What seems more important in defining who people really are, is what they do outside working hours - what they are interested in. It is in this perspective that possessions are valued. Commodities become representations of a person's personality as discussed by numerous authors, including Tim Edwards[231], Alan Tomlinson[232] and Judith Williamson[233]. The emphasis is on leisure. People are less defined by their occupations but by their lifestyles - what they do in their 'free-time'. This idea has been used in an advertising and marketing – for instance a campaign for the Swiss watchmaker Breitling in 2006, portrayed John Travolta, trading not on his 'career' (actor) but his 'profession', (or in other words his hobby) (pilot), (see *fig. 5*).

To the benefit of retailers, the creative class still proves to be particularly materialistic. Following on from Jean Baudrillard's belief that people create a sense of who they are through what they consume[234], Dick Hebdige argued that creativity is '*no longer what we make, or what we think, but what we buy*'[235]. This is particularly true for the members of the creative class who seek 'creative products' to demonstrate their creativeness. Retailers have therefore produced goods that reflect creative trends. Fashion, in particular, as the most visible commodity, can function as an indicator of personality and of social status as Thorstein Veblen argues: '*expenditure on dress has this advantage over most other methods, that our apparel is always in evidence and affords an indication of our pecuniary standing to all observers at the first glance*'[236]. In this context, art has been used to 'infuse' commodities with a sense of individuality and originality. High-end fashion retailers in particular launched lines or collections in partnership with artists, such as Louis Vuitton and the Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, or Longchamp and Tracey Emin. Fashion has a symbolic dimension which has enabled it to act as a form of language, communicating to others the wearer's personality, as developed in the works of Malcolm Barnard[237] and Alison Lurie[238]. Fashion is developed with a clientele in mind, it is about being seen and seeing others. In her analysis of Japanese teenage girls, Yuniya Kawamura demonstrated that fashion contributes to the creation of subcultures or communities[239]. So to 'communicate' their belonging to the creative class, 'creative' people put a lot of attention in their fashion style, making sure that it reflects their personalities and lifestyle, and the ethos of the creative class.

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[230] Bocock, Robert, *Consumption*, Routledge, London, 1993, p. 107
[231] Edwards, Tim, *Contradictions of Consumption: Concepts, Practices and Politics in Consumer Society*, Open University Press, London, 2002
[232] Tomlinson, Alan (ed.), *Consumption, Identity & Style: Marketing, Meanings, and the Packaging of Pleasure*, Routledge, London, 1994
[233] Williamson, Judith, *Consuming Passions: The Dynamics of Popular Culture*, Marion Boyas Publishers Ltd., London, 1986
[234] Baudrillard, Jean, cited in Bocock, Robert, *Consumption*, Routledge, London, 1993, p. 67
[235] Hebdige, Dick (1988), cited in Davidson, Martin (ed.), *The Consumerist Manifesto: Advertising in Postmodern Times*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 192
[236] Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957 [first published in 1899], p. 167
[237] Barnard, Malcolm, *Fashion as Communication*, Routledge, London, 1996
[238] Lurie, Alison, *The Language of Clothes*, First Owl Books Edition, New York, 1981
[239] Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, pp. 784 - 801

fig. 5: This advertising campaign for Breitling (2006) illustrated a shift in use of celebrity. Rather than Travolta 'the actor' (the profession that made him famous), it is Travolta's leisure activity as 'the pilot' the association taps. This shows the growing importance of 'leisure occupation' in establishing social 'creative' standing, rather than income as a member of the upper 'creative class'.

The growing significance of 'creativity' is evident in other retail sectors, the computer retailer, Apple, for instance, cultured its reputation as a creative brand by developing an image that reflects the lifestyle of the 'creative class'. In the 1990s, to illustrate its brand slogan 'think different', Apple launched a campaign of posters and commercials representing famous public figures as faces of their brand (scientists, politicians, sportsmen, artists and entertainers, see video 1) whom they portrayed as 'radical' thinkers, ahead of their time, part of the avant-garde. They included John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Maria Callas, Charlie Chaplin, Pablo Picasso and Martha Graham, icons of the creative class. This appeal for the non-conformist, freethinkers supports Frank Thomas's idea that corporations exploit the countercultural and capitalise on the anti-consumerist philosophy[240].

This was evident in Apple's 2007 advertising campaign. In a series of television and internet video spots, it sets up two characters "MAC" (the comedian Justin Long) which portrayed the brand as the 'counterculture' in relation to 'PC' (the actor John Hodgman) as the 'mainstream' (implicitly characterised as the computer giant, Microsoft). The two characters exemplify the differences between the creative and non-creative class; 'PC', a middle-aged businessperson, overweight, bald and dressed in a suit (a characterisation of Bill Gates) confronts 'MAC', a young, good-looking 'cool' successful entrepreneur (Steve Jobs). Like Apple, the creative class are characterised as laid-back, lifestyle centered, with discernable tastes. With such campaigns, Apple implores its consumers to take a side, stimulating a strong emotional response -- a 'love Apple / hate PC' outlook, favouring creative work as more relevant and down to earth over more mechanistic ways of thinking and working (videos 2 and 3).

By entering into the world of the consumer, the brand becomes inescapable. By infiltrating the lifestyle of their target consumers, companies can use them as publicity vehicles for their brands. According to Angela Pumphery[241], 80 percent of UK residents surveyed became aware of a 'cool' brand through word of mouth, demonstrating that the popularity of a brand is highly dependent on being popular amongst the right social circles. Jukka Gronow goes further by saying that nothing every really goes out of style, it only becomes popular with the wrong crowd[242]. The opposite is also true; what is fashionable is what is associated with the 'right' class of people. If, as Martin Davidson noted in *The Consumerist Manifesto: 'a brand is a product that has personality that we relate to'*[243]. Brands have to be developed with 'personalities' that the target consumers would connect with. However, brands can be personified only to a certain extent: they are intangible and conceptual and require associations with real persons. For this reason, the idea that there are '*cool brands*'[244] seems flawed. There are no '*cool brands',*

[240] Frank, Thomas, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism,* The University of Chicago Press, London, 1997
[241] Pumphery, Angela and Croft, Martin (eds.), *Cool Brand Leaders: An Insight into Britain's Coolest Brands,* Superbrands Ltd., London, 2004, p. 9
[242] Gronow, Jukka, *The Sociology of Taste,* Routledge, London, 1997, p. 144
[243] Davidson, Martin (ed.), *The Consumerist Manifesto: Advertising in Postmodern Times*, Routledge, London, 1992, p. 28
[244] Pumphery, Angela and Croft, Martin (eds.), *CoolBrandLeaders: an Insight into Britain's Coolest Brands,* Superbrands Ltd., London, 2004; Pumphery, Angela and Croft, Martin (eds.), *CoolBrandLeaders: an Insight into Britain's Coolest Brands,* Superbrands Ltd., London, 2005

but cool consumers and retailers, and brands only become 'cool' through associations with such people and their 'coolness'.

This was the case for LOMO, a once low-end Russian camera brand, mass-produced for the Soviet market and distributed through other socialist countries, Vietnam, Cuba and East Germany. LOMO cameras became popular with Viennese students who starting importing the cameras from the Czech Republic and soon founded the Lomographic Society (Lomographische Gesellschaft). Following several international Lomographic exhibitions, and the establishment of lomographic embassies, LOMO has since been redeveloped as a 'cool' product, but what has made it popular, is the community of people using the products, rather than the product itself at first. To spread its popularity, but remain associated with a core 'cool crowd', LOMO cameras have been sold in 'hip' outlets: art galleries and trendy stores (such as the Photographer's Gallery in London or the trendy concept store Colette in Paris), advertised in popular lifestyle magazines and the staging of photography exhibitions and events throughout the world. This strategy has been fruitful and Lomo has received the attention and interest of the 'cool' crowd.

A brand cannot be developed as 'cool' without concrete evidence, which is why such companies rely heavily on associations with the 'cool' people of the current times. Brands can also be perceived as cool through the personality of their creators or directors, who are most often presented as icons of the creative class, as Virgin, which owes a lot to the personality of its founder, Richard Branson, to be perceived as a 'cool' brand. High-end fashion retailers have exploited this by putting forward their artistic designers. Gucci, Dior and Louis Vuitton in particular have benefited from the personalities of the creative directors that have work for their respective companies, Tom Ford, Hedi Slimane and Marc Jacobs to personify the cool image of their brands. This attitude confirms Florida's belief that: '*our economy is moving from an older corporate-centered system defined by large companies to a more people-driven one - fashion designers and multi-national corporations*'[245]. Consumers are better aware, so that companies are now not just known for their products, but also for the faces that run them, and the personalities and lives of the directors must follow the spirit of their brands. In this perspective, it is not surprising that companies, especially high-end fashion houses have been appointing younger and more camera-friendly directors, such as Antoine Frey, who was promoted Director of Azzaro in 2007 (aged 32) and Antoine Arnault, the son of Bernard Arnault, chairman of LVMH who was appointed board member of the luxury group in 2006 (aged 28).

The mass-consumption of luxury has deeply affected the demarcation between social classes. The objective of consumption has further evolved from the initial shift from '*having*' to '*appearing,*' as first discussed by Debord to currently, '*knowing*'. Consumers are now

[245] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 6

differentiated by their understanding and knowledge of brands and lifestyle associated with them. This comes through reading the 'right' magazines, mixing the 'right' social set. This is how the 'cool in-crowd' distinguishes itself from other through their 'cultural capital'. Gladwell described this 'knowledgeable' crowd as instigating '*epidemics*' or trends. In China, brands 'educate' the 'nouveaux riches', through targeted marketing campaigns, which explain the origin of high-end fashion brands and lifestyle (and other brands) associated with high-lifestyle. Consumers have also taken pronunciation classes to be able to name brands and goods in the western way. This latest shift was inevitable as the state of *'appearing'* implied a certain degree of '*simulacra*' (as understood by Baudrillard) or *'faux semblant'*, detrimental to the authenticity and image of luxury and ultimately, acceptance into the higher spheres of the social order.

Whether consumers '*have*' the right goods to '*appear*' as part of the elite does not automatically legitimise their belonging to this social group. Increasing numbers of consumers, across the social spectrum, who can afford to buy luxury goods still fail to be accepted by the high-societies as they do not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the high-class lifestyle. However, persons that can demonstrate sufficient knowledge of this milieu, even though they may not 'appear' as being part of it, are less likely to be rejected. This was the case of the 'hippies' or 'grunges' who adopted a dress code unrepresentative of their social classes, looking more like bohemians, homeless and members of the lowest classes. However, they were not entirely rejected by the rest of society as they could demonstrate their belonging to the higher strata through their knowledge or 'cultural capital'. This supports Russell Keats' belief that: '*life style tends to become, one may say, class-specific*'[246].

This is also, why, as Veblen[247] observed, people who convey the impression of doing things effortlessly and to whom, luxury appears as expected, are accepted as belonging to the elite. Bertrand de Steel of CFN, a Tokyo based retail consultancy explained that in Asia, knowledge of luxury plays a key role in determining belonging to the higher social strata: '*showing off is done in a subtle way. It's through knowledge, it's very sophisticated. For example, ten years ago people bought the most expensive things, now that's not considered trendy, it's too much in your face. Knowledge is the differentiator today*'[248]. Vittorio Radice, former Director of Selfridges, confirmed this concept, that as a retailer, the shopping experience as to be designed to feed consumers' desire to gain more knowledge: *'they* (consumers*) are the millennium generation who watch every TV station, read 110 fashion magazines and spend three hours a day on the internet. These people are aware. They know exactly what's in and what's out. Consumers are declaring an end to all things ordinary, they are in search of excitement and innovation. We need to produce entertaining environments that stimulate*

[246] Keats, Russell, Whiteley, Nigel and Abercrombie, Nicholas, *The Authority of the Consumer*, Routledge, London, 1994, p. 68
[247] Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: an Economic Study of Institutions*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957 [first published in 1899], p. 170
[248] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand*: *Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 85

that curiosity and desire'[249]. Stephen Bailey saw the appetite for knowledge as responsible for changing the image of shops: *'the appetite for knowledge is both a symptom and a cause of this potentially huge change – the public is becoming better educated and consequently more discriminating, demanding superior merchandise and better environments from shops'*[250].

Consumers have therefore sought to become more aware of the goods they purchase. Fashion magazines have responded by acting as educators, writing articles on the leading fashion and luxury brands, their history, present and future; also interviewing their PR-friendly heirs (Margherita Missoni, Nadja Swarovski or Nathalie Rykiel). The newly built flagship stores, which will be the focus of chapter 2, have been developed to enhance consumers' knowledge of the brand. In such places, consumers can learn about the brand history, production methods and 'experience' the brand philosophy. With the emergence of new and promising markets such as the so-called 'bric-bloc'[251] of Brazil, Russia, India and China, retailers have invested much effort into 'educating' consumers from these regions, to make them familiar with foreign brands.

In this context, one could consider the rising importance of knowledge in consumption as shaping a 'knowledge consumer' echoing the term *'knowledge worker'* coined by the business and management theorist Peter Drucker in 1959 to describe the importance and the value of knowledge within the workforce[252]. Drucker argued that we are in a *'knowledge economy'* in which knowledge has become the core value of economic growth. If workers value knowledge in their professional lives, are more educated and better trained, it is also likely that this heightened knowledge impacts on their consumption and that they seek goods that can further develop their 'intellectual' or 'cultural' capital, and not just their 'economic' capital. Knowledge in its widest form, including intellectual and cultural knowledge, has been regarded as setting social distinctions. Back at the end of the nineteenth century, in the *Theory of the Leisure class*, Veblen argued that education was key in establishing a person's social status[253]. He contended that what distinguishes established persons with a long-lasting wealth and high-class origins from "nouveaux riches" is the ease and knowledge acquired with an enduring experience of high-society: '*wealth acquired passively by transmission from ancestors or other antecedents presently becomes even more honorific than wealth acquired by the possessor's own effort'*[254].

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[249] Atkinson, Kathryn, 'A Life Less Ordinary', *Retail Interiors*, October 2001, p. 13
[250] Bayley, Stephen (ed.), *Commerce and Culture: From Pre-Industrial Art to Post-Industrial Value*, Penhurst Press Limited, Tunbridge Wells, 1989, p. 7
[251] Urquhat-Stewart, Justin, 'Trim Your Exotic Tastes Now', *The Sunday Times*, 23 April 2006, p. 13
[252] Peter, Drucker, *People and Performance: the Best of Peter Drucker on Management*, Heinemann Publishers Ltd., Oxford, 1977
[253] 'The Higher Learning as an Expression of their Pecuniary Culture', in Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957, [first published in 1899], pp. 363 – 400
[254] Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957, p. 29

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* Pierre Bourdieu considered ways in which class groups differentiated themselves through their patterns of consumption, and stressed how persons' 'cultural capital' can directly be used to determine social standing. This is consistent with Drucker's belief that knowledge has become a significant value of contemporary society. The importance of knowledge in determining social status also justifies why consumers particularly seek goods that demonstrate their 'intellectual' and 'cultural' capital. The importance of knowledge in consumption had also been considered by Arjun Appadurai who distinguished two forms of knowledge: '*the technical knowledge*' (that goes into the production of the commodity); and the knowledge that goes into appropriately consuming the commodity[255]. It is this later form of knowledge which has grown to be significant to the current patterns of consumption. However, although access to knowledge has improved, due to technological progress and a more widespread education at a global level, some critics have viewed 'knowledge' as becoming more superficial. American artist Nan Goldin noted this tendency during a public talk in 2007. She argued that younger artists 'know things' as facts but have little depth of knowledge. Goldin illustrated this by describing an encounter she had with a young artist who asked about her influences. Goldin evoked, amongst others, the American film director John Cassavetes, whom her young inquisitor did not know. However, the following day, the young artist announced that she now 'knew' the director's work. Goldin realised that she had 'googled' the director's name, read a basic outline on him and thought it a sufficient basis to 'know' the director. While Goldin's observation is contentious, it still highlights a shift in the perception of knowledge, from depth to breadth. 'Knowing' has evolved from a result of having learnt to having experienced. High-end fashion brands have drawn on this phenomenon by creating products that can demonstrate that their customers have *'been there, done that'*, as it has been the case of Comme des Garçons and its flash stores.

Numerous authors such as Richard Hofstadter[256] and James Twitchell[257] have observed in their respective work, the phenomenon of the '*dumbing down*' of knowledge and culture. These authors described a glorification of the 'idiot'. Taking a predominantly American-centric point of view, these authors described the wide appeal for the 'white trash' and popular or lowbrow cultures. Twitchell illustrated this process of '*dumbing down*' through the decrease of the average number of words in the written vocabulary of a six - to fourteen-year-old American child, from twenty-five-thousands in 1945 to ten thousands in 1992[258]. Yet, this may not accurately reflect the state of knowledge in society. In reality, rather than being a phenomenon of 'dumbing down', there appears to be a broadening of knowledge horizontally rather than vertically. People know about a wider and more diverse range of topics, but with less depth. Still, consumers' thirst for knowledge demonstrates a shift in this trend, demonstrating that intelligence is now chic. Consumers have new heroes according to Neil

[255] Appadurai, Arjun, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, p. 41
[256] Hofstadter, Richard, *Anti-intellectualism in American life,* (1963), cited in Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004
[257] Twitchell, James. B, *Carnival Culture: The Trashing of Taste in America*, Columbia University Press, Chichester, 1992
[258] ibid., p. 256

Feineman in *Geekchic*[259]. Feineman explained how the economic success lived by 'geeks', people working essentially in I.T, during the 'dot.com era' from the 1990s, repositioned the image of cool. In a long and diverse lists of items, Feineman described how this 'subculture' essentially defined by occupation – which he considered as determining social class – has transformed the 'cool' landscape as 'geekfood' (bagels, pizza, coffee), 'geek movies' (*Pi*, *Donnie Darko* or *Matrix*), etc. He celebrated this shift in transforming the lives of people who were once considered as losers to becoming winners and style icons. For this reason, high-end fashion retailers and designers have produced commodities that make cultural and political references and show that the wearer has travelled, read or is fashion educated. Recent examples include Anya Hindmarch's '*I'm not a plastic bag*' bags and London designer Henry Holland's House of Holland[260] t-shirts with slogans referring to leading fashion designers: '*Get Yer Freak On Giles Deacon*', '*UHU Gareth Pugh*', '*Marry Me Ana Sui*', '*Do Me Christopher Bailey*' or '*Cause Me Pain Hedi Slimane*'. These items became popular, worn by celebrities, fashion designers and fashionistas. Hindmarch's bags in particular, received such unprecedented demand that launches in few Asian stores have had to be cancelled to ensure customer safety[261]. Popularity for these items can be understood because they manage to demonstrate the wearer's knowledge of trends and fashion, and therefore membership to the 'fashion world'.

Increasingly, knowledge is demonstrated not only in what the consumer buys, but where. As I discuss in chapter 2, some high-end fashion brands have opened 'flash stores' stores for temporary duration in almost secret locations, only consumers in the 'know' are aware where they are. The commodities sold in these stores are often released on limited editions, as in Prada's temporary store open in 2006 in Basel for the duration of the art fair, demonstrating the wearer had attended the fair and having an interest for art, and also that the consumer had been invited to shop in the exclusive store. Similarly, items sold within the ephemeral Comme des Garçons 'Guerrilla stores' (see chapter 2) indicate that their consumers are part of a high-end fashion subculture lead by the Japanese fashion label. This difficulty in knowing where to find these stores is a way for high-end fashion retailers to ensure that the 'right' consumers buy their goods. It also enables them to constitute a brand community. People visiting these stores and buying their products can more easily visualise the 'community' they are a part of.

The '*leasing culture*', discussed earlier, has altered the dissemination of high-end fashion so that high-end fashion trends are now essentially initiated and circulated by fashion connoisseurs rather than only by a high-spending elite. To be accepted as fashionable or trendy and as the rightful owner of the goods they have purchased, consumers seek to attain the status of 'connoisseurs'. Consumers' increasing knowledge of fashion is also represented in the

[259] Feineman, Neil, *Geekchic*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2005
[260] House of Holland website: <http://www.houseofholland.co.uk> (last accessed 22 July 2007)
[261] Counterfeits of these bags were rapidly produced and sold as witnessed by the author in markets in throughout South London, Anya Hindmarch website: <http://www.anyahindmarch.com/division/environmental_bags.aspx> (last accessed 22 July 2007)

increasing complexity of the choice of the items purchased. Consumers are more assertive, dictate their own styles and refuse to be dictated by brands. Consumers act as their own stylists, mix and matching high-end fashion with high street brands. The growing nostalgia culture and rising popularity of vintage wear implies that consumers are becoming more aware of the history of fashion and are more likely to determine the origin of styles and trends.

The presence of art in stores directly fits in this quest for knowledge. The display of art in retail environments builds not only an image for the brands, but a cultural and intellectual capital. In this context, the presence of art in the retail environment can also serve to distinguish members of the elite from the masses. Those who can understand and appreciate the works of art are likely to possess the right cultural baggage to be credible consumers of the brands. Art has therefore been employed by high-end retailers to differentiate consumers and express the brand in cultural terms, by linking it to artistic trends.

The fact that consumers take a greater time to define their individual style and shop across fashion styles (an observation made by Ted Polhemus[262]) shows that they perceive shopping as a form of leisure, which is according to Veblen, a key determinant of social status. More than an evidence of wealth, consumption demonstrates that the consumer has time for leisure and as exposed by Juliet Schor in 1993 in the *Overworked American*[263], time has become a rare and prized value. Through a description of American workers, Schor demonstrated that there is a '*time famine',* which has lead for time to be perceived as a luxury. Unlike Veblen who perceived leisure as a state of idleness and time wasting, the *'creative class'* makes a productive use of their leisure time. Members of the creative class, particularly those who are employed in the creative industries, work in jobs that merge work and leisure to the extent that what would be considered as leisure activities be the professional occupation of a person. An art critic for instance would be paid to attend exhibitions and other cultural events. Such situations substantiate Chris Rojek's perception of leisure as a myth. Rojek believes that '*one cannot separate leisure from the rest of life and claim that it has unique laws properties and rhythms*'[264]. This argument contradicts Veblen's view of leisure but is truer of unconventional contemporary working patterns of the creative class, with erratic working hours and professions that mix leisure and work. So, instead of flaunting their wealth (economic capital), it has become more significant for people to demonstrate their knowledge (intellectual capital) and leisure (cultural capital). For instance, those who can demonstrate having seen the latest films released at the cinema, read the current bestselling books and who wear the trendiest designers would be more highly regarded than an affluent person who may have a high-disposable income but no time to spend it. Yet, Florida sees knowledge and information as tools for creativity[265].

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[262] Polhemus, Ted, *Style Surfing: What to Wear in the 3rd Millennium,* Thames & Hudson, London, 1996
[263] Schor, Juliet. B, *The Overworked American: the Unexpected Decline of Leisure*, Basic Books, New York, 1993
[264] Rojek, Chris, *Decentring Leisure: Rethinking Leisure Theory*, Sage Publications, London, 1995, p. 57
[265] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 44

Knowledge could be seen as means of furthering creativity and consumers could be seeking knowledge and information to nurture their creativity.

Florida remarked that the 'creative class' values its cultural capital more than its social capital. Other authors, notably Robert Putnam[266], deplored the decreasing involvement of the creative class with its local community. Florida attributed this to lifestyle; creative workers' demanding careers require longer working hours and often necessitate relocating, lessening attachment with a regional community. Florida mapped the popularity of asocial leisure (as the fitness culture – going to gym - or watching television) as a cause for the decline of social involvements. One could however counter Florida and Putnam's suggestions that there is a decline of people's social capital. Instead, it appears that there has been a radical shift in people's social experiences. People choose to be socially active outside their direct environments. Social capital cannot be measured on adherence to community groups or '*league bowling clubs*'. These are the wrong measures to evaluate people's social lives. People can be far more socially active from their homes, joining online communities, participating in forums and debates. Furthermore, time is so scarce that people cannot make commitments and favour social situations that are less regulated, with no time demands and regular meetings. Still, it is true that the values of the creative class have moderated the importance of the social capital. The rising numbers of attendance to cultural institutions and events suggest that the creative class focuses more on developing its cultural rather than social capital. In fact, Florida proposed that a new form of capital has emerged, the '*creative capital*'. Evidence of the quest to build a creative capital can be found in the increasing and multiple channels inciting people to present and share their work. People increasingly seek platforms to show their skills and demonstrate their creativity. 'User-generated' social networking websites such as MySpace[267], Facebook[268] and YouTube[269], have become more than popular and have changed how consumers also perceive the world. People are more active, and welcome interactive opportunities to put in their own input.

The growing interest in the purchase of art suggests that those who cannot create prefer to invest in creativity as a way to gain creativity, or simply, to gain respect from creative people. In this context, collecting becomes creative and the collector, a creative figure. Buying works of art could be compared to the purchase in Japan of *joshi kosei*[270] - items which once belonged to schoolgirls, and which by virtue of their previous owners have acquired the 'schoolgirl' image which is seen as symbolising youth and spontaneity. In other words, the people buying

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[266] Putnam, Robert. D, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Touchstone book, London, 2000

[267] Founded in 2003, Myspace is an international popular social networking website offering interactive and user-submitted content with blogs, music and videos. This site is reported to have since 2006, more than 100 million accounts.

[268] Launched in 2004, Facebook is a social networking with over 70 million users.

[269] Established in 2005, Youtube is an interactive video-sharing/social networking site. Youtube is not a member-only website so it is difficult to evaluate the number of users, but it said that Youtube has surpassed Myspace in terms of popularity: Sweney, Mark, 'YouTube Overtakes MySpace', *The Guardian* - Technology, 31 July 2006: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2006/jul/31/news.newmedia> (last accessed 4 June 2007)

[270] Kinsella, Sharon, 'Japanese High-School Girl Brand' in Pavitt, Jane (ed.), *Brand.new*, V&A Publications, London, 2000, pp. 104 - 105; accompanying the 'Brand.new' exhibition, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 19 October 2000 - 14 January 2001

these goods buy them to feel young by adopting the signs of youth. People buy such items for the qualities and images they represent, in the same way buyers of *joshi kosei* believe that they can buy immaterial and conceptual representations of youth, some collectors could be buying works of art to buy creativity: *'the wealthy buy themselves participation in this free zone through ownership and patronage'*[271]. Indeed, collectors mingle with the 'art crowd' at exhibition openings and at art fairs and are keen to own pieces from artists they consider as friends, such as Elton John who owns photographs by his friend Sam Taylor Wood. The galleries opened to show the private collections of the German advertising guru Christian Boros, or Belgian developer Walter Vanhaerents, or the Belgian industrialist Baron Guy Ullens could be seen not only as acts of self-promotion as Gareth Harris[272] suggested, but as evidences of these collectors' knowledge, taste and creativity.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the meaning of high-end fashion has changed. There are now many channels for consumers across the social spectrum to buy luxury commodities and at lesser costs. Transformations in the production of high-end fashion have enabled retailers to make luxury more accessible, particularly for younger consumers. However, because of this mass-accessibility, high-end fashion is no longer a means of indicating wealth and rank. I argued that now, to demark itself, the elite appears to be interested in buying commodities that can demonstrate their 'cultural' capital and the fact that they are not only materially rich, but live a luxury lifestyle that the lower classes could not experience. Indeed, Richard Florida's notion that creativity has become the driving force of contemporary society, as discussed in *The Rise of Creativity*[273], is an underpinning 'given' for this study. Creativity has been particularly valued because it gives an evidence of access to 'time' and as a sign of leisure. Because of this, I have shown that retailers have given a greater emphasis to creating luxury goods that could designate their consumers' individuality and creativity. Limited editions and custom-made ranges have therefore been produced to satisfy this need for demarcation. I am persuaded that it is in this context that 'art' has been introduced in retail. The questions that remain are whether in all truth, creativity can in fact be purchased, and whether art can realistically be used to give commodities a creative dimension. This is why in chapter 2, I question the role that works of art displayed in stores play, and what they bring to the brand identity and shopping experience.

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[271] Stallabrass, Julian, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 4
[272] Harris, Gareth, 'Show Us the Money', *The Independent*, 31 August 2007, pp. 2 - 4
[273] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004

2. The Changing Landscape of High-End Fashion Retail

In the commercial climate of 2008, retailers have to take into account that the growing importance of creativity should be reflected not only in the production but also in the delivery of goods. Retailers have therefore strived to change their stores and make shopping more engaging.

Since the late nineties, high-end fashion retailers have commissioned renowned architects to design new large-sized and high-budget stores, described as 'super-flagship stores'. The Italian fashion house Prada, in particular, has significantly contributed to these recent developments and has been imitated, on a global scale, by other leading high-end fashion companies.

The aims of this chapter are to explain retailers' intentions for establishing such stores, and to explore how architecture has transformed the image and role of the high-end fashion retail environment. Through case studies, I explain how the incorporation of high-architecture in the conception of high-end fashion flagships is part of an elaborate strategy by retailers to elevate shopping into a highbrow activity. Finally, I evaluate the overall effectiveness of super-flagship stores and reveal that there are drawbacks and risks associated with creating such retail monuments. The second part of this chapter deals with 'concept' stores, which I argue represent a better alternative to flagships in making shopping more of a singular and cultural experience. Over and above all, I suggest both approaches contribute to the establishment of what author and designer Rasshied Din described as '*new retail*'[274]. I give evidence as to why this radical reshape of retail architecture permits the credible presentation of works of art in stores.

a. The Shop as a Branded Space: High-Architecture Flagship Stores

Visits to stores significantly contribute to the appreciation of brands, which explains why stores have become more than display spaces for products. Shops are now developed as three-dimensional representations of brands' ethos, and art and high-architecture have been central in shaping this message. In their review of the retail landscape at the start of this new

[274] Din, Rasshied, *New Retail*, Conran Octopus Limited, London, 2000

millennium, Susan Abramson and Marcie Stuchin found that stores had become *'walk-in advertisements'*, but also as a means for retailers of communicating to consumers: '*increasingly, they* (shops) *are looked at as advertising vehicles, laboratories for product line experimentation, resources providing important information about the customer, and a means to position brands adjacent to their competitors, both in terms of location and in the minds of the customer*'[275]. Eleanor Curtis described that stores are part of the brand expression with is reflected on a multitude of levels, from the shop interior to the shop assistant: '*the building, the logo, the advertising, the fashion model, even the shop assistants, in addition to the clothes and accessories themselves, all tie up this thing called 'image' or brand*'[276]. This suggested that the attention given to stores should not be viewed in isolation. Stores should reflect the brand and its greater communication strategy.

Since the late nineties, there has been a general trend for high-end fashion brands to exploit high-architecture. Brands have commissioned 'starchitects' to create 'flagship stores', stores that are larger in scales and budgets to maximise in-store images of luxury, and to fulfil the new functions required from stores. Flagship stores are distinct from generic stores, in sizes, locations and their carefully elaborated designs. These stores differ from other outlets by offering a 'branded experience', to the extent that some stores have been described as '*brand theme parks*'[277], such as Nike and its 'Niketown' global flagship stores, with built-in sport attractions and free-access entertainment: 'freestyle' basketball courts or treadmills to test footwear.

Prada, the Italian high-end fashion house has, since the late nineties, made architecture a central part of its strategy to raise publicity and improve its corporate image, demonstrating the importance and influence of architecture. Indeed, Prada's Epicenter projects, some of the most publicised outlets were developed in an attempt to modernise the '*physical reality*'[278] of this family-owned company founded in 1913[279]. Up to that point, Prada had adopted a template for the design of its global stores (including department store concessions) to give them a sense of unity and facilitate brand recognition. These outlets, known as the 'green' stores for their common and distinctive green decorating schemes, soon became emblematic of Prada (see *fig. 6* and *7*). However, the ease of recognition of Prada stores was interpreted as having an adverse effect, and perceived as diminishing the company's reputation as innovative. Miuccia Prada recognised herself that the stores had to be changed: '*at the end of the 1990s, (...) the perfect Prada store look, which we all know, became about a kind of death. Every shop was the same. Perfect and unchanging. So we started to change things. It was a nightmare, because we had to change our mentality,*

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[275] Abramson, Susan and Stuchin, Marcie, *Shops & Boutiques 2000,* Rizzoli Publications, New York, 1999, p. 8
[276] Curtis, Eleanor, *Fashion Retail*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., Chichester, 2004, p. 14
[277] Tungate, Mark, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara,* Kogan Page, London, 2004, p. 77
[278] anon., (Prada), 'Prada Los Angeles Epicenter', July 2004, p. 3 - downloaded 24 April 2005: <http://www.bartcolighting.com/prada.asp> (last accessed 7 June 2005)
[279] Prada was founded by Mario Prada in 1913 in Milan as a luxury leather goods company. In 1978, Miuccia Prada, the founder's granddaughter took over the family business. She expanded it by producing footwear (1983) and clothing (1989) achieving a global success, cited in Dukcevich, Davide, 'Miuccia Prada', Forbes, 20 June 2001: <http://ww.forbes.com/2001/06/20/0620fashionintro_6.html> (last accessed 23 April 2005)

and that's never done quickly[280]*'*. The fact that many artists have used the representations of Prada stores to symbolise high-end fashion and depict consumer society demonstrated how iconic Prada had become. A notable example of this is Andreas Gursky, the German photographer who initiated in 1996 a series of photographs of Prada stores' interiors. Gursky focused on displays; and with no human representation - no employees or consumers - the shops can be seen from an unusual angle, conveying a sense of beauty but also, of artificiality (see *fig. 8*). Yet, these photographs do not make an explicit critique of consumerism unlike the work of the Scandinavian installation artists Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset who have used the high-profile image of Prada to comment on the excessive and absurd character of high-end fashion and to a larger extent, consumerism[281]. In 2005, the pair placed *Prada Marfa,* a replica of a Prada store in the middle of the desert outside the Texan town of Marfa, known for the 'Marfa lights' (a natural meteorological phenomenon which had nourished stories of UFO sightings) and for the involvement of the late American minimalist artist Donald Judd to create art in a culturally-devoid area[282]. *'Prada Marfa'* appears completely out of place, like a mirage (see *fig. 9* and *10*). The store is devoid of purpose: it is completely inoperative, with a sealed entrance. It will be left to deteriorate, like a time capsule, preserving the display items from the Prada Autumn/Winter 2005 collection, raising thoughts on the lifespan of consumer goods, the longevity of fashion, architecture, and humanity. This juxtaposing of culture and nature demonstrates the lack of meaning of fashion and luxury outside its context. Elmgreen and Dragset chose to represent a Prada store as they felt it was the most easily identifiable brand in terms of design: '*the interior design of the shops became iconographic following the Gursky photo and therefore suitable for our installation*'[283]. In fact, Elmgreen and Dragset had already used the Prada logo in October 2001, with their piece *Opening Soon / Powerless Structures fig. 242*, where they printed the words '*opening soon'* along with the Prada logo in large vinyl lettering on the windows of Tanya Bonakdar gallery in New York, to comment on the opening of high-end fashion stores in cultural hotspots[284]. However, although supported by Prada[285], it is very likely that the representation of Prada stores by artists must have directly contributed to encouraging them to re-consider their design strategy. Hence, in 1999, new stores were created and presented as Epicenters.

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[280] Irving, Mark, 'Anytime I think I Might be Becoming Too Arty… An Interview with Miuccia Prada', *Art Review*, September 2006, p. 63

[281] Elmgreen and Dragset first used the Prada logo in 2001, with their piece *Opening Soon/Powerless Structures*, where they gave the illusion that a new Prada store was opening by printing the words 'opening soon' along with the Prada logo in large vinyl lettering, on the windows of Tanya Bonakdar gallery in New York, cited in Haq, Nav, 'Super Store', *ArtReview*, September 2005, pp.66 - 69

[282] Marfa is home to the Chinati foundation, a contemporary art museum established by Donald Judd in 1986. The foundation includes pieces by Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, John Chamberlain, as well as works of art by contemporary artists such as Carl Andre, Richard Long and Jon Wesley.

[283] Cited in an email interview of Elmgreen and Dragset, in Erin Manns, 'Elmgreen & Dragset', *Kultureflash*, October 2005: <http://www.kultureflash.net/archive/142/priview.html> (last accessed 21 January 2007)

[284] Haq, Nav, 'Super Store', *ArtReview*, September 2005, pp. 66 – 69

[285] Haden-Guest, Anthony, 'The Language of Branding', *Financial Times* (Weekend), 1 - 2 October 2005, p. 26

Interiors of Prada 'green' stores in Singapore (*fig. 6*, left) and Madison avenue, New York (*fig. 7*, right), illustrating a consistence in the use of light and colour to make the stores visually recognisable as a Prada space.

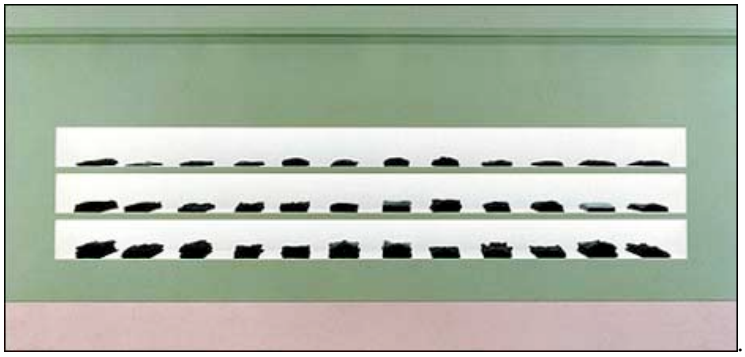

fig. 8: Andreas Gursky's photographs of Prada displays demonstrated how Prada had become symbolised through uniform retail design of its stores and exemplifying fashion and consumption. Gursky was also able to show the artistic character of retail environments as in this piece, *Prada III,* 1998.

fig. 9.

fig.10.

With the installation *Prada Marfa*, artists Elmgreen and Dragset were able to show that brands are ubiquitous that even in the most unfamiliar and unrelated locations, Prada, as a symbol of high-end fashion and consumerism is still highly recognisable. In these images, the contrast between the natural environment and the artificiality of brands is made obvious, raising discussions on the purpose of fashion and luxury.

With unconventional designs, strategically elaborated to surprise consumers by breaking away from Prada's iconic 'green' retail image, the Epicenters were envisaged, according to a Prada press statement, as a '*working experiment*'[286] to change the shopping experience and '*to reshape both the concept and function of shopping, pleasure and communication, to encourage the meshing of consumption and culture*'[287]. Prada believed it could achieve such ambitious objectives by creating a range of new stores in strategic locations and commissioning 'starchitects', architects with very high status, promoted as stars to design their stores and elevate them into monuments of high architecture. These stores were not just designed to stand amidst other flagship stores, they were designed to be distinct. A Prada press statement explained that the Epicenters are not like traditional flagship stores but, sites dedicated for experimental shopping: '*in contrast to the concept of a classical 'flagship store' – the simple enlargement of a generic store, in other words more of the same – the new Prada Epicenters offer a diversification of the shopping experience: the commercial functions are overlaid with a series of experiential and spatial typologies that enrich and expand the territory of shopping*'[288]. Although not as radical as described by Prada, the Epicenters did differ from most other flagships existing at the time by introducing technology, avant-garde architecture and art to present future retail trends, and through it, Prada's advancement. Other renowned high-end fashion brand flagships as the Issey Miyake and Comme des Garçons stores both located in New York were in comparison very low-tech, with significantly smaller retail surfaces.

The first Epicenter store was opened in SoHo, New York in December 2001. The 2,100 square metres (23,000 square-foot) outlet was designed by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, Director of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) at a cost of $40 million. Located within a listed 19th century building, the store's avant-garde interior greatly contrasts with the exterior, (see *fig. 11* and *12*). Figure 12 shows how the entrance opens into the store's distinctive characteristic: the 'wave', a half-pipe shaped zebrawood structure which merges the street and subterranean levels into one. On one side, the 'wave' has steps on which clothes can be displayed. The high ceilings are equipped with '*laser-guided, industrial grade, motorized cranes*'[289], high-tech machinery usually used for stage management onto which large aluminium mesh cages containing mannequins are suspended and moved throughout the store, giving an impression of a catwalk show (see *fig. 13* and *14*). With this Koolhaas succeeded in putting 'spectacle' in the store, fulfilling Miuccia Prada's wish to lessen the difference between '*what is in the show and what is in the shop*'[290].

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[286] anon., (Prada), 'Prada Los Angeles Epicenter', July 2004, p. 3 - downloaded 24 April 2005: <http://www.bartcolighting.com/prada.asp> (last accessed 7 June 2005)
[287] Arroyo Alba, Pedro Pablo, 'Prada Tokyo. Architecture is Architecture', 24 October 2003: <http://architettura.supereva.com/files/20031023/> (last accessed 21 January 2007)
[288] anon., (Prada), 'Prada Los Angeles Epicenter', July 2004, p. 3 - downloaded 24 April 2005: <http://www.bartcolighting.com/prada.asp> (last accessed 7 June 2005)
[289] Lobo, Hilary., Giammalvo, Gregory and Quinn, Raymond, 'Prada Epicenter, New York', *Arup Journal*, 2003, p. 23 - downloaded 24 April 2005: <http://www.arup.com/DOWNLOADBANK/download70.pdf> (last accessed 7 June 2005)
[290] Golsorkhi, Masoud and Lock, Isaac, 'The Reluctant Mogul', *O:* (The Observer's fashion supplement prepared by *Tank*), Summer 2007, pp. 56 – 59

fig. 11. Exterior view of the Prada Epicenter store in Soho, New York. Unlike the 'green' stores, there is no indication of the Prada logo on the façade, which makes the store more intriguing. Furthermore, the traditional character of the exterior creates a greater contrast with its radical interior (see below).

fig. 12. View of the 'wave', the most striking visual element of the interior design of the New York Prada Epicenter. The atmosphere of the store highly contrasts with the interior design of the 'green' stores (figs. 6 - 7), and from other stores. With this original interior design, Prada stepped away from retail conventions and sought to surprise consumers.

fig. 13

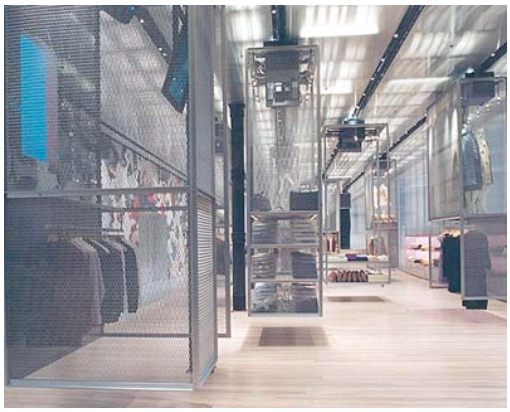

fig. 14

Views of the 'cages', mobile display structures, used to showcase clothing and accessories and transport products across the store. These cages made use of the high ceilings and brought the feel of a catwalk show, introducing 'spectacle' in the store.

June 2003 saw the opening of the Tokyo Epicenter created by the Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron[291]. More extravagant than the New York branch, the store, located in the district of Aoyama in Tokyo, amounted to $87 million[292]. The six-story high and five-sided building, built in the shape of a glass crystal, combining convex, flat and concave windows, became an instant architectural landmark of this fashionable area[293], whilst at the same time, being remarkably distinctive from the New York Epicenter and the other 'green stores' (see *fig. 15*).

The last Epicenter to this date, the Beverly Hills Epicenter completed in July 2004 was also designed by OMA, but at undisclosed costs[294]. The store's key feature is the absence of a traditional storefront; instead, the entire width of the store opens up along Rodeo Drive (see *fig. 16*). Once more, the store manages to differentiate itself from the other Prada stores and those of its competitors.

With their striking designs and extravagant budgets, the Prada's Epicenter projects stirred great interest and Prada's competitors quickly tried to surpass Prada's efforts (see table 1). The trend is so fast moving that the numerous books that have been written on the subject rapidly become obsolete. Revised editions are being published. A second edition of *Fashion Retail* written by Eleanor Curtis, for instance, has been released in March 2007, less then three years after the publication of the first edition[295]. It can even be envisaged that a second wave will hit the high street as mid-range fashion brands begin to imitate the trend set by high-end fashion houses. H&M, for instance had called on the celebrated French architect Jean Nouvel to design a store on the Champs-Elysées. However, the planning permission was rejected. The authorities felt that the presence of mid-range retailers would make trite the reputation of this famous avenue. H&M's failure to create a super-flagship shows that at this stage, high-architecture is not sufficient to elevate mid-range retailers' image and that super-flagships are still currently associated with high-end fashion labels. It also demonstrates that super-flagships are developed to communicate luxury and therefore function better with high-end fashion label or other luxury brands. Indeed, a number of companies in other retail sectors have also commissioned famous architects to design successful super-flagship stores. To cite just a few, Apple, in collaboration with the American firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson architects, opened from 2002 a series of award-winning stores throughout the world. These stores built to respond to the growing demand for Apple products, in particular the iPod helped publicise the company. This new retail presence positively affected the revenue, as it is evident in table 2 exposing Apple's sales performance from January 2001 to July 2006. In 2001, Shiseido, a

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[291] The Tokyo store was bigger than the New York Epicenter, with over 2,860 m2 (30,785 ft), a considerable size in a city like Tokyo, where there is a high-value on space.
[292] Ray Chandler of Fortune magazines specified that this was, at the time, the biggest investment made by an Italian company in Japan, Chandler, Ray and Kano, Cindy, 'Recession Chic', *Fortune,* 29 September 2003, pp. 26 – 27
[293] Arroyo Alba, Pedro Pablo, 'Prada Tokyo: Architecture is Architecture', 24 October 2003: <http://architettura.supereva.com/files/20031023/> (last accessed 21 January 2007)
[294] This store was of comparative size to the New York and Tokyo stores, with 2,230 m2 (24,000 sq.f).
[295] Curtis, Eleanor, *Fashion Retail*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., Chichester, 2004

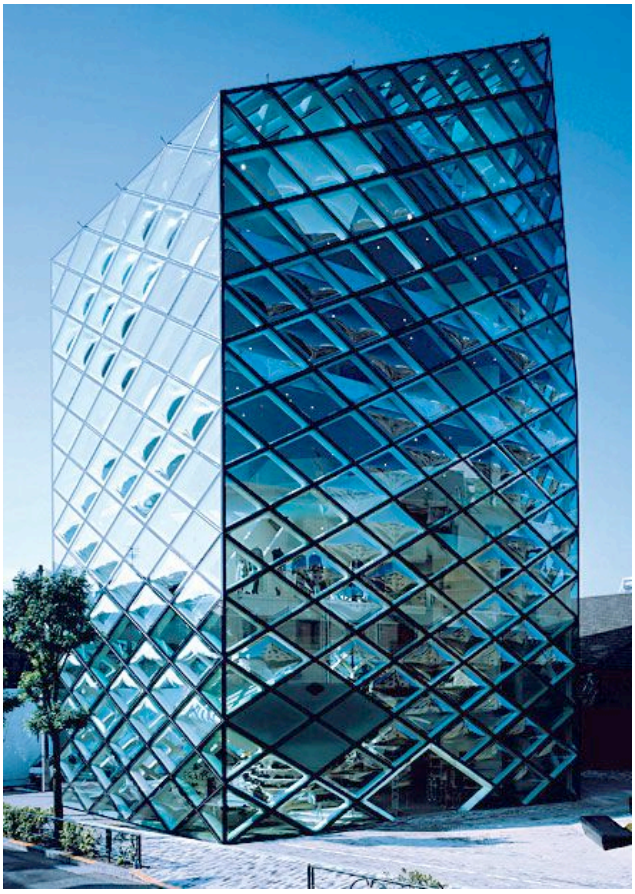

fig. 15: The Prada Epicenter store in Tokyo (designed by Herzog and de Meuron) is not only distinct from the other Prada 'green' stores but from the New York epicenter. Its highly elaborated architecture made the store stand out, becoming a landmark of the area.

fig. 16: The Prada Epicenter store in Los Angeles (designed by OMA) is also distinctive, transforming the traditional appearance of retail storefronts by its absence of shop window. Like in the New York and Tokyo Epicenters, no graphic indication of Prada appears on the storefront.

Table 1: International flagship stores of high-end fashion brands created by 'starchitects' between 1998 and 2006

1998: Comme des Garçons opened series of stores in Aoyama, Tokyo; Chelsea, New York and rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, Paris created by Future Systems. Paul Smith opened the 'Westbourne House' flagship store in Notting Hill, London, designed by Sophie Hicks

1999: Louis Vuitton opened a flagship in Nagoya, Japan designed by Jun Aoki. Future Systems designed Selfridges' new Birmingham branch as well as Marni's new international stores (in London, Milan, Paris, New York, Tokyo and Kuwait City)

2000: Louis Vuitton opened a branch in Tokyo's Ginza-Matsuya district created by Jun Aoki.

2001: Dolce and Gabbana opened a flagship in Moscow designed by British architect David Chipperfield. Dutch group Droog Design created a radical concept for Mandarina Duck's 'Paris Embassy project'. Canadian architect Frank Gehry designed Issey Miyake's flagship store in TriBeCa, New York Italian architect Renzo Piano designed 'Maison Hermès' in Tokyo, the fashion house's Japanese flagship store and headquarters. Chanel commissioned Peter Marino to create new store in Osaka. Paul Smith opened a flagship store in Milan designed by Sophie Hicks. Shiseido, a Japanese upmarket cosmetics company, employed Ricardo Bofill to design their new headquarters in Ginza, which included a shop, showrooms, offices, café and an art gallery.

2002: Italian architects Claudio Silvestrin and Guiliana Salmaso created 28 new stores for Giorgio Armani, notably in Hong Kong. Louis Vuitton commissioned Jun Aoki to design a new store in Tokyo's Omotesando district. Dolce and Gabbana commissioned British architect David Chipperfield to create stores in New York and Paris. Apple opened a series of award-winning stores throughout the world: in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco designed by the American firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson architects. Giorgio Armani opened its 'Emporium' in Milan designed by American architect Michael Gabellini

2003: Louis Vuitton commissioned Jun Aoki (in collaboration of architects Eric Carlson and Aurelio Clementi) to design its Tokyo Roppongi Hills new branch. Chanel commissioned Peter Marino to design its Paris flagship. Japanese architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa know as SANAA, created Issey Miyake by Naoki Takizawa and Christian Dior's latest outlets in Omotesando, Tokyo. Tod's unveiled a new store in Omotesando, designed by Japanese architect Toyo Ito. Apple opened stores in Tokyo, Nagoya and London designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson architects.

2004: Louis Vuitton commissioned Jun Aoki to design its Tokyo Ginza-Namiki and Upper East Side, New York stores. Dolce and Gabbana opened a new store in Munich designed by British architect David Chipperfield. Chanel commissioned Peter Marino to design New York and Tokyo flagships. Christian Dior opened a store in Ginza, Tokyo, designed by Spanish architect Ricardo Bofill. Armani opened stores in Shanghai, Seoul and São Paulo designed by Claudio Silvestrin and Guiliana Salmaso. Jil Sander opened a store in New York designed by American architect Michael Gabellini.

2005: after a two-year refurbishment directed by American architects Peter Marino and Eric Carlson, Louis Vuitton reopened its largest store on the Champs-Elysées, Paris. Chanel commissioned Peter Marino to design its Hong Kong flagship.

2006: Longchamp opened its 100th store: 'la Maison Unique' in SoHo, New York designed by British architect Thomas Heatherwick. Apple opened additional flagship stores in New York and Tokyo designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson architects. Jil Sander opened a store in Los Angeles designed by Michael Gabellini. Chloe opened new worldwide flagship stores in Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and New York designed by Sophie Hicks. Jewellers and pearl specialist, Mikimoto, commissioned Toyo Ito to create a store in Ginza.

Comme des Garçons, New York

Louis Vuitton, Ginza-Matsuya, Tokyo

Shiseido, Tokyo

Tod's, Tokyo

Chanel, Tokyo

Mikimoto, Tokyo

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006

Paul Smith, London

Selfridges, Birmingham

Paul Smith, Milan

Apple store, New York

Louis Vuitton, Tokyo

Louis Vuitton, Paris

Chloe, Tokyo

Table 1: International flagship stores of high-end fashion brands created by 'starchitects', between 1998 and 2006

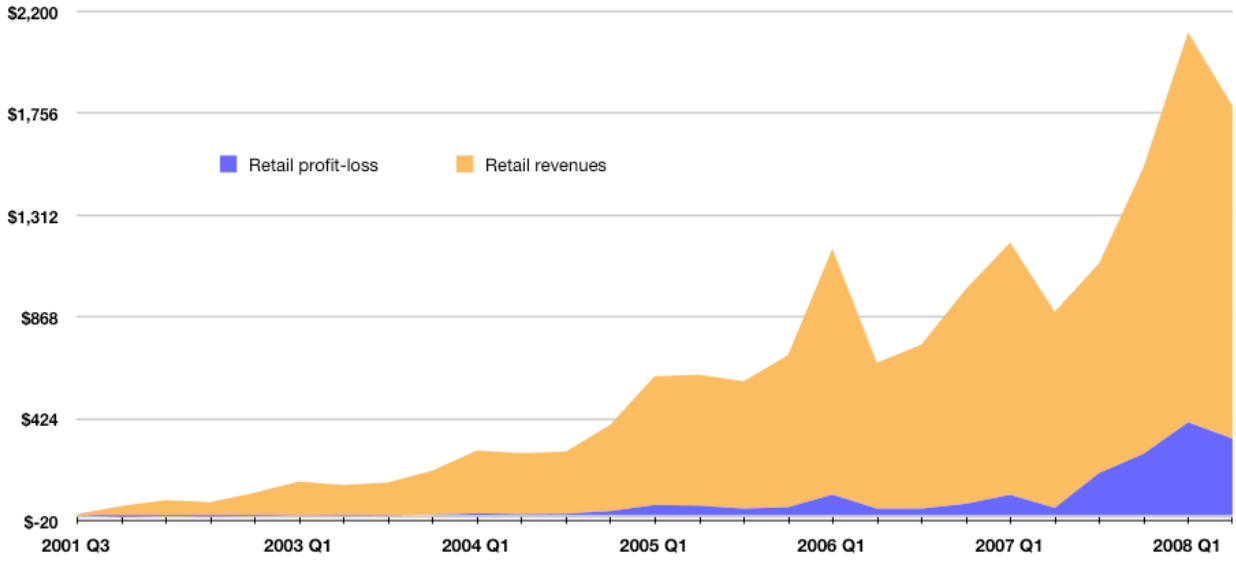

Table 2: Since Apple established a retail presence in 2001 by opening high-architecture stores throughout the world, Apple's sales have greatly increased as shown on this graph. By establishing a retail presence, and designing stores with the objective of building a unique customer experience in the technology sector, Apple was also able to expand its global brand recognition.

Japanese upmarket cosmetics company, employed Ricardo Bofill to design their new headquarters in Ginza, which included a shop, showrooms, offices, café and an art gallery. In 2002, Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid designed BMW's latest plant in Leipzig, Germany. In 2006, Jewellers and pearl specialist, Mikimoto, commissioned Toyo Ito to create a store in Ginza. These examples show that architecture has become associated with the retail image of high-class brands.

Stores have become an expression of the brands, communicating the brand identity to consumers. Otto Riewoldt explained that the 'branding' of retail spaces is part of what he viewed as the process of 'Brandscaping' – the three-dimensional design of brand settings - which forges the backdrop for creating consumer experiences[296].

Super-flagship stores share common architectural features, but to mark their distinction from other stores, architects have incorporated elements of residential and office architecture. Some have disregarded the most identifiable attribute of retail design: storefronts, to intrigue and draw customers in, as the Prada Epicenters stores. This absence of logos enhances images of luxury. In this case, it showed that Prada does not need to be announced, implying that the Italian brand is unique and easily recognisable. Mark Tungate pointed out, *'exteriors provide no trace of the Prada name'* but *'smart Prada consumers, undoubtedly up to their ears in newspapers and architecture magazines, are expected to know where they are headed'*[297]. In contrast, the Louis Vuitton outlets created by the Japanese architect Jun Aoki have for prevailing characteristic the incorporation of the Louis Vuitton signature Monogram or checkerboard pattern within the design of the stores' façades (see *fig. 17 - 19* of the stores in Roppongi, Tokyo and Nagoya). Other brands have also incorporated their brand name and logos in the design of their new stores as in the Dior shop[298] in Omotesando, Tokyo (2003), (see *fig. 20*) and the Christian Lacroix store[299] in Dankanyama, Tokyo, which is has a handwritten text by the designer printed on its glass façade[300]. Unlike the Prada stores, the brand name and logos are predominant, literally branding the stores, turning the architecture into packaging.

More distinctively, some flagship stores have no conventional glass windows such as the Los Angeles Prada Epicenter and the Hermès store in Tokyo. In the Prada store, the windows have been replaced with 'peepholes' constructed on the floor so that, going against retail conventions, consumers have to look down to the basement level to look at window displays

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[296] Riewoldt, Otto, *Brandscaping: Worlds of Experience in Retail Design*, Birkhauser, Berlin, 2002
[297] Tungate, Mark, *Fashion Brands*: *Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page, London, 2004, pp. 77 - 78
[298] Designed by the Japanese architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, who founded SANAA in 1995; and have since worked on a number of projects: the *O-Museum* in Nagano, Japan (1999), the *21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art* in Kanazawa, Japan (2004), the *Toledo Museum of Art Glass Pavilion*, Toledo, USA (2001) and the *New Museum of Contemporary Art,* in New York (2003)
[299] Designed by Christophe Carpente (2002) of CAPS architects
[300] anon., 'Handwriting by Lacroix', *Blueprint*, September 2001, p. 29

fig. 17: Façade of the Louis Vuitton Roppongi Hills, Tokyo branch designed by Jun Aoki. The brand is acknowledged through the incorporation of the brand name and branded pattern into the design of the façade.

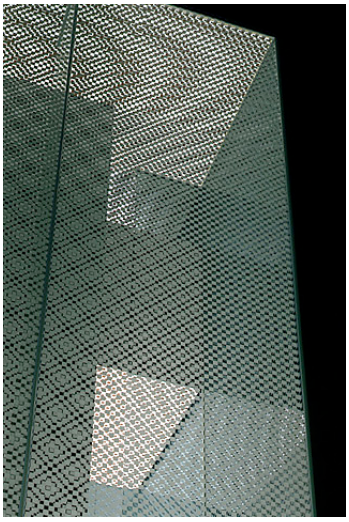

fig. 18: Louis Vuitton store in Nagoya *fig. 19*: Detail view of the glass façade

By incorporating the 'codes' of Louis Vuitton into the structure of the stores, Jun Aoki was able to create a branded architectural 'skin' and turn the 'store-shell' into a unique visual representation of the brand.

fig. 20: Louis Vuitton extended architectural branding has been picked up by other brands including Dior, in its Omotesando, Tokyo branch (designed by SANAA) which also incorporated the brand logo in the design of the façade.

(see *fig. 21*). In the Tokyo Hermès store (1998-2001), designed by Renzo Piano[301], a few clear glass blocks were incorporated in the façade of the side of the building to display smaller items such as watches, ties or Hermès' famous silk scarves (see *fig. 22*). The small dimension of the glass showcases (45 x 45 cm[302]) made items appear more precious and delicate. They also maintain the architectural style; usually it is the case that retail architecture is adapted to integrate shopping functions, but in this store, it appears that the retail functions were adapted to suit the architectural style of the store.

The use of transparency is a common theme in super-flagship designs. Transparency, which is traditionally used in offices, and more recently in residential design, turned the architectural structure of the stores into packaging where unwrapping equates entering the stores. The use of transparency makes up for the absence of shop windows, and make the store appear more public and more accessible, increasing temptations to walk in, as passers-by cannot help but see inside the stores. Envisaged as a '*magic lantern*[303], the 'Maison Hermès'[304] in Tokyo was entirely constructed with small glass blocks. During the daytime the store is lit by natural light, and at night, lit from inside, the façade become translucent and the store appears to glow (see *fig. 23* and *24*). The use of glass blocks and the intensity of the transparency of the edifice is highly reminiscent of the 'Maison de Verre', an architectural landmark of Paris, which was built in 1927 - 1932, by Pierre Chareau in collaboration with Bernard Bijouet and Louis Dalbet (see *fig. 25*), giving more credibility to the high-architecture character of the store. This dual image of the store during the day and at night is also central to the design concept of the Prada Tokyo Epicenter (see *fig. 26*) and the Tokyo Chanel store designed by Peter Marino.

Transparency is a recurring visual characteristic of modern architecture and has also been used by retailers to give their brands an innovative persona. For Dior's first shop in Japan, SANAA used transparency to give a sense of modernity, and to contrast with Dior's Paris flagship on avenue Montaigne, said to be inspired by the Château de Compiègne[305], with moulded ceilings, parquet floors and wood panelling (see *fig. 27 - 29*). Nevertheless, to reconcile the heritage of Dior and its modern vision, SANAA worked with Peter Marino and the French architectural practice, Architecture & Associés (Pierre Beucler and Jean Christophe Poggioli) to give the store's interior a Parisian feel. Like the New York Prada Epicenter, with its

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[301] Piano is considered as one of the world's leading architect. Famous for the design of the '*Centre Georges Pompidou*' in Paris (1971-77, in collaboration with British architect Rogers), and its renovation (1996-2000); Piano has also contributed to a vast amount of projects such as, the *Lingotto Factory Conversion* in Turin (1983-2003), the *Zentrum Paul Klee Museum* in Bern (1999-2005) and the *Museum of Contemporary Art*, in Sarajevo (1999-tbc).

[302] Silloway, Kari, 'Maison Hermès', *Galinsky*, 2004: <http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/hermes/index.htm> (last accessed 21 January 2007)

[303] ibid.

[304] With over 6,000 square meters (65,000 square feet), this building houses two floors of shopping space, workshops, offices, an exhibition space and museum, topped by a roof garden. This store, opened in September 2001 was said to have cost $138 million according to Chadha and Husband: Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand Inside Asia's love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 94

[305] Phillips, Ian, 'Cities of Light', *Interior Design*, 1 April 2004: <http://www.interiordesign.net/id_article/CA412119/id?stt=000&text=faubourg> (last accessed 18 October 2007)

fig. 21: 'Peepholes': the floor shop windows of the Prada Epicenter store on Rodeo drive, Los Angeles, use the basement level to showcase products.

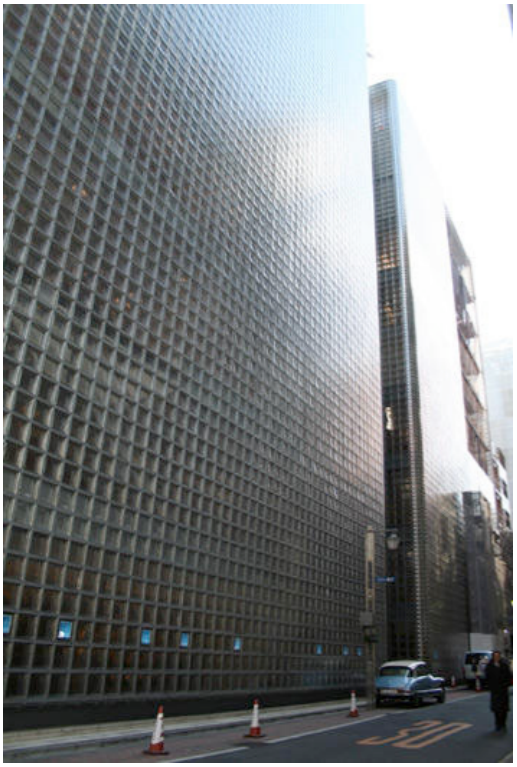

fig. 22: The absence of traditional glass windows on the side of the Hermès store in Ginza, Tokyo (designed by Renzo Piano) preserved the smoothness of the façade; only a few transparent glass blocks were used to incorporate smaller items, blending with the architectural style of the building. Furthermore, the small dimensions of the glass showcases made products appear more precious and delicate, closer to the style of the presentation used in the retail of jewellery.

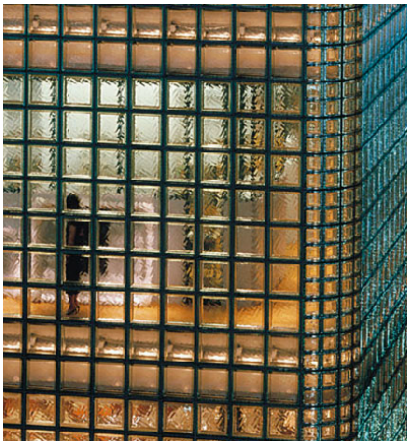

fig. 23: Hermès Tokyo store at night; the low and soft lighting that emerges from the store, emits a sense of warmth.

fig. 24: Detail view of the Hermès store, showing the transparency of the glass façade.

fig. 25: The Hermès store resembles the 'Maison de Verre', an architectural landmark of Paris. Built in 1927 - 1932, by Pierre Chareau in collaboration with Bernard Bijouet and Louis Dalbet, this edifice also made use of the transparency of glass blocks.

fig. 26: The store's transparent character turns the architectural structure into a packaging, where unwrapping equates entering the store. The use of transparency makes for the absence of shop windows, the products are exposed increasing passers-by's temptation as they cannot help but see inside the store.

traditional exterior façade and modern interior, SANAA worked on creating architectural contradictions. Built in 2003, in Omotesando, Tokyo, the 30 m tall and 15,000 square foot store is cutting-edge, with a dramatic transparent flat glass façade with sharp edges (see *fig. 30*). Similarly to the Hermès and Prada stores, the Tokyo Dior outlet has different aspects by day or night. Internally, the store contrast with its exterior, instead of the eight floors perceived from the street, there is only one basement floor and five levels. Decorated with Louis XVI–style grey silk sofas and chairs, with black stone floors, and an assortment of white and black lacquers, the interior design mixes elements of modernity and classicism characteristic of the Paris store (see *fig. 31).* It could be argued that these new flagship stores might also have used transparency to make their stores more 'open'[306], in accordance with Lianne McTavish's suggestion that the use of glass for the Louvre pyramid put an emphasis on transparency which reflected the 'openness' of the museum, '*the apparent 'openness' of the museum is usually related, however, to the new emphasis on the transparency in, for example, the glass pyramid and the glass skylights which cover the vast courtyard in the sculpture areas of the Richelieu wing*'.

What distinguished these new flagship stores are their unconventional proportions. On the one hand, some have been constructed in heights and sizes that are larger than ordinary flagships. For example the Chanel store opened in December 2004 in Ginza, Tokyo represents to this date the biggest Chanel store. With over 6,100 square metres of floor space, distributed on 10 floors and with 56-metre high, it towers over the entire area. Designed by Peter Marino, this store is said to have cost over $240 millions[307]. The store houses different levels of shopping areas, offices, the Chanel Nexus centre, a dedicated cultural event space, and on the top floor, the 'Beige Tokyo restaurant' created with the association of renowned French chef, Alain Ducasse, and a rooftop terrace, le 'Jardin de Tweed café'. On the other hand, smaller outlets have been designed with a more residential approach, to confer an intimate feel such as the Prada Tokyo Epicenter which according to Pedro Pablo Arroyo Alba, the Spanish architect and author, '*corresponds more to a domestic compound than a tower*'[308].

Architecture has also been used to symbolise the most iconic products of a brand. The Apple store in Tokyo was partially built in stainless steel evoking the signature hard casing of the titanium PowerBooks laptops produced at the time. To increase the resemblance with the computers, the Apple logo has been positioned in the centre of the edifice and like the computer is lighted from the back (see *fig. 32* and *33),* the store becomes a metaphor for the goods. Similarly, the design of the Chanel store in Beverly Hills was based on the shape of the bottle of the best-selling Chanel No. 5 perfume (see *fig. 34* and *35*). In the Chanel Tokyo store, Peter Marino recreated the layering of tweed, a fabric cherished by Coco Chanel by weaving

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[306] McTavish, Lianne, 'Shopping in the Museum? Consumer Spaces and the Redefinition of the Louvre', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1998, p. 176

[307] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand Inside Asia's love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 94

[308] Arroyo Alba, Pedro Pablo, 'Prada Tokyo: Architecture is Architecture', 24 October 2003: <http://architettura.supereva.com/files/20031023/> (last accessed 21 January 2007)

fig. 27. *fig.* 28. *fig.* 29.

Interior design of the Dior flagship store in Paris, which emphasise the 'classic' character of the brand.

fig. 30: For Dior's first boutique in Japan, the designer team SANAA took an avant-garde edge to contrast with the Parisian flagship.

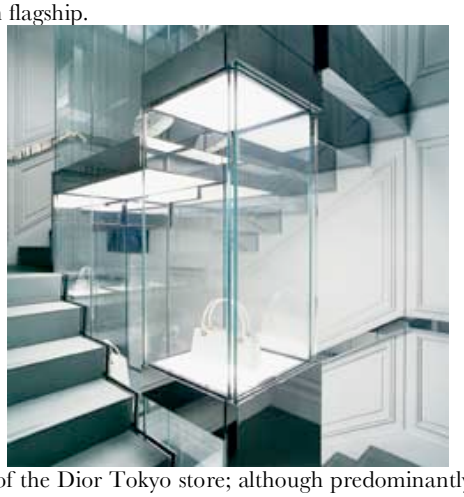

fig. 31: Interior view of the Dior Tokyo store; although predominantly modern, traditional architectural elements, such as the use of lacquer, steel, and wood panelling, characteristic of the interior of the Parisian store were introduced

fig. 32: View of the Apple store in Ginza, Tokyo (designed by Bohlin Cywinski Jackson) using a material similar to that used for the frame of the PowerBook, and the backlight Apple logo characteristic of the Apple laptops.

fig. 33: Image of an Apple PowerBook G4 laptop with its distinctive 'titanium' frame and backlit Apple logo.

Model of the forthcoming Chanel Beverly Hills store designed by Peter Marino (*fig. 34*, left), inspired by the trademark black and white packaging of the Chanel n° 5 perfume (*fig. 35,* right).

layers of triple-glazed black privalite glass and stainless steel into the structure of the building, claiming that *'the Chanel Tweed, (...) is as iconic as the brand's logo. In fact, it is part of the fabric of the brand's DNA'*[309]. By referring to products, architecture makes stores more familiar and identifiable with the brand.

Above all, super-flagship stores are designed in the spirit of reassembling art and commerce. Art has been directly integrated in the architectural design of some stores. For example, the LED technology, integrated in the façade of the Chanel Tokyo store enabled the projection of videos at night created by the Israeli video artist Michal Rovner (see *fig. 36* and *37*). The Chanel store in Hong Kong, renovated by Marino was also built in that spirit with the same video projections are shown on the façade of the store (see *fig. 38*). Marino worked closely with five artists for the elaboration of this store. The artists' pieces directed and guided the structure and shape of the store, rather than only being an afterthought. French duo, Francois-Xavier and Claude Lalanne[310], famous for their animal sculptures made a deer, an animal that Coco Chanel found inspiring. One entire room was designed around a Coco Chanel portrait by Brazilian artist Vik Muniz, making it a focal point. An atrium was built around a 32 metre tall Murano glass sculpture of a giant pearl necklace created by the French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel, (see *fig. 39)*.

Marino also chose to collaborate with artists whilst designing the Louis Vuitton store in Paris. American artists Tim White-Sobieski created a video-installation accompanying customers along the entire length of the store's striking 20 metre escalator and James Turrell designed *Wide Glass, 'a modular light based structure projected onto a flat screen'*[311]. The lift was transformed into a permanent art performance by the Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, untitled V*otre Perte de Sens'* (your loss of sense in French, which will be further examined in chapter 5).

There are numerous examples of works of art being built within the architecture of new flagships stores. In the Tokyo Dior store, the Belgian artist Carsten Höller used a fitting room to explore the notions of time and self-perception. Inside the fitting room, instead of a traditional mirror, images of consumers are taken by four surveillance cameras, and are distorted as photographic images and projected on a screen. These images change systematically, presenting different angles of the individual in a series of three-second still frames[312] (see *fig. 40)*. The act of trying clothes on becomes a performance and could encourage

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[309] Livingstone, Heather, 'Tokyo's Chanel Tower provides Canvas for Israeli Artist', *AIArchitect*, the News of America's Community of Architects, 5 January 2007: <http://www.aia.org/aiarchitect/thisweek07/0105/0105d_chanel.cfm> (last accessed 25 January 2007)
[310] These artists had already made a piece for Coco Chanel's personal art collection in the fifties, cited in Bousteau, Fabrice, 'La Mode, une Vitrine pour l'Art Contemporain?', *Beaux Arts*, January 2006, p. 46
[311] anon., (LVMH), 'Louis Vuitton Opens the World's Largest Luxury Store in Paris', *LVMH Magazine* (Online), 14 November 2005: <http://www.lvmh.com/magazine/pg_mag_contenu.asp?int_id=338&archive=0&rubrique=ACTUALITE&srub=0&rub=&str_theme_id=> (last accessed 1 July 2007)
[312] Kwah, Meng Ching, 'White Femininity: Dior Omotesando', *Studio International*, 7 June 2004: <http://www.studio-international.co.uk/architecture/dior_omotesando_13_9_04.asp> (last accessed 20 January 2006)

fig. 36

fig. 37

Art was incorporated in the architectural design of the Chanel Tokyo flagship store (designed by Peter Marino). LED technology, integrated in the façade, enabled the projection of pieces by the Israeli video artist Michal Rovner, inspired by elements linked to the brand such as tweed (Coco Chanel's favourite material), used in *Tweed, Tokyo* (*fig.* 36, left). Another technological prowess is that both from inside and outside, the LED technology appears transparent.

fig. 38: Michal Rovner's video pieces were also projected on the façade of the Chanel Hong Kong store, making the projection of works of art characteristic of the brand

fig. 39: Jean Michel Othoniel, *Collier de Perles*, 2005. This installation was site-specific to the Chanel store in Hong Kong, giving the store additional value.

fig. 40: Carsten Höller, *Fitting Room,* 2005, which shows customers on CCTV from different angles, transformed the fitting rooms of the menswear department of the Dior store in Tokyo into a performance and unique experience.

men, who are known not to like using changing rooms[313], to try clothes on. The Dior flagship store in Paris features works of art by Claude Lalanne, André Dubreuil, Hervé van der Straeten, Ado Chale, Rob Wynne and Oyoram. The Chanel store in Paris invited the French artist Xavier Veilhan, to create works of art to be used for the display of its jewellery collections. The interior of the Balenciaga store in Milan was designed by Balenciaga's head designer Nicolas Ghesquière in collaboration with the French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster.

The fact that some works of art are integrated within the architecture of stores gives more stature to the stores, and makes the works of art permanent, turned into site-specific art. Stores become unique sites, distinguished from homogenous retail environments characteristics of high-street chains. The renowned French conceptual artist Daniel Buren, explained that the temporary pieces he made for the gallery in Maison Hermès in Dosan park, Seoul were *'completely incorporated into the architecture'*, to the extent that entering the Hermès gallery was entering his piece, ' *the architecture has been used to its maximum'*[314]. Works of art displayed in the store have a key function which according to architect Peter Marino is that *'the art should speak the visual language of the brand'*[315]. This insinuates that works of art are chosen to fit the brand and its image. Works of art are chosen to communicate the image of brands, used as part of their visual codes.

There is evidence to suggest that art used as a visual code, only communicates to a minority of consumers. Bourdieu described art as an elitist form of communication, arguing that although art could be seen by all, it could only be understood by people possessing the accurate '*cultural capital'*: *'a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded'*[316]. Louis Torres and Michelle Marder Kamhi confirmed this belief as they explained how art has evolved in such abstract and conceptual forms that the necessity of 'having' knowledge of *'the cultural competence'* is ever more significant: *'as increasingly bizarre alleged art forms have proliferated at a dizzying rate, so has a body of impenetrable critical and scholarly literature professing to explain and justify them. Nonetheless, a substantial segment of the public, even among those repeatedly exposed to this work and to the arguments on its behalf, have failed to embrace it'*[317]. This suggests that less traditional works of art, the more conceptual pieces, such as installations and performances, as commonly presented in stores are likely to only be understood by a minority of consumers, mostly educated connoisseurs, who according to Bourdieu are more likely to be part of the higher strata of society.

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[313] Underhill, Paco, *Why We Buy the Science of Shopping*, Thomson, London, 2003
[314] Samson, Anna, 'Meeting Daniel Buren', *Crash*, Winter 2006, p. 206
[315] anon., 'Shop Tactics: Chanel, Hong Kong Peter Marino's Change of Art', *Wallpaper*, March 2006, p. 114
[316] Heumann, Gurian, (1991), 'Noodling Around with Exhibition Opportunities', in Karp, Ivan and Lavine, Steven. D, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Smithsonian Installation Press, London, 1991, p. 177
[317] Torres, Louis and Marder Kamhi, Michelle, *What Art Is: The Esthetic Theory of Ayn Rand*, Open Court, Chicago, 2000, p. 1

The use of art as a visual code to communicate to consumers within the retail environment could therefore have a role of 'filtering'. Quinn also suggested that the use of high-architecture can also function as a filter: *'when fashion space is enacted in built form, it is framed by the kind of architecture that elevates the commodities of fashion to a space that is easily accessible to its patrons but capable of filtering the foreign, alien, unwelcome public. Retail architecture is one such 'filter', providing means for fashion to manage space and construct it into an enduring image of desire*[318]. The need for 'filtering' consumers becomes more important with new store design to avoid stores being turned into tourist attractions.

Entwined with the introduction of high-architecture, art is a key feature of retailers' strategy to transform the shopping activity into a cultural experience. With the incorporation of art in their stores, retailers have been able to give more value to their outlets; and in some cases, the avant-garde edge of the architecture of new flagships has been sufficient to confer the status of art to stores. British architect Thomas Heatherwick, also an artist, gave an artistic dimension to the store he created for Longchamp in New York. With its extraordinary flooring structure, Longchamp's 'Maison Unique' is turned into a permanent art installation (see *fig. 41* and *42)*. This was also the case of Issey Miyake's famous store also in New York. Frank Gehry, the Canadian architect, designer of the store created what can acceptably be perceived as sculptures to 'dress' the interior (see *fig. 43* and *44)*. Yet, perhaps, the most explicit use of architecture as art is the Milan store of Viktor & Rolf. The designers, Viktor Hosing and Rolf Snoeren, commissioned Siebe Tettero in collaboration with Sherrie Zwail, principal of Szi-design from Amsterdam to '*twist the classic'* in the concept of the designers' small (69 square-metre) store in Milan. Tettero and Zwail managed to create a unique surrealist atmosphere by seemingly turning the shop and its neoclassic features 'upside down'. The floor in epoxy-resin imitated traditional white ceilings, whilst parquet flooring was used on the ceiling and chairs attached to the ceiling were used to hang clothes inside the changing rooms (see *fig. 45*). Chandeliers were fitted on the floor and the store was lit in a way to give the illusion that the light was emitting from the floor (*fig. 45* and *46)*. Archway columns were used as benches for consumers to try shoes on (*fig. 46* and *47)*. By fooling the consumers' senses, the architects turned the store into a memorable, participative art performance, generating a massive coverage for the brand.

With such stores, the product becomes subsequent to the visit, which may be the objective of some retailers, as Vittorio Radice explained: *'the fact that they walk away with a shopping bag is almost immaterial, it is just a 'souvenir' of the visit'*[319].

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[318] Quinn, Bradley, *The Fashion of Architecture*, Berg Publishers, London, 2003, p. 37
[319] Atkinson, Kathryn, 'A Life Less Ordinary', *Retail Interiors*, October 2001, p. 14

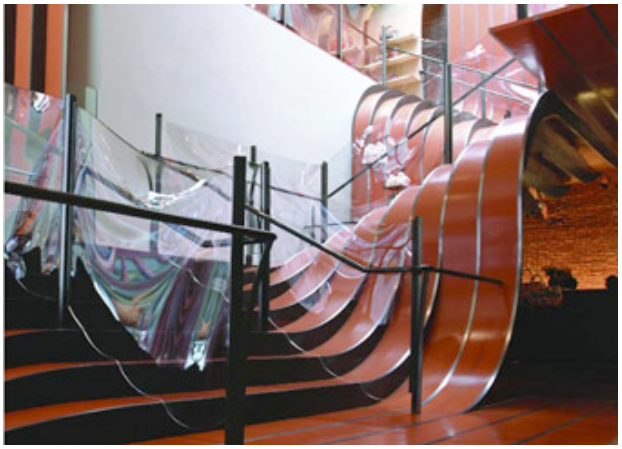

fig. 41 *fig.* 42

With its extraordinary flooring structure, Longchamp's 'Maison Unique' in New York is turned into a permanent art installation, breaking boundaries between architecture, art and fashion, representative of its designer's personality, the British architect/artist Thomas Heatherwick.

fig. 43 *fig.* 44

Views of the Issey Miyake store in New York, designed by Frank Gehry. *Tornado,* the titanium sculpture / structure gave the store a radical image, expressing in architectural terms the texture of fabric.

fig. 45: Shop Window of the Viktor & Rolf store in Milan designed by Siebe Tettero architects. The shop appears 'upside-down' through the inversion of architectural features: the chandelier is fixed on the ground, whilst a chair is screwed on the ceiling and used to hook the displays.

fig. 46 and 47: Interior views of the Milan store, showing how the archways are used as seats and the parquet flooring as ceiling. What appears as the ceiling is used as flooring.

The shop visit itself is developed as a projection of consumers' *fantasies* of the luxury lifestyle; as Tia DeNora and Sophie Belcher explained: *'to shop is to engage in fantasy, to project one's self into an aesthetic environment where one may "be" other and new things (or perhaps more accurately, one may project 'things' on or in to oneself). Briefly, a shopper may try on or image wearing things that would, in practical terms, be out of bounds'*[320]. Buying high-class goods therefore becomes buying a piece of fantasy of the high-class lifestyle: *'even if the cost of goods is prohibitive (...) one may nonetheless purchase 'smaller' or more peripheral items or accessories commensurate with the spirit and style of that greater item (and compensating for the larger purchase one has foregone)'*[321]. Art could be used to sustain the image of the fantasy of a luxury lifestyle, as according to John Berger, *'art is a sign of affluence; it belongs to the good life; it is part of the furnishing which the world gives to the rich and the beautiful'*[322]. This image of the store as a fantasy has been developed in an advertisement campaign for Louis Vuitton by the Japanese artists Mamoru Hosoda and Takashi Murakami. In this short animated film, the main character lives magical adventures in a fantasy world while entering the store (video 4).

Some works of art by artists or architectural details of these new flagships have incorporated brand logos and other details into the design, elevating them into the symbolic language, giving them more value, while at the same time creating a visual code of the brands. For instance, a LED star was incorporated in the architecture of the Dior store in Tokyo (see *fig. 30*), to reflect Christian Dior's personal talisman, which Ian Philips, author and journalist, explained: '*as fashion legend has it, he literally stumbled upon a carriage wheel's star-shape hubcap while walking down the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré on April 18, 1946 - the very day he first met his longtime financial backer, Marcel Boussac'*[323]. The point of turning the brand into a legend is to turn its visual element into the symbolic.

Many super-flagships included in the design of their stores, art galleries or museums. The Prada New York Epicenter was designed with a built-in 'theatre'. The store's flooring, designated as the 'wave' can be transformed into a performance facility, with half of the structure used as interim seating whilst the facing side conceals a retractable stage, and is used to stage exhibitions, concerts and other events (see *fig. 48 - 50)*. Other brands have built permanent dedicated cultural spaces within their stores. The 'Maison Hermès' in Tokyo for instance houses two cultural centres: a museum[324], devoted to the brand's heritage and a gallery, to showcase contemporary art supported by the company. Chanel's Tokyo store

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[320] DeNora, Tia and Belcher, Sophie, 'When You're Trying Something on you Picture Yourself in a Place Where they are Playing this Kind of Music' – Musically Sponsored Agency in the British Clothing Retail Sector', *The Editorial Board of the Sociological Review,* 2000, p. 90

[321] ibid., p. 91

[322] ibid., p. 135

[323] Phillips, Ian, 'Cities of Light', *Interior Design*, 1 April 2004: <http://www.interiordesign.net/id_article/CA412119/id?stt=000&text=faubourg> (last accessed 18 October 2007).

[324] This is the second Hermès museum, the first is situated in the label's headquarters in Paris. The museum displays pieces tracing back the brand 176 year--long heritage. Hermès was founded in the 1837, originally produced leather equestrian products. The company expanded and in the 1880s, it began making luxury luggage and accessories. The company has since become a luxury empire, expanded its lines to include the production of silk scarves, ties, fragrances, jewellery, watches and ready-to-wear collections.

fig. 48: Appearing as a flooring structure, the 'wave' of the Prada New York Epicenter functions as a display unit, but also conceals a retractable stage which is occasionally transformed into a performance facility (as picture here), with half of the structure used as interim seating

fig. 49: View of the 'wave' used during the 'Waist down' exhibition of Prada skirts.

fig. 50: View of the 'wave' used as a stage, with the steps used as seats, during a concert of the rock band, The Hours, in 2004.

includes a dedicated cultural space: 'the Chanel Nexus hall'. Dior in Tokyo has a 'multi-event' space on its top-floor, most often used for temporary art exhibitions. Louis Vuitton also houses a gallery, 'l'Espace Louis Vuitton', situated in the top floor of the Parisian store.

The presence of such cultural spaces within stores primarily serves to transform customers' shopping experience. Brands aim to make the shopping experience cultural by the enhancing the hybrid character of their stores, between public and private. The objective is to attract customers and to elevate the status of their brands. Fashion houses that set out a cultural agenda consider themselves as patrons, democratising high-architecture or art. Karl Lagerfeld, Chanel's creative director justified this state of affairs when he said: '*I see it as a good thing that fashion people are involved with architecture - there is no reason why only people in politics should be arbiters of taste*'[325]. Marino described the projections of artists' video pieces on the façade of the Hong Kong Chanel store as an edifying act: '*never before has Chanel, or any other brand, put art outside their boutiques and projected it to the entire city. It's a gift to the inhabitants and tourists visiting Hong Kong*'[326]. Is it such a charitable act? The video pieces presented on the building's façade, commissioned by Chanel, could be perceived as implicit advertising as Marino himself had previously suggested by describing the use of LED 'screens' in the Tokyo store '*functioning as a 21st Century branding billboard*'[327].

Fashion houses may be genuinely dedicated to supporting art and architecture, but it is also undeniable that this support is to benefit their brands. Louis Vuitton is to open in 2009 an art foundation, which according to a Louis Vuitton statement, will allow the fashion house to develop, to a long aspired level, its dedication to art[328]. Designed by Frank Gehry, the art centre will be located within the Jardin d'Acclimatation (a historical recreational park in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris). Due to its use of glass and large scale, this foundation has already been nicknamed as the '*Crystal Palace of Paris*'[329] and will have a strong program to stimulate artistic production in the city (see *fig. 51*). The foundation will undoubtedly elevate the status and flatter the egos of the fashion house and other brands part of the LVMH[330] conglomerate. The Louis Vuitton foundation opens only a few years after Francois Pinault, Director of PPR (formerly Pinault-Printemps-Redoute), LVMH's biggest competitor, abandoned a similar project to open France's biggest privately funded museum (which would have been designed by Japanese architect, Tadao Ando and housed the magnate's large collection of contemporary

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[325] Menkes, Suzy, 'Duelling Designers Build Images From the Outside In: Architecture: The New Sexy Subject for Fashion Moguls', *International Herald Tribune*, 23 January 2001: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2001/01/23/arch.2.t.php> (last accessed 17 June 2005)
[326] Créac'h, Marie, 'Chanel lights up Hong Kong', *Vogue* (UK), 14 December 2005: <http://www.vogue.co.uk/vogue_daily/story/story.asp?stid=31266> (last accessed 28 January 2007)
[327] Weathersby, William Jr, 'Chanel Ginza', *Architectural Record*, November 2005: <http://archrecord.comstruction.com/projects/lighting/archives/0511chanel.asp> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
[328] Bremner, Charles, 'A Crystal Palace for Paris', *The Times*, 3 October 2006: <http://timecorrespondents.typepad.com/charles_bremner/2006/10/paris_is_about_.html> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
[329] ibid.
[330] Founded in 1987, Moët Hennessy - Louis Vuitton (LVMH) is the world's leader in luxury, with a portfolio of prestigious brands, as amongst other: in fashion and leather goods (Celine, Donna Karen, Fendi, Givenchy, Kenzo and Marc Jacobs), cosmetics and toiletries (Kenzo Parfums, Make up for Ever, Parfums Christian Dior and Sephora), watches and jewellery (de Beers and Tag Heuer) and in Wines and spirits (Belvedere, Dom Pérignon, Hennessy, and Veuve Clicquot).

art[331]) due to hefty and hindering bureaucracy. Pinault has since opened a museum inside the Palazzo Grassi in Venice in April 2006, where the municipality openhandedly supported his project[332]. This reveals the rivalries between brands for the support of culture. It also shows that brands require political support to develop their cultural projects.

Stephen Craig[333] argued that urban high-architecture constitutes public art. Following this argument, it could be suggested that these new high-end architecture flagship stores could be therefore considered as public art. The advantage of achieving this 'public' status gives a greater role to these flagships and gives more credibility to the 'public' relevance of the works of art displayed in these stores.

Wolfgang Ullrich described the use of art in such ways as an *'advertising ploy'*[334]. He asked *'why is it that art is suitable for polishing images or acting as colorful bait?'* in particular considering as he wrote, art *'interests only a minority'*. Ullrich reasoned the use of art as targeting not just a minority but the masses:

> Unlike other minorities' objects of passion, art – this is the only way to answer this question – art acts as a strong signal even upon those who are not engaged with art. They can at least be impressed by it, since generally positive qualities are associated with art (...). Perhaps they are even more effective with a majority, to whom modern art is strange, to those who are familiar simply with the positive ideas of art[335].

Although art is understood by a minority, it appeals to an increasing number of people. Major cultural public institutions have witnessed increases in their visitor numbers. For instance, the Tate modern gallery in London saw in 2007 an increase of 21 percent in the number of its visitors since 2005[336]; and was described as the second most-visited destination for tourists in the UK (with 5,235,000 visitors in 2007)[337]. The National Portrait Gallery in London has witnessed more than a three-time increase in its visitors numbers in over twenty years, rising from 448,690 in 1980 to 1,607,767 in 2007[338].

The public character of these stores makes it possible for the public not only to view, but to experience the buildings. The power of architecture has been understood by retailers as a way of captivating the public. The popularity of the Bilbao Guggenheim gallery in Spain, designed

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[331] Randall, Colin, 'French Tycoon Abandons Paris Art Museum', *Telegraph*, 11 May 2005: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/05/11/wart11.xml&sSheet=/news/2005/05/11/ixworld.html> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
[332] Riding, Alan, 'Mr. Pinault goes to Venice to Open his Palazzo', *International Herald Tribune*, 31 May 2006: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/05/01/features/grassi.php> (last accessed 2 June 2008)
[333] Matzner, Florian (ed.), *Public Art: A Reader*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2004
[334] Ullrich, Wolfgang, 'Outside Whoosh, Inside Inconspicuous: Demands Upon Art in the Public Space', in Matzner, Florian (ed.), *Public Art: A Reader*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2004, p. 403
[335] ibid., p. 403
[336] anon., 'Tate Modern Sees Visitor Increase', BBC News Online, 21 February 2007: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/England/London/6381563.stm> last accessed 14 April 2007
[337] Tate Annual report 2006/7: <http://www.tate.org.uk/about/tatereport/2007/> (last accessed 3 March 2008)
[338] anon., 'About the Gallery', National Portrait Gallery, 2007 <http://www.npg.org.uk/live/visitors.asp> (last accessed 3 March 2008)

by the Frank Gehry, whose style has become iconic and easily identifiable, has been so well received it has even stimulated a redevelopment of the Basque region of Spain. This construction was so distinctive that it instigated the notion of a 'wow-factor' in architecture, which all architects seek to achieve and surpass. With these new high-architecture flagships, fashion houses are seeking to establish retail equivalent of the Bilbao museum, but great design alone may not be sufficient. Beatriz Plaza explained that the success of the Bilbao Guggenheim is also due to other factors. It was part of a plan to redress the entire region, its infrastructure in particular a new seaport was set up away from the city centre, a metro line (designed by Norman Foster) was created, and a new drainage system constructed[339]. This could explain why all these high-budget flagship stores have been built in urban centres with good infrastructures, an existing and widespread consumer base and popular interest for art and architecture.

Another central reason for brands to support art and architecture is to captivate the attention of the people who are interested in these disciplines, because as Pierre Bourdieu demonstrated, culture tends to appeal to wealthy and educated people. Moreover, I would argue that with these changes in the image of shops - the introduction of art, high-architecture and technology - the feminine character of stores is lessened, and engages more a masculine interest. By making shopping more 'worthwhile', more cultural, stores may in fact be 'masculinising' shopping, supporting this argument, the Dior store in Tokyo has put a particular emphasis on using technology in the design of its menswear department.

Technology is another component of retailers' strategy to transform the shopping experience and the role of the store. Technology has always been important for retailers. Throughout the twentieth century, technological innovations have been introduced within retail environments as described in the *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* edited by Rem Koolhaas[340]. Cities or countries' first lifts and escalators were mostly presented in stores. Other technological advancements were stimulated by the retail sector, such as air conditioning for instance. Cutting-edge retail technology (conceived by OMA's research division: AMO) was integrated in the design of the Prada Epicenters. Radio Frequency Identification systems (RFID) were used to facilitate and pioneer new customer interaction. With RFID tags inserted on all merchandise, a database of information, could be accessed by scanning items from *'ubiquitous displays'*[341] touch-points located throughout the store (see *fig. 52)*. Sales assistants were provided with wireless RFID handheld readers, enabling them to receive 'live' stock inventories, saving them from unnecessarily leaving the shop floor to spend more time to interact with customers; and information such as sale history to improve customer relations and loyalty.

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[339] Plaza, Beatriz, 'Bilbao Effect', *Blueprint*, November 2006, p. 31

[340] Koolhaas, Rem., Chung, Chuihua Judy,. Inaba, Jeffrey and Leong, Sze Tsung (eds.), *The Harvard Guide to Shopping: Projects on the City 2*, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002

[341] Customers can view catwalk videos, sketches of items, learn details about cuts and fabrics, see immediate colour swatches and hear suggestions for complementary items, in Traiman, Steve, 'A Working Experiment', *Retail Systems Reseller*, December 2002 <http://www.retailsystemsreseller.com/archive/Dec02/Dec02_5.shtml> (last accessed 19 March 2005)

Changing rooms were fitted with '*magic mirrors*': large mirrors with built-in plasma screens enabling customers to see themselves from the front, back and side simultaneously with a time delay replaying their movements[342] (see *fig. 53*). The changing room doors were built with privalite glass partitions, which from the press of a button integrated in the floor can transmute from transparent to opaque. The New York branch's technological features were also adopted by the other Epicenters to a varying degree. The point of these devices is to make the store appear as a forerunner ahead of other retail formats; and as discussed earlier, technology has become a sign of cool.

Marino was able to create award-winning[343] distinctive buildings for Chanel with the pioneering use of Light-emitting diode (LED) technology. Over 700,000 white computer-controlled LEDs were integrated in the façade of the Tokyo store, transforming it into a giant screen, which as described earlier facilitate the projection of artists films at night. In these stores, technology functions as an art medium, and is part of this strategy to make shopping cultural.

Locations are also central to the development of super-flagships and the display of art in retail. They are built in cities that already have an established clientele. Locations were key to the concept of the Prada Epicenters as indicated by the stores' appellation. The use of this terminology makes a direct statement about Prada, transposing the dictionary definition of the word – *the point on the earth's surface which is directly above the focus of an earthquake, or directly above or below a nuclear explosion*[344] - to the context of fashion. The designation of the Prada stores as 'Epicenters' therefore makes two suggestions: the first one is that these stores are 'physically' located in the fashion world's epicenters. The second one is that on a conceptual level, Prada is leading fashion and setting trends. In other words, Prada is the epicenter of fashion and the Prada stores are located in fashion epicenters. New York, Tokyo and Los Angeles are considered as some of the world's major *'fashion capitals',* hosting biannual fashion weeks, home to renowned designers, as well as major fashion academic institutions[345]. New York is important for the production and consumption of fashion, representing the fashion capital of the United-States and influencing the entire American continent. Tokyo is as significant for the Asian continent, especially in terms of consumption, because of the Japanese consumers avidity for luxury products. In terms of production, Los Angeles is also a key city[346], due to the presence of numerous factories with cheap labour from Central America

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[342] Lobo, Hilary., Giammalvo, Gregory and Quinn, Raymond, 'Prada Epicenter: New York', *Arup Journal*, 2003, p. 23, downloaded: <http://www.arup.com/DOWNLOADBANK/download70.pdf>

[343] The Paris store was awarded the American Institute of Architects - Institute Honor Awards for Interior Architecture 2005. The Tokyo store was presented with the Illuminating Engineering Society - Lumen Award of Merit 2006

[344] Robinson, Mairi and Davison, George (eds.), *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*, Chambers, Edinburgh, 1996, p. 441

[345] Renowned fashion designers have been trained in New York's renowned fashion colleges: Parsons – the New School for Design (Tom Ford, Marc Jacobs, Donna Karan Derek Lam, Narciso Rodriguez and Anna Sui,) and the Fashion Institute of Technology (F.I.T), such as Caroline Herrera, Calvin Klein and Michael Kors.
Tokyo's Bunka Fashion College is Japan most prestigious fashion institute, leading Japanese fashion designers: Kei Kagami, Rei Kawakubo, Takada Kenzo, Nigo, Jun Takahashi, Junya Watanabe and Yohji Yamamoto are former alumni.

[346] Breward, Christopher and Gilbert, David (eds.), *Fashion's World Cities,* Berg, London, 2006

fig. 51: Sketch of the 'Fondation Louis Vuitton pour la creation' by Didier Ghislain (2006), based on the designs of Frank Gehry for the foundation which is to open in 2009

fig. 52: The *'ubiquitous displays'* used inside the Prada store in New York can be used by consumers to receive information about items.

fig. 53: View of the '*magic mirrors'* inside the fitting rooms of the Prada store in New York with built-in plasma screens enabling customers to see themselves from the front, back and side.

and with regards to consumption, it is an epicenter of fashion. Undeniably associated with Hollywood, Los Angeles is important due to the large concentration of celebrities living in the surrounding areas: the most influential and profitable clientele of high-end fashion houses. The Prada Epicenters stores are located within these cities' most fashionable areas. SoHo (in New York) and Aoyama (in Tokyo) are popular with 'fashionistas', (the journalist shorthand term for people who follow the latest fashions), due to the great numbers of trendy shops and bars in the vicinity as shown in the Superfuture maps of these areas showing the popular trendy stores and bars, clubs and galleries (see *fig. 54* and *55*). However, these are not necessarily the most luxurious areas, unlike Rodeo Drive which is one of the most exclusive areas of Los Angeles. This disparity is intentional, as Prada explained: *'the Epicenter stores are conceived by OMA as specific insertions both in relation to the network of existing 'green' Prada stores, as well as the city and cultural context they are situated in'*[347]. In other words, the Prada Epicenters are to be viewed in relation to the location of the other Prada stores, the city's fashion scene and the cultural context.

Prada's intention was to give the Epicenters a cultural dimension, to highlight Prada's *'on-going effort to engage in contemporary culture and architecture'*[348]. The New York Epicenter in particular, is commended for its theatrical and artistic atmosphere and is referred to as the 'Prada Guggenheim', due to its location inside the museum's former offices. Presumably, Prada had selected this current location because of this history, tying in with the 'cultural' philosophy Prada wished to engage in.

Consumers' perception and knowledge of brands, although not directly measurable in financial terms, contribute almost entirely to a brand's financial success; and fashion houses have instrumentally used art and high-architecture to promote their stores and improve brand awareness. Super-flagships were welcomed, not as mere shops, but as true architectural monuments, receiving unprecedented exposure. The coverage was not limited to the specialised architecture or fashion press; diverse publications in other fields, such as in design, finance, travel and technology, also reported on these new stores. However, brands had not only foreseen this wide interest but had orchestrated it. Prada, in particular, strategically publicised its collaborations with renowned architects. In February 2001, the Prada Fondazione in collaboration with Rem Koolhaas published *Projects for Prada – Part I*[349], a book detailing the concept and design of the New York store ten months before its opening. In March 2001, Prada made public the full scale of the Epicenter projects during an exhibition entitled '*work in progress*' opened at the Prada Fondazione in Milan, concomitant with the Milan furniture fair[350]. The exhibition displayed sketches, drawings, models, photographs,

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[347] anon., 'Prada Los Angeles Epicenter Press Release', *Prada*, July 2004, p. 3 - downloaded 24 April 2005: <http://www.bartcolighting.com/prada.asp> (last accessed 7 June 2005)
[348] ibid, p.3
[349] Koolhaas, Rem and Prada, Miuccia (eds.), *Projects for Prada - Part I*, Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2001
[350] Arroyo Alba, Pedro Pablo, 'Prada Tokyo: Architecture is Architecture', 24 October 2003: <http://architettura.supereva.com/files/20031023/> (last accessed 21 January 2007)

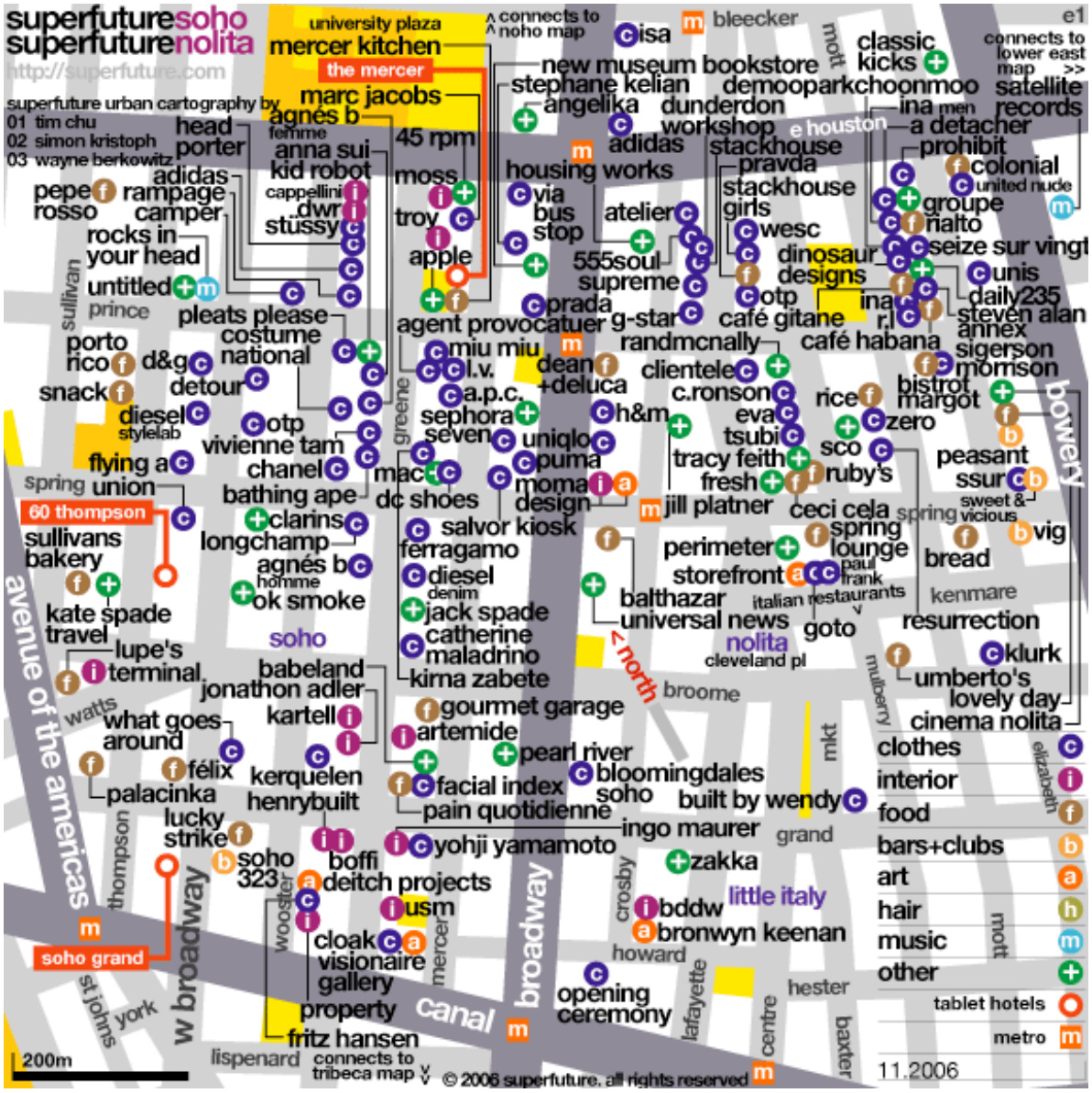

fig. 54: Map by Superfuture indicating the trendy and popular spots around the New York Prada store, demonstrating that the Prada is not a stand-alone store but located in the new leisure / cultural zone - not the fashion retail district.

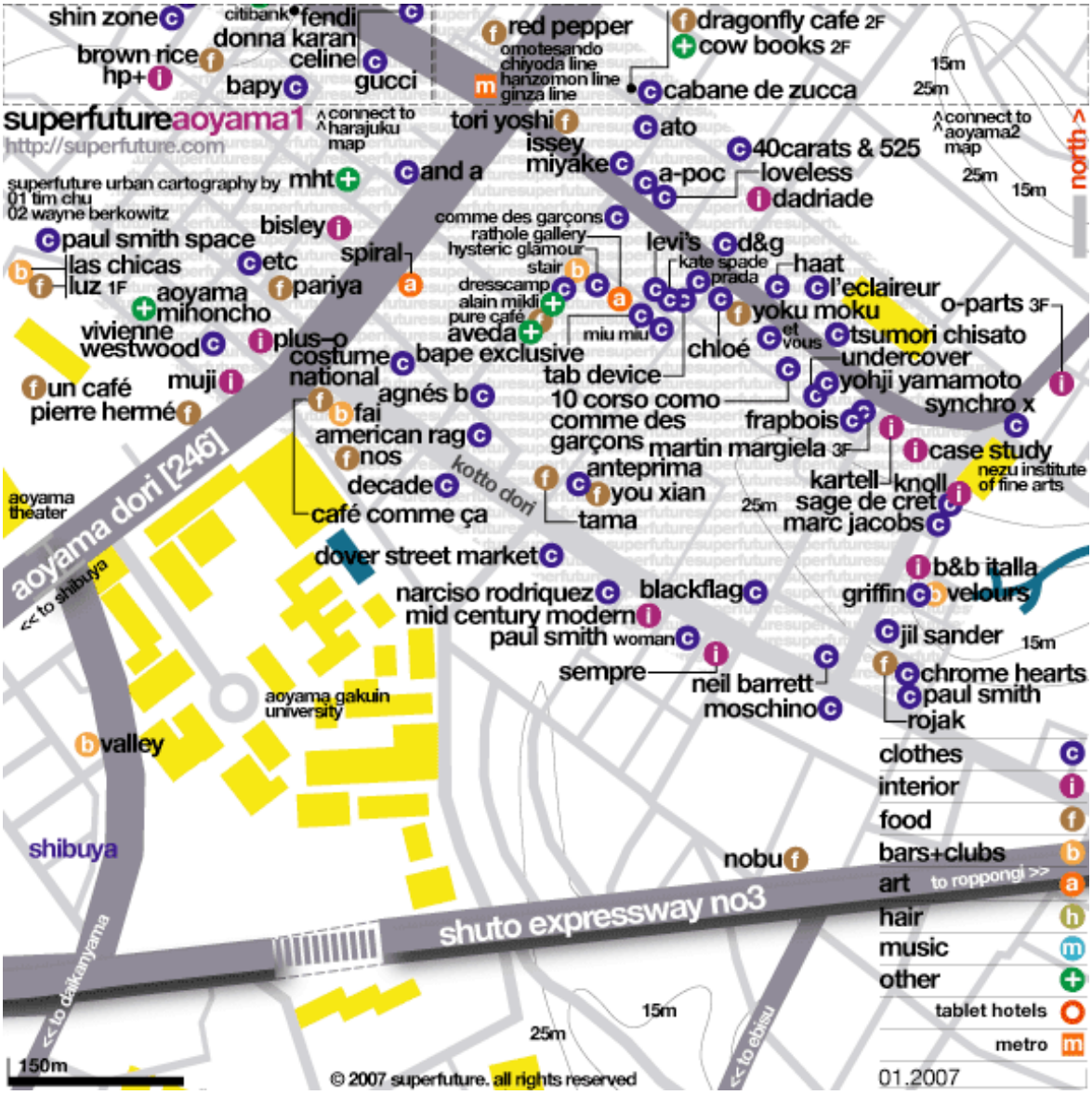

fig. 55: The Tokyo Prada store is positioned amongst upper mid-market and high-end fashion stores and lifestyle labels including A Bathing Ape, Undercover, Comme des Garçons and Yohji Yamamoto as indicated in this map by Superfuture.

slide projections, material samples, full-scale prototypes of structural elements and furnishing, creating a great buzz for the uncompleted stores. In January 2004, *Prada Aoyama Tokyo*[351] was published, describing Herzog and de Meuron's concept for the Tokyo store. Prada exploited the interest for contemporary architecture; the publication of these titles is a disguised promotion for the stores and the brand. By arranging such an exhibition and publications, Prada wished to elevate the status of the Epicenter, presenting them as radical architectural projects.

Louis Vuitton has taken a similar approach to Prada by organising in April 2003, in Japan, an architecture exhibition of its latest Louis Vuitton flagship stores. A symposium was also held, inviting the architects who had worked on these projects to talk *'about design specifics and the problems they experienced in the selection of materials'*[352]. Like Prada, Louis Vuitton published a book of essays written by the architects, *Logique/Visuelle: the Architecture of Louis Vuitton*, under the editorial supervision of Moshen Mostafavi, chair of the architectural association school of architecture in London, giving academic credibility to these texts.

The participation of renowned architects in these projects has benefited both the retail and architectural sectors. The stores have received wide coverage, contributing to an increasing awareness of contemporary architecture. Jamie Scott examined the coverage of architecture in *Vogue* to demonstrate the rising appeal for architecture in the popular press. Scott described that '*between 1990 and 2000 about 40 issues of Vogue, around a third published during that period, contained features concerned with architecture in some form*'[353]; it can be envisaged that as new flagships have been built this figure has further increased. The advantage of having fashion 'glossies' such as *Vogue* reviewing the architecture of fashion stores is their circulation can be, for the minimum, ten times higher than specialised architectural magazines[354]. The increasingly mass-coverage of architecture in the press also increases its status. High-architecture, like art, is seen as part of the high-class lifestyle, as Bourdieu had already argued in *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*[355].

The involvement of architects with these retail projects has contributed to a wider recognition of their work, and a further increase in their 'star' status, leading a recent trend for contemporary architects to be the subject of exhibition in national museums and galleries[356],

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[351] Herzog, Jacques and de Meuron, Pierre (eds.), *Prada Aoyama Tokyo*, Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2004.
[352] Hata, Kyojiro, *Louis Vuitton Japan: the Building of Luxury*, Assouline, Paris, 2004, pp. 43 – 44
[353] Scott, Jamie, 'Architecture in Vogue', in Chance, Julia and Schmiedeknecht, Torsten (eds.), 'Fame and Architecture', *Architectural Design* (Special Edition), vol. 71, no. 6, November 2001, pp. 75 - 78
[354] Scott, Jamie, 'Architecture in Vogue', in Chance, Julia and Schmiedeknecht, Torsten (eds.), 'Fame and Architecture', (*Architectural Design AD*, (Special Issue), Academy Press, London, 2001, p. 76
[355] Bourdieu, Pierre, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, Routledge, London, 1989
[356] Models and sketches of the Prada Tokyo store were included in 'Herzog & de Meuron, an exhibition', 1 June – 29 August 2005, Tate Modern Gallery, London, reviewed by Basar, Shumon, 'Into a Space of Waste - Herzog & de Meuron: An Exhibition', *Blueprint*, August 2005, p. 78. Zaha Hadid at the Guggenheim, NY; future city at the Barbican, Herzog & de Meuron at the Tate modern and Pompidou,

and of films or documentaries[357]. This recognition has also enabled architects to participate outside their field of expertise, for instance, Frank Gehry has created a jewellery collection for Tiffany & Co in 2006; and in May 2006, Peter Marino was named one of the most influential persons in New York's fashion world by *The New York Magazine*[358]. According to Julia Chance and Torsten Schmiedeknecht who discussed the notion of fame in architecture, argued that the importance of fame had transformed architects into 'household names'[359].

It has been judicious for architects to associate themselves with such high-key retail projects, as governments that were once the biggest investor in major architectural projects have been less readily able to commission grand projects. Grand architectural projects are now supported by corporations, and in particular, fashion houses: "*the state has long been the main sponsor for modern buildings, but it looks as if fashion moguls may become the new renaissance princes of patronage*[360].

Fashion houses strategically selected award-winning architects, celebrities in their own rights or, so-called 'starchitects' to design their stores. The use of celebrity architects follows the strategies of celebrity endorsements already commonly used by retailers to publicise their products. Yet, it appears that brands selected particular architects for specific reasons. Prada did not commission Koolhaas because of past retail projects, as the Epicenters represented the architect's first retail commissions, but because of his knowledge and research on shopping. Koolhaas, in collaboration with the Harvard Graduate School of Design had conducted an extensive research on shopping, leading to the publication of the *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping*[361] in 2002. It is more than likely that Prada wanted to exploit this knowledge as suggested Arroyo Alba: '*Koolhaas extended the insights from the research about the evolution of commercial spaces into a proposal of several Prada 'Epicenters' around the world*[362]. Koolhaas' lack of experience in the retail sector was a positive attribute as his name was not already linked to any other brands; and by borrowing from his experience in creating cultural and residential monuments, Koolhaas would be able to break away from traditional retail concepts. Peter Marino on the other hand, had worked for numerous fashion designers. Françoise Montenay, Director of Chanel, compared Marino to fashion designers who simultaneously work for different fashion houses without compromising brands' images: '*take Karl Lagerfeld, he is world renowned for being Chanel's designer, although he signs collections for Fendi,*

Shigeru Ban at the Barbican, my father the architect, Lagos/Koolhaas, Sketches of Frank Gehry. Jean Nouvel Pompidou centre, Paris - 4 March 2002

[357] *'Sketches of Frank Gehry'*, dir. Sydney Pollack, 2005 (UK) and 'My Architect', dir. Nathaniel Kahn, 2004 (UK)

[358] anon., 'The Influentials', *New York Magazine,* 7 May 2006: <http://nymag.com/news/features/influentials/16912> (last accessed 21 April 2006)

[359] Chance, Julia and Schmiedeknecht, Torsten (eds.), 'Fame and Architecture', *Architectural Design AD*, (Special Issue), Academy Press, London, 2001, p. 4

[360] Menkes, Suzy, 'Duelling Designers Build Images From the Outside In: Architecture: The New Sexy Subject for Fashion Moguls', *International Herald Tribune,* 23 January 2001: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2001/01/23/arch.2.t.php> (last accessed 17 June 2005)

[361] Koolhaas, Rem., Chung, Chuihua Judy,. Inaba, Jeffrey and Leong, Sze Tsung (eds.), *The Harvard Guide to Shopping*: *Projects on the City 2,* Harvard Graduate School of Design, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2002

[362] Arroyo Alba, Pedro Pablo, 'Prada Tokyo: Architecture is Architecture', 24 October 2003: <http://architettura.supereva.com/files/20031023/>

or H&M[363]. Montenay claimed that the design of these stores could reflect the brand, not the style of the architect, describing the Chanel stores designed by Marino, Montenay explained that: '*there is no confusion, here you are not in Marino, nor in Dior, everything here reflects Chanel, anyone entering this store would feel it*'[364]. But if 'starchitects' styles cannot be observed, why employ such high-profile architects?

Brands choose architects because of reputation and because they want the architects to be associated to their brand. Other architects have been employed for the apparent diversity of their work, such as Jun Aoki for Louis Vuitton and Thomas Heatherwick for Longchamp; Aoki completed a wide and diverse range of projects, including a swimming pool, numerous residential commissions, museums, showrooms or railway stations which differentiated him from other architects; Aoki is also an established artist, making him more competent to give stores an artistic dimension and to work with other artists. Thomas Heatherwick, both an artist and architect, stamped his signature style for Longchamp's 'Maison Unique' breaks boundaries between architecture, art and fashion.

These 'starchitects' could also having been chosen because of their links with the design of art institutions, making them known as '*art architects*'[365], a term coined by Bradley Quinn to describe the work of architects such as the Swiss duo, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, designers of the Tate Modern and Laban dance centre; or Frank Gehry, designer of the Bilbao Guggenheim museum in Bilbao.

Fashion houses employ renowned architects with the hope of making their stores architectural landmarks. Retailers have therefore employed architects that have already achieved this with past projects. However, this objective to turn flagship stores into monuments, puts pressures on architects as explained David Chipperfield: '*clients now say that they are looking for an icon*', which he described as an unreasonable brief as '*an icon just happens*'[366]. Chipperfield is right; landmarks are not just built, they have to acquire recognition. For buildings to become landmarks there has to be a social dimension leading people to accept it as such. In other words, it is the customers that will accept and make super-flagships 'landmarks' rather than the retailers, critics and architects.

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[363] Bousteau, Fabrice, 'La Mode, une Vitrine pour l'Art Contemporain?' *Beaux Arts*, January 2006, p. 44

[364] Interview originally published in French: "*Il n'y a pas de confusion, ici vous n'êtes ni dans du Marino, ni dans du Dior, tout ici respire Chanel, n'importe qui en entrant dans la boutique le resent*"(…) Françoise Montenay ajoute "*regardez Karl Lagerfeld, il est mondialement connu comme le créateur de Chanel, pourtant il signe des collections pour Fendi, ou H&M*", in Bousteau, Fabrice, 'La Mode, une Vitrine pour l'Art Contemporain?', *Beaux Arts*, January 2006, p. 44

[365] Quinn, Bradley, *The Fashion of Architecture*, Berg Publishers, London, 2003, p. 46

[366] Long, Kieran, 'David Chipperfield', *Icon*, December 2003: <http://iconeye.sites.subhub.com/artciles/20070322_9> (last accessed 18 October 2007)

The high-status of super-flagship stores is attained by the introduction of high-architecture given them legitimacy to display art. These stores are therefore inaugurated as true architectural achievements and opening receptions are attended as key social and cultural events. The presence of celebrities at the openings of such super-sized flagship stores ensures extensive newspaper and magazine coverage. For example, the inauguration of the refurbished Louis Vuitton store on the Champs-Elysées was attended by numerous international celebrities. The guest selection was thoughtfully devised; each celebrity invited represented a key figure of the various markets targeted by Louis Vuitton. These stars[367], from different nationalities, age groups and professional sectors were chosen so they could be recognised by the widest audiences. The opening party was held at the Petit Palais, one of the most famous landmarks of the French capital, which had recently reopened after lengthy renovations, further demonstrating the links between art and Louis Vuitton. An exhibition presented conjunctly the history the edifice and of Louis Vuitton trunks both dating from 1900 (the year of the World Exhibition for which the Petit Palais was constructed)[368].

In the same way that celebrities are marketed as 'brand ambassadors', flagship stores can be considered as 'brand embassies'. Supporting this idea, political figures have been attending some of these launches. This is highly significant. Their presence reveals the importance of brands within capitalist economies in which store openings are greeted as a positive economic symbol, with the capacity of enhancing a city, or even, a country's brand image. Rudolph Giuliani, the then Mayor of New York, attended the opening reception of the Prada Epicenter. Considering the timing of the opening, three months after the 9/11 attacks, his presence was to be interpreted as a message of reassurance for American consumers, tied in with President Bush's statements encouraging consumption. The presence of Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, the French Minister of Culture, at the Louis Vuitton Paris opening also made an implicit political statement that the French government welcomes corporate involvement with culture, ultimately the first signs of the privatisation of art.

High visitor numbers affect the working of flagship stores. Paco Underhill, Director of Envirosell, a leading consumer-behaviour research and consultancy firm, stressed: '*if we look at our retail landscape, it's littered with stores that looked good and functioned poorly'. (...) The proof of the pudding isn't the number of design magazines that write you up, but the number of receipts you ring up in the cash register*'[369]. Underhill may be wrong in thinking that the success of flagships can only be evaluated in financial terms. Success should not only be measured in quantitative but also, in qualitative terms and it is true that brand awareness is key. The high-investment made by

[367] Guests included American actresses: Sharon stone and Winona Ryder, Chinese actor Yun-Fat Chow, French actors of different generations as Catherine Deneuve, Emmanuelle Seigner or Ludivine Sagnier, Mexican actress Salma Hayek, Japanese designer Tomoaki Nagao (a.k.a. Nigo) and artist Takashi Murakami. Some of these celebrities were also contracted by Louis Vuitton at the time, already appearing in their advertising campaigns (such as Eva Herzigova, Diane Kruger, Uma Thurman and Pharrell Williams).
[368] anon., (PR Newswire on behalf of Louis Vuitton), 'Louis Vuitton Hosts a Star-Studded Celebration for the Inauguration of its Champs-Élysées House', 10 October 2005: <http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=155604> (last accessed 21 June 2006)
[369] Brown, Janelle, 'High-concept Haute Couture', *Salon*, 25 June 2001: <http://archive.salon.com/mwt/style/2001/06/25/retail_redesign/index.html> (last accessed 16 March 2006)

brands show that this is part of a broad strategy that may not be so evident on a short-term basis.

In September 2002, less than a year after the opening of the first Epicenter store in New York, Patrizio Bertelli, (co-director of Prada and Miuccia Prada's husband) reported the US sale figures increased by 18 percent from 2001[370]. Sales at the New York store averaged approximately $60,000 a day[371]. It seems from these figures that the Epicenters were profitable. However, six years after the first outlet opened, it seems that the Prada Epicenters may have been over ambitious. The complete scale of the Prada Epicenters is behind schedule. A fourth Epicenter planned in San Francisco for 2006 is on hold as Prada's debt has been increasing (reportedly, in 2004, it stood at $576.3 million)[372].

The heavy shop traffic in the New York Epicenter has created structural difficulties. Due to the shape of the store, the basement level is where most of the items are stocked. As a result, with few people inside, it quickly feels cramped. During a visit to the store in April 2005, I observed that the lift and magic mirrors, key features of the store, were inoperative[373]. The in-store technology (estimated at a cost of $10 million) often malfunctions due to overuse and poor manipulation, and is therefore apparently hardly used by customers and staff. The use of RFID technology received the attention of the press, and was noted in articles, but in practice, it was a failure. Members of staff find it easier and more reliable to check stockrooms directly to verify product availability. Customers cannot understand how to operate the product databases, and prefer browsing and touching the products. Is it so surprising? Given that consumers have the possibility to shop online, it could be assumed that if they have made the choice to leave their home and visit a shop, they want to experience the 'real'. The advent of the internet has yet to transform consumer motivations for shopping, which have little evolved from the 'flâneurs' of the Nineteenth Century as described by Walter Benjamin[374]. Shopping is a social activity and shops are the locations for gatherings. People go to stores not just out of necessity but to pass the time, to meet people and feel part of a community, to be inspired and get ideas about the society they live in. The problems faced by Prada with its stores suggest that super-flagships neglect their principal utility as functioning shopping outlets. As a result, '*the customer has increasingly become a spectator of the circus rather than the focus*', as Simon Doonan, creative director of Barney's in New York and columnist for *The New York Observer* perceived the situation[375]. It is said that super-flagships have only served to flatter

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370 Traiman, Steve, 'A Working Experiment', *Retail Systems Reseller*, December 2002:
<http://www.retailsystemsreseller.com/archive/Dec02/Dec02_5.shtml> (last accessed 19 March 2005)
371 Lindsay, Greg, 'Prada's High-Tech Misstep', 1 March 2004, *Business 2.0*,
<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/business2/business2_archive/2004/03/01/363574/index.htm> (last accessed 28 March 2006)
372 Said to be partially due to the high costs of the Epicenters, but also to the purchase of fashion houses: Jil Sander, Helmut Lang and Church's, Lindsay, Greg, 'Prada's High-Tech Misstep', *CNN*, 1 March 2004:
<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/business2/business2_archive/2004/03/01/363574/index.htm> (last accessed 28 March 2006)
373 Said to have cost in the millions, cited in anon., 'Prada Flagship Store, New York', *Galinsky*, 2004 (Updated 2005):
<http://www.galinsky.com/buildings/Prada/index.htm> (last accessed 3 April 2005)
374 Benjamin, Walter, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Eiland, Howard and McLaughlin, Kevin, Belknap Press, London, 1999
375 Brown, Janelle, 'High-concept Haute Couture', *Salon*, 25 June 2001:

brands' egos. Indeed, were these shops necessary? As noted earlier, super-flagships are built in places that often already have existing stores. Instead, super-flagship stores could have been built in brands' targeted emerging markets.

By trying to resemble museum and art galleries, stores may also adopt their problems. Brands could find it difficult to make people return to their stores. As in cultural centres, stores could find that people come to be entertained or educated but not to spend. And, like cultural attractions, super-flagship stores would need to resort to creating fashion's equivalent of 'blockbuster exhibition', in other words, products that would be highly commercial, appealing to large numbers of people and sell in large quantities. By building high budgets stores, fashion houses have taken great financial risks putting pressure on their own collections to be more commercial; the architecture and designer, Hugh Pearman foresaw that: '*to justify that investment, the goods are going to have to sell in very large quantities or at extremely high mark-ups, or a combination of both*'[376]. Confirming Pearman's prediction, the high-end fashion brands that have engaged with high-architecture have also recently been developing limited editions, sold at a high mark up.

The power of high-architecture to draw in customers to high-end fashion stores may be limited. As journalist Janelle Brown described, '*once you've oohed over the architecture, do you really need to go back and visit it again, or are you instead going to head to Zara, where the walls are merely whitewashed but the prices tags are less painful?*'[377] As demonstrated high-architecture may have been successful in publicising and elevating the status of brands, in particular the Prada Epicenters, but it did not necessarily ensure that consumers would purchase products. High-architecture is not sufficient to disrupt the fact that customers can do a wide range of alternatives to shopping.

Designed by renowned architects, with great budgets, incorporating works of art by established artists, super-flagships were not elaborated as stores but as public spaces, constituting the basis of their problems. Super-flagship stores are victim of their own popularity. Attracted by the high-profile architecture of the buildings and extensive press coverage, people visit these stores out of curiosity, to browse but not to shop. Super-flagships have become tourist destinations, attracting visitors rather than customers. The Louis Vuitton store on the Champs-Elysées for instance, is said to be '*one of the most visited landmarks in Paris – right behind the Eiffel tower and Notre-Dame cathedral*' (...) '*3,000 – 5,000 visitors come every day, the large majority of whom are tourists*'[378]. This is not surprising, as Louis Vuitton redeveloped the Parisian store with the objective of making stand out on the famous avenue. As one of the

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<http://archive.salon.com/mwt/style/2001/06/25/retail_redesign/index.html> (last accessed 16 March 2006)

[376] Pearman, Steve, 'A High Price to Pay', *Blueprint*, September 2003, p. 114

[377] Brown, Janelle, 'High-concept Haute Couture', *Salon*, 25 June 2001:
<http://archive.salon.com/mwt/style/2001/06/25/retail_redesign/index.html> (last accessed 16 March 2006)

[378] anon., 'Leather and Canvas', *The Economist*, 4 February 2006, p. 59

most visited cities in the world, Paris represents a strategic location for brands. With this store, Louis Vuitton was not targeting French customers primarily, but trying to lure the large numbers of high-spending tourists visiting the French capital, notably from China and Russia, sought-after emerging markets. However, stores that are so public also attract the 'wrong' visitors, people who can devalue the image of the brand.

In the world of fashion where trends are rapidly changing, stores are also under pressure to be frequently renovated. Quinn pointed out that retail architecture should 'follow' the pace of fashion: '*like fashion itself, a retail boutique is premised on constant renewal, in many respects the antithesis of sustainable architecture*[379]'. So rather than aiming to create high-architecture store, representation of 'sustainable' architecture, successful stores could in fact be, temporary sites that can be frequently renovated, following fashion and its trends. Martin Illingworth, chief architect for Selfridges described the changes already taking place in his company: '*there used to be a six year life cycle with shop fits, now it's two to three years as a cosmetically things are much faster paced. Obviously we must use cheap, throwaway materials but there must also be a flexible middle ground*'[380]. However, with their high budgets and strong architectural features, it will be more difficult for super-flagship stores to be changed, their longevity ultimately at risk. I argue that this has given works of art displayed in stores a greater role, as they are capable of changing the atmosphere of a store and be frequently renewed.

Although the use of high-architecture can contribute to attracting customers and enhance brand recognition, there are examples of companies for which this strategy was unsuccessful. For example, Best Products[381] went into liquidation (also simply known as BEST), although being famous for the ground-breaking use of conceptual high-architecture in its stores, designed by artist and architect, James Wines and his architecture firm SITE (Sculpture in the Environment). Although the company first experienced a jump in business after the remodelling of a series of stores, it was not enough to draw consumers in, and fight off the competition[382].

In the cultural sector, the emphasis put on high-architecture has had, for some institutions, adverse effect; rather than attracting new visitors, some art institutions, as the Guggenheim Bilbao have been criticised for putting too much attention on the architecture than on the quality of the collection[383].

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[379]Quinn, Bradley, *The Fashion of Architecture*, Berg Publishers, London, 2003, p. 41
[380] anon., 'Special Report from the Retail Interiors Conference 2001', *Retail Interiors*, Nov 2001, p. 16
[381] Best Products was founded in 1956 by Sydney and Frances Lewis, in Richmond, Virginia (USA); but went into liquidation in 1997.
[382] Bell, Jonathan, 'Second Site', *Wallpaper*, October 2007, pp. 158 – 162
[383] Plaza, Beatriz, 'Bilbao Effect', *Blueprint*, November 2006, p. 31

Hugh Pearman described the use of this architects are somewhat unnecessary, *'pricey autographs*', existing only to raise exposure, although it is not always sufficient. Pearman gave the example of the city of Bard, USA, which invested in building 'monuments' by 'starchitects', spending $62 million on a full symphonic concert hall designed by Gehry, which failed to make Bard a well-known location: *'you'll find a Venturi, Rausch & Scott Brown building, and an art gallery by Polshek & partners, but these weren't enough to put Bard on the map'*[384]. This example also demonstrates the importance of the local area. To be successful, flagship stores have to be accessible and appealing to their target consumers.

A common problem of flagship stores is the fact that they are better than the other stores owned by the brands. Consumers therefore expect more from all branches and any future shop. Prada may be replicating the same problems it suffered with its 'green' stores with its Epicenters. If the Epicenters become too iconic, it may be difficult for Prada to surpass their image. Prada will need to continue creating challenging stores.

Stores are trying to outgrow their retail functions by organising exhibitions, performances, events and even courses, adopting characteristics intrinsic of cultural institutions. Because of this, customers have also changed their expectations of shops. High-end fashion consumers have began to act more like visitors, and at times, participants. However, as developed in the second part of this chapter, smaller-sized and lower-budgets stores have been also successful in expressing luxury and attracting consumers.

[384] Pearman, Hugh, 'Name Droppers', *Blueprint*, July 2003, p. 52

b. Retail Experimentations: The Conceptualisation of the Shop

Whilst most high-end fashion brands have been using high-architecture to convey images of luxury, other brands, Comme des Garçons in particular, have expressed luxury through attributes that previously used to be assimilated with low and middle-end fashion outlets: concept stores.

Concept stores can be successful alternatives to flagship stores as they are less costly, more imaginative in raising brand awareness and transposing the brand 'spirit' into the shop design. The notion of concept store marks these stores' differences: they are less obvious then other type of stores and are so-called because they cannot be pigeonholed within any existing retail formats. They combine genres, often being at once: clothes shops, bookshops, art galleries, and restaurants. These stores offer more than shopping opportunities; they have a cultural dimension with solid art programmes and dedicated exhibition spaces.

Architecture and fashion evolve at different paces. Architecture in the retail context should adapt to fashion and its trends. In this perspective, some fashion houses have been developing architectural projects to suit fashion's incessantly changing character: 'pop-up' stores, shops opened for temporary durations.

The second part of this chapter shows how concept stores have changed the retail format by adopting methods from the art world. I suggest that store buyers act as curators, selecting commodities with artistic values and presenting them as part of cultural trends. Concept stores founders also act as editors, developing their stores as the alternative fashion magazines. Finally, I discuss how concept stores have changed retail formats, shaped its future and influenced trends in other industries.

This retail concept has been well received and concept stores have been springing up throughout the world but the most famous ones remain such as Colette in Paris, Dover Street Market in London, Loveless in Tokyo and 10 Corso Como[385] in Milan. Opened in September 1991 and with over 1,200 square meters of retail space, 10 Corso Como is possibly the oldest and biggest concept store in the world. Located in a popular and peripheral neighbourhood in Milan, within a former Renault garage, the store is set inside a courtyard, hidden away from the street. The large retail complex surrounds a beautiful and verdant courtyard, used as a tea

[385] Also known as Corso Como

garden in the Summer, giving the store somewhat of a residential feel (see *fig. 56)*. Launched as a high-end fashion shop, 10 Corso Como progressively expanded to include a book and music shop, a café and restaurant opened in 1999, an art gallery[386] and a hotel in 2004.

Often described as Paris' trendiest store, Colette was opened in March 1997 on the quieter end of the fashionable rue Saint Honoré, with the bold aspiration to '*re-invent the concept of retail*'[387]. Following the mantra '*StyleDesignArtFood*', the 700 square metres outlet offers a mix of high-end fashion labels and streetwear brands[388], designer accessories, limited editions books and CDs, hard-to-find DVDs as well as a 'water-bar' and an art gallery (see *fig. 57 - 59*). It is this diversity which makes the store hard to categorise, and is best described as a 'concept store'.

The change in terminology to describe the shop is central to the distinction of concept stores. Florence Müller found that new retail stores, concept stores in particular, had been borrowing from the language of art to distinguish themselves from other stores and to elevate their image as culturally charged retail spaces[389]. Indeed, the new vocabulary of fashion retail has began to include expressions which were until then not used in such context, stores are now described as '*atelier*'[390], '*concept*'[391], '*lab*'[392] and '*space*'[393]. According to Dean, this use of language alien to the retail sector help make concept stores seen as '*retail with a difference*'[394]: *'retail spaces begin to adopt a design language that borrows from many styles and genres – art gallery, art installation, bar, club – it is clear that customers are becoming more sophisticated and that retailers are responding to this shift. With concept stores, experience comes first and the purchase preferably follows'*. However, for Dean, the real distinction of concept stores lies in the selection of products: '*what was once called niche marketing where products are targeted at small buying groups, is now being revamped to meet the demands of exclusivity by customers who want to purchase limited, production run garments that stand out from the crowd. The concept store, the antithesis to the megastore or mall is a growing sector of the retail market*'[395]. This suggests that concept stores are differentiated by their unique selection of goods.

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386 The *Galleria CarlaSozzani* was established in 1990 and is specialised in photography.
387 <http://www.colette.fr> (last accessed 09 March 2007).
388 Colette stocks hundreds of brands, including some of the biggest names in high-end fashion: Alexander McQueen, Balmain, Bottega Veneta, Comme des Garçons, Fendi, Hussein Chalayan, Jeremy Scott, Jil Sander, Junya Watanabe, Karl Lagerfeld, Lanvin, Marc Jacobs, Marni, Miu Miu, Nina Ricci, Prada, Viktor & Rolf and Yves Saint Laurent. Colette also offers limited edition from popular and trendy casual wear and sportswear labels: Adidas, Acne, A.P.C, BBC, Fred Perry, Hysteric Glamour, Ice Cream, Lacoste, Levi's, Nike, Misericordia, Paul Frank, Puma, Stüssy or Vans.
389 Müller, Florence, *Art & Fashion,* Thames & Hudson Ltd., London, 2000, p. 452
390 '*Atelier* Jean-Paul Gautier': <http://www.interiordesign.net/id_article/CA482323/id?stt=001>
391 Examples of concept stores, Oki-ni, in London: <http://www.oki-ni.com> and Colette in Paris, <http://www.colette.fr/>
Dean defined such stores as '*retail with a difference*', establishing a 'new retail':
'What was once called niche marketing where products are targeted at small buying groups, is now being revamped to meet the demands of exclusivity by customers who want to purchase limited, production run garments that stand out from the crowd. The concept store, the antithesis to the megastore or mall is a growing sector of the retail market', Dean, Corinna, *The Inspired Retail Space, Attract Customers, Build Branding, Increase Volume,* Rockport Publishers, London, 2003, p. 52
392 'Diesel Style lab': <http://www.dieselstylelab.com>
393 'L'Espace Kenzo' in Paris: <http://www.kenzo.fr>
394 Dean, Corinna, *The Inspired Retail Space, Attract Customers, Build Branding, Increase Volume,* Rockport Publishers, London, 2003, p. 52
395 Ibid, p. 52

fig. 56: The concept store, 10 Corso Como, in Milan is located within a traditional Milanese house with a verdant courtyard, which gives it a residential feel

fig. 57: View of the 'music' corner of the concept store Colette, Paris.

fig. 58: View of the first floor, with its selection of high-end women and menswear of Colette

fig. 59: The trendy 'Water bar' at Colette - the only 'waterbar' in a fashion store.

A key difference with other type of retail outlets, in particular flagships, is centred on the individual character of concept stores. Concept stores are not part of chains but are developed to be one-off. They represent the middle point between department stores and flagships.

Because of their individual characters and small sizes, concept stores can be compared to boutiques. Since the 1960s, the term 'boutique' referred to small retail outlets that sell high-end fashion and accessories. Boutiques established their reputation through their selection which reflects the taste of the store owners. Because of the independent and individual character of these stores, boutique directors have been able to reflect their own taste in the store design. Elsa Schiaparelli's shop, opened in 1935, can be considered as one of the first boutique as the term is understood today, is famous for the way in which Schiaparelli was able to express her own taste in the design of her shop. Schiaparelli invited artists, whom she considered as friends, such as Dali and Cocteau to contribute to the design of the store and of her clothes. This illustrates how boutiques, and now concept stores, can become windows to the owners' world and tastes. It also shows the role art can play in giving a unique atmosphere and sense of individuality to stores.

Concept stores have also been described as 'micro-department stores'[396]. They are smaller but stock a great diversity of products. A comparison can be made between concept storeowners and department stores' founders: concept stores are presented as owners' personal projects, as for instance Colette, which was named after the store's founder (and which also conveniently evokes the pen-name of the twentieth century French novelist Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (1873 - 1954), giving the store an additional cultural reference). Store owners are identified and products are introduced as 'handpicked' by them. Storeowners therefore play a key role in developing store's reputations. It is not rare to see owners in their stores, Colette for instance can often be seen working, anonymously, in her shop. For these reasons, I would argue that concept stores are reminiscent of the beginnings of department stores. Like concept stores owners, early retail entrepreneurs who created the first department stores were personally dedicated to their stores and determined to transform the shopping experience; such as: Aristide Boucicaut (founder of Le Bon Marché in Paris in 1852, recognised as the first department store[397]), Charles Digby Harrod (founder of Harrods in Knightsbridge, London, in 1889[398]), Sadao Takahashi (who developed the family business, Mitsukoshi into a retail empire, revolutionising Japanese retail[399]), and Harry Gordon Selfridge (founder of Selfridges, London in 1909[400]). Department stores could therefore be considered as concept stores of their time,

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[396] Multiple references to 'micro-department stores have been made in the popular press: in Harkin, Fiona, 'Stores that Trade on Club Style', *The Financial Times*, 18 September 2004, in *Vogue* magazine (UK), (multiple articles written between 2004 - 2007) and in trend spotting websites such as Trendscaping: <http:trendscaping.inyourhead.com/> (last accessed 12 April 2008) and Cool Hunting: <http://www.coolhunting.com> (last accessed 30 May 2008)

[397] Lancaster, Bill, *The Department Store: A Social History*, Leicester University Press, London, 1995

[398] ibid.

[399] Havens, Thomas, R. H, *Architects of Affluence: The Tsutsumi Family and the Seibu-Saison Enterprises in the Twentieth Century Japan*, Council on East Asian Studies - Harvard University / Harvard University Press, London, 1994

[400] Honeycombe, Gordon, *Selfridges, Seventy-five Years, The Story of the Store: 1909 – 1984*, Park Lane Press, London, 1984

pioneering radical retail practices which have since become customary, such as: departments, fixed prices, credit facilities, return policies, retail sales and seasons, and in-store cultural events.

Like department stores, the success of concept stores appears to be dependent on the identity of their founders. Owners must have key industry and political contacts. With contemporary stores, such as the most successful ones, Colette and 10 Corso Como, were set up by women who had previously worked in fashion and had established a valuable network. Concept stores' owners could be compared with magazine editors whose personalities also play a key role in a magazine's identity. In fact, most concept stores have been designed to emulate magazines. For instance, Carla Sozzani, the founder of 10 Corso Como, was herself part of the Italian fashion press. She worked for Italian *Vogue* and helped establish the Italian *Elle*. Sozzani claimed that she conceived her store as a magazine: '*I wanted to open a place that was like a magazine come to life*'[401]. However, concept stores do not resemble just any type of magazine, rather, they follow the style of the 'new wave' fashion magazines that has sprung in the late nineties - *Another Magazine, Purple, Spoon, Slurp, Tank* and *Self-Service*. These publications are usually more expensive and target a niche market of readers[402]. These were not designed to be read exclusively by one gender, they review both women and men's fashion, focusing on the lesser-known brands. Unlike mainstream mass-circulation fashion 'glossies', a strong emphasis is put on art and culture, rather than on celebrity gossip or diet fads. This is in many respect echoed in concept stores' approach to retail. In effect, they transpose magazines layouts into the design of the store. Concept stores imitate the broad coverage of alternative fashion magazines in their eclectic product ranges. The cultural sections of these magazines are embodied into the cultural programmes of concept stores and in their book and music retail areas. Another key similarity linking concept stores with magazines is the frequency in which the stock changes, matching the periodical distribution of magazines. Like magazines, concept stores' products are presented along themes and trends rather than by collections and seasons. Such comparison could not be made between super-flagship or department stores and magazines. Super-flagships could be compared to advertising pamphlets as they only cover one brand. Department stores on the other hand, lack specialisation and have a far too large product selection to be compared to magazines. Such analogy to magazines was further demonstrated in 2003 when Topshop approached the fashion magazine *Tank* for branding and logo advice[403].

By establishing concept stores like alternative fashion magazines, stores can expect their customers to be like magazines' readers. These magazines are therefore used as stores' ideal advertising platforms; and by emulating magazines, the stores can themselves be used as

[401] anon., 'Tales of the Taste Maker', *Republic*, 2006, pp. 18 - 21
[402] Most of these new fashion magazines cost between €15 and €25 (Self-service €20, Spoon €18, Purple €18 and Slurp €25), compared to popular fashion glossies which usually cost less than €5 (Elle (FR) €2.30, Vogue (FR) 4.9 or Marie Claire (FR) €2.5).
[403] Greaves, Katy, 'Tank Drivers', *Blueprint*, March 2003, pp. 35 – 37

advertising platforms. Colette for instance has been running diverse non-retail events that are conscientiously planned as advertising stunts. Events are structured around the launch or promotion of particular products, ensuring press coverage, whilst improving customer relations. For example, Colette organised regular dance classes, held in partnership with Nike or a one-off events such as a 'cake tasting' and t-shirt customisation workshop for children (and their parents) supported by the French t-shirt and childrenswear label, Petit Bateau[404]. These events can educate and entertain customers, giving customers a positive impression of the store. This form of activity could be compared to the educational activities organised by galleries and museums, which serve not only to educate young visitors, but also is a way of 'opening' up to new audiences by being more accessible and by including all members of a family.

Brian Moeran's description of the purposes of fashion magazines could also apply to the purposes of concept stores:

> What are the purposes of a fashion magazine? To inform readers of the latest fashions, of who is wearing what in the entertainment world and where they may find the clothes shown in its pages every month? To provide a venue for advertisers to reach a readership potentially interested in their - primarily fashion and beauty – products, and generally to provide a supportive editorial environment that encourages firms like Chanel, Gucci, Dior and LVMH to place advertising regularly[405].

Like magazines, concept stores present the latest fashion trends. Concept store directors edit, curate, and adapt to seasonal trends and present themes. Concept store owners inform their consumers on the latest trends; in this way, concept store directors work like fashion magazine editors who edit information for their readers. Like editors, concept stores owners become known for their taste, which must accurately reflect the fashion zeitgeist. The comparison between store directors and magazine editors is not exclusive to concept stores. As stated earlier, some department stores and boutiques directors have been celebrated for their individual taste which often gave stores their distinctiveness and contributed to their popularity and reputation. Terence Conran applied this principal of 'editing' trends in the selection of the goods sold in his store Habitat (founded in 1964). Like a magazine editor, Conran introduced young designers and reviewed new trends in home furnishing. Paul Smith has also 'edited' the selection of his designs and the goods sold in his stores to adapt local markets. For instance, what is available and the retail design of Paul Smith stores in England and Japan differs. A similar spirit can be found in the organisation of concept stores. Concept stores adapt to the local market, to trends and current social issues.

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[404] Information gathered during an interview of Guillaume Salmon, press officer for Colette, 22 February 2006, Paris
[405] Moeran, Brian, 'More than Just a Fashion Magazine', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 726

In the same way, Roland Marchand distinguished magazines as being targeted at *'multiple audiences',* addressing both readers and advertisers, concept stores address consumers and the media[406]. According to Arnold Hauser: *'if designers create the form of fashion items, therefore, fashion magazines create their legend'*[407]. Through their elaborate design, enhancing the shopping experience, concept stores, like magazines also contribute to fabricating: *'mythical personages out of designers and the fashion houses for which they work, as well as of other members of the fashion world'*[408]. Like fashion magazine, successful concept stores represent an ideal advertising opportunities for brands. In the same way, brands seek to be featured in magazines (and not just paid advertisements) retailers want to have their brands associated with concept stores to show that they are part of a new retail phenomenon and of current cultural trends.

The diversity and thorough selection of items in concept stores may also be giving what *Financial Times* columnist, Vanessa Friedman described as '*the buying knowledge'*[409]. Friedman explained how consumers had become eager to receive information not only on what to consume but how. She evoked the emergence of *'fashion paparazzi'* whom she described: '*lurk around the entrance of a show* (fashion show*) and whenever someone who they think looks interesting or famous appears, they run over like hyped-up puppies and take their picture, while an associate asks what the subject is wearing'*[410]. Friedman justified the role of these photographers as to *'serve a ravenous appetite for information on the part of the Asian consumer about what brands are being worn and how they are put together'*. Concept stores could therefore function like magazines. Unlike flagship stores, they can offer consumers through the brands they stock, an idea of which brands go together.

Another dimension to the comparison with magazine is that exhibitions themselves could be compared to magazines as so argues Abbott Miller, writer for *Eye Magazine*. Miller explained that: exhibitions designs *'blend the complex factors of architectural space with the narrative concerns of book and magazine design'*[411].

The strongest innovation made by concept stores is centred on the diverse product range. Concept stores are 'multi-brand', offering a variety of labels rather than one brand exclusively, unlike flagship stores. This product selection reflects contemporary consumers. People rarely dress entirely in clothing from one specific label; rather they mix and match items from different brands. People also rarely purchase high-end fashion brands exclusively; they combine them with mid-range to low-range items. This is translated into the diverse selection

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[406] Marchand, Roland (1985), cited in Moeran, Brian, 'More than Just a Fashion Magazine', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 726
[407] Hauser, Arnold (1982), cited in Moeran, Brian, 'More than Just a Fashion Magazine', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 732
[408] Moeran, Brian, 'More than Just a Fashion Magazine', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 738
[409] Friedman, Vanessa, 'Subjected to Becoming the Object', *The Financial Times* (Weekend), 17 - 18 March 2007
[410] ibid., p. 7
[411] Miller, Abbott, 'From Object to Observer', *Eye*, 2006, p. 46

of products. The focus is on the variety rather than the quantity of products. The selection of merchandise is critical, guiding the image of the stores and establishes their reputations. In fact, narratives are created through the objects, following themes set by retailers. In this context, the role of fashion buyers has been transformed and revalorised, making them '*co-producers of fashion*'[412] as noted Patrik Aspers and Lise Skov[413]. Joanne Entwistle explained that the literature on fashion, by focusing on the study of production histories and analyses of work in the fashion industry on the one hand, and studies of consumption on the other, failed to investigate the *'critical relationships between production and consumption',* overlooking fashion buyers, their role still having to be unpacked[414]. Entwistle adapted Bourdieu's notion of cultural intermediaries and argued that fashion buyers were active as cultural tastemakers, and likened fashion buyers to art traders:

> Just as the art trader brings to the marketplace works of art, adding value by virtue of selection and promotion, the fashion buyer brings clothing to the public eye, helping to produce or promote "fashion", a characteristic of particular sorts of clothing that depends upon fluctuating, i.e. changing temporal and spatial, notions of value. Art traders and fashion buyers are, therefore, acting both as cultural agents, symbolically creating products with high cultural value and helping to shape and forge tastes in the process, and also, by necessity, economic agents as well, since their actions are orientated to a marketplace[415].

Entwistle argued that fashion buyers are intermediaries between production and consumption[416]. Referring to a study conducted with Agnès Rocamora in 2006, Entwistle justified the growing public importance of fashion buyers as linked to their key position as intermediaries between suppliers and consumers: *'along with the head of the Fashion Office, buyers are the public face of the retail practice at industry events, such as the bi-annual fashion weeks and have to, quite literally, embody the new, high-fashion image[417]'*. Entwistle also argued that buyers have to '*"look the part", which depends upon having the appropriate cultural capital, in the form of knowledge of fashion trends, brands and names in the business and which is embodied as 'fashion capital' in terms of wearing fashionable clothes, having a sense of 'style' and appropriate high-fashion taste'*[418]. Nevertheless, I would argue that appropriate knowledge of trends outside the fashion sector, and in particular, regarding the arts is now essential to the success of fashion buyers and their employers.

Buyers are to be aware of the 'bigger picture' of fashion. Fashion is shaped by culture on the broadest levels, as described Skov and Aspers: '*fashion is determined in the streets, in clubs and by cinema and other popular culture*'[419]. This supports Entwistle's belief that referring to Bourdieu, fashion buyers require an 'appropriate "cultural capital', which she described in this context as

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412 Aspers, Patrik and Skov, Lise, 'Encounters in the Global Fashion Business', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 806
413 ibid., pp. 802 – 813
414 Entwistle, Joanne, 'The Cultural Economy of Fashion Buying', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 705
415 ibid., p. 709
416 ibid., p. 705
417 Entwistle, Joanne and Rocamora, Agnès (2006) in Entwistle, Joanne, 'The Cultural Economy of Fashion Buying', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, pp. 716
418 ibid., pp. 716 - 717
419 Aspers, Patrik and Skov, Lise, 'Encounters in the Global Fashion Business', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 805

being: *'in the form of knowledge of fashion trends, brands and names in the business (Entwistle & Rocamora) and in terms of wearing fashionable clothes, having a sense of "style", and appropriate high-fashion taste'*[420]. Buyers can be seen as trendsetters and could be considered along with storeowners as 'tastemakers'; the people who influence or set cultural trends which Millard described in *the Tastemakers: U.K Art Now*[421]. Entwistle pointed out that *'buyers rarely, if ever, meet their customers directly, relying instead on "gut instinct" and "assumptions"'*[422], which draws their role closer to the role of art traders who also have to rely on 'gut instincts' to spot new work of art.

Entwistle concluded from interviewing fashion buyers that *'buying knowledge accumulates through some combination of formal merchandising knowledge, and intuition, or 'gut feeling', as well as from an ongoing engagement with products, markets and customers. Many of the buyers could describe, in close detail, their consumers in terms of taste, lifestyle and shopping habits'*[423]. This demonstrates that in order to successful purchase new stock for a store, the buyer needs to follow the lifestyle of the consumer, and not only investigate what consumers would wear, but what they likes, where they go out, what music they enjoy to reflect this in the store's selection. Fashion buyers essentially attempt to reflect the right 'taste'.

Illustrating this point is Sarah, Colette's daughter, who has become famous in her own right due to her role as the store's buyer. Her functions are not limited to selecting the stores' brands; her awareness of trends is applied to wider fields as art or music. She acts as Colette's art director organising the store's art exhibitions and cultural events. The concurrence of these two distinct roles shows how Colette views the product selection. Buyers therefore have the role to create the adequate narratives through the objects they offer, and in this context, they function as curators in the current sense: working *'less as guardians and more as communicators'*[424], selecting products with the same concern for coherence as curators with art collections, so that in high-profile concept stores like Colette or 10 Corso Como, the buyers can be involved in 'curating' products.

During the 'UK Jack, OK!' exhibition in Colette, celebrating 'Britishness', (presenting artists such Banksy, David Shrigley, Valerie Belin, Hedi Slimane, Chris Levine and their views on contemporary British culture), limited edition products were created matching the theme of the exhibition, such Union Jack Fred Perry polo-shirts and John Galliano jewellery, Anya Hindmarch limited edition imitations of Walkers Crisps packages and Tesco carrier bags,

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[420] Entwistle, Joanne, 'Fashion Buyers: Cultural Intermediaries', *European Retail Digest*, Autumn 2005, p. 12
[421] Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: UK Art Now,* Thames & Hudson, London, 2001 and Millard, Rosie, 'The Tastemakers', *The Times Magazine,* 6 October 2001, pp. 24 – 32
[422] Entwistle, Joanne, 'The Cultural Economy of Fashion Buying', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 718
[423] ibid., p. 719
[424] Catherine McDermott and Donna Loveday, (course leaders of Kingston University MA programme in curating) explained the role of contemporary curators in McDermott, Catherine and Loveday, Donna (ed.), Curating the Contemporary', *Blueprint* '(Curating Contemporary Design' conference - Special Issue*)*, June 2006, p. 83

exclusive Colette and Topshop t–shirts 'souvenirs'. All these items were presented to complement the theme of the works of art exhibited (see *fig. 60* and *61),* and were given an almost art status as they were exhibited alongside works of art.

With these greater roles, buyers are now not only able to set fashion trends but cultural trends. Concept stores have also become associated with up-and-coming fashions, leading them to become favoured locations for products, brands or magazines launches.

Concept stores make an effective use of their locations. Most concept stores are situated off the key shopping areas, in places that are not luxurious and thus, further away from the competitions. Unlike super-flagship stores that tend be clustered in the same areas or even streets, concept stores are often isolated and are the principal shopping attraction of a street or neighbourhood. Yet, the popularity of concept stores has affected the identity of the areas in which they are situated. The local cafés in Colette's vicinity have been redecorated and their prices have gone up to match the change of the customer profile (see *fig. 62*). New stores have opened in close proximity to Colette to take advantage of the constant back and forth of 'fashionistas', such as Chantal Thomass, the up-market lingerie brand which has created a striking boudoir theme for the interior of its flagship store (see *fig. 63* and *64*).

Contrary to flagship stores that struggle to keep up with visitor numbers, concept stores greatly benefit from tourists and even encourage their visits. Colette, for instance, has promoted this trend by publishing, in collaboration with Eurostar, a free travel guide of London and Paris, presenting the store as an essential Parisian shopping destination. The international clientele is also reflected in the product range; international brands, English books and DVDs, and a large selection of foreign magazines are available. Unlike super-flagships, concept stores attract visitors that are more likely to consume. As concept stores target niche markets and are known amongst a more limited number of people interested in fashion, the consumers that come to concept stores buy something rather than only browse. Tourists are welcomed and even sought after in concept stores because they contribute to their status. The presence of tourists indicates that stores have achieved an international reputation. While the stocking of international brands represents for few customers the familiar, it epitomises the exotic for the locals. 'Exotic' items are also seen as exclusive, as foreign brands are harder to find and more uncommon. A certain level of arrogance is attached to foreign brands as it can show that the wearer has either travelled or is aware of global trends. This stock of international brands differentiates concept stores further from other shops. Concept stores' similarity with magazines also make them more convenient, particularly for tourists who are able to find a broad and specialised range of products under the same roof.

fig. 60 and *61:* Views of the 'UK JACK OK!' exhibition in Colette. The works of art were integrated with the items for sale.

fig. 62: The popularity of Colette helped revive the previously less frequented lower end the rue Saint Honoré as other brands, such as Vanessa Bruno and Comme des Garçons parfums moved to the area to capitalise on Colette's reputation, as indicated in this map of the *1er arrondisement* of Paris by Superfuture indicating the stores, bars, restaurants which have opened near Colette.

fig. 63: Exterior of the Chantal Thomass flagship store adjacent to Colette, Paris.

fig. 64: Interior of the Chantal Thomass store, with its elaborate 'boudoir' theme.

The popularity of concept stores and trusted reputation have made them become brands in their own rights. The most high-profile concept stores, Colette and 10 Corso Como, have launched their own successful merchandising: music compilations, fragrances, t-shirts and various limited edition products also made in collaboration with other brands. 10 Corso Como has taken the branding of the store a step further by opening a hotel: 3Rooms at 10 Corso Como. The three apartments decorated by Carla Sozzani and her husband, the American artist Kris Rush, constitute a conceptual and luxurious 'micro-hotel'. The creation of 3Rooms is not an unusual venture for a fashion brand. It falls in a trend for luxury brands to create exclusive hotels, which is radically changing the image of the hospitality industry.

Hotels have been opened throughout the world. Some have been created by designers independently of the brand they represent, such as Christian Lacroix in Paris, Karl Lagerfeld in Germany, Vera Wang in Hawaii and Betsey Johnson in Mexico who have acted as interior designer. Other hotels were launched by brands themselves, Bvlgari has opened hotels in Milan and Bali, Salvatore Ferragamo in Florence and Rome, and Versace opened the Palazzo Versace on the Australian Gold Coast in 2000. A Cerruti hotel is planned to open in Dubai. Giorgio Armani, in collaboration with Ritz-Carlton is planning to build hotels throughout the world, also starting with Dubai[425]. Even mid-range brands like Camper or Miss Sixty have opened hotels (Casa Camper in Barcelona and the Sixty Hotel in Milan). High fashion brands did not limit themselves to be involved with fashion or hospitality. Fashion brands have expanded to follow the lifestyles of their consumers. Some high-end fashion brands have therefore created high-end restaurants, such as Giorgio Armani who collaborated with the celebrated Japanese chef, Nobuyuki Matsuhisa to open Armani/Nobu restaurant in Milan[426]. Many high-end fashion brands have launched home furnishing collections (Nicole Fahri, Fendi, Missoni, Michael Kors, Vivienne Westwood or Giorgio Armani) and sport lines (Chanel or Prada). These projects are significant, they show how high-end fashion brand become associated with luxury at the broadest levels. They demonstrate how much brands have become immaterial, increasingly developing experience-led non-retail projects. Consumers can appreciate brands without buying their items but by staying in their hotels, eating in their restaurants, visiting brands' art centres and galleries or listening to their music compilations.

The identity of concept stores as autonomous high-end fashion brands was subsequently demonstrated by associations with other brands. A '10 Corso Como Comme des Garçons' store was opened in March 2002 in Minami-Aoyama, Tokyo, associating the Milanese store with the Japanese label. The interior of the store encapsulated the spirit of both brands as

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[425] Anderson, Gordon. T, 'Want a Suite with that Suit?', *CNN*, 12 November 2004, <http://money.cnn.com/2004/11/04/pf/goodlife/designer_hotels/index.htm> (last accessed 9 March 2007) and Banay, Sophia,. 'From Haute to Hotel', *Forbes*, 14 September 2006: <http://www.forbes.com/2006/09/13/hotel-fashion-designers_life_travel_cx_sb_0914haute.html> (last accessed 9 March 2007), and
Scott, Chris, 'The Stylist Hotel', *Frame*, March - April 2004: <http://www.framemag.com/article.php?id=300&mag_id=37> (last accessed 9 March 2007)

[426] <http://www.armaninobu.it/armani_nobu_index.html> (last accessed 9 March 2007)

depicted in *fig. 65*. Both brands were assimilated, the brand associations created a third brand (see *fig. 66*). In July 2004, 'Colette meets Comme des Garçons' was opened in Tokyo for six months only. Limited edition products were created to 'commemorate' the collaboration between the two brands. This affiliation benefited both parties. For the concept stores, 10 Corso Como and Colette, it was a unique opportunity to 'test' the Japanese market, with the security and support of one of the country's fashion doyennes. Comme des Garçons profited from the exposure and press coverage, while tapping on the interest for these stores by the Japanese 'fashionistas', demonstrated by the great number of Japanese visitors to these stores. For the concept stores, it was a chance to further develop the Japanese clientele's loyalty. These collaborations with a high-end fashion label demonstrate the luxurious character acquired by concept stores. Yet, this is part of another trend, it has become frequent for high-end fashion labels to be associated with other brands, notably Stella McCartney or Yohji Yamamoto with Adidas, Karl Lagerfeld and Victor & Rolf with H&M, Hussein Chalayan with Urban Outfitters and Vanessa Bruno with La Redoute. But, what are high-end fashion labels' interests in being associated with lower-range brands? Mark Tungate, journalist and author claimed that through these associations which he called '*strategic alliances*', '*luxury brands could show they knew how to talk street, the chain stores would benefit from glitter, and there would be lots of free publicity for everyone*'[427]. For high-end fashion labels, such associations are opportunities to become more accessible without affecting their up-market images or upsetting their genuine customers who can be demarcated from the mass-market consumers.

For mid-range brands, such associations have the obvious justification that they somewhat elevate the status of the brand and differentiate them from other mid-range labels. Still, Comme des Garçons' associations with the concept stores were more complex; the fashion house became associated not with a single brand but with a shop which represents multiple brands, including the competitors of the Japanese label. Yet, this association did not harm Comme des Garçons' image. On the contrary, these retail experiments strengthened the avant-garde image of the company. Comme des Garçons was able to benefit from the popularity of the other brands available in Colette or 10 Corso Como, such as Maison Martin Margiela or Alexander McQueen.

To secure its image as a forerunner, Rei Kawakubo, the label's founder and designer not only designs items that are very much outside mainstream fashion, but she also develops unconventional retail projects. Kawakubo views her stores as more than boxes to showcase products in. In fact, she puts the same care in developing her stores as she does in conceiving her collections; in his investigation of the designer and her label Deyan Sudjic concluded that: '*to Kawakubo the look of a shop and the cut of the clothes are all part of the same thing. And she has been as ready to question conventional notions of what a shop is as she has been to experiment with clothes*[428]'.

[427] Tungate, Mark, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page, London, 2004, p. 41
[428] Sudjic, Deyan, *Rei Kawakubo and Comme des Garçons*, Rizzoli, New York, 1990, p. 13

fig. 65: Interior of the 10 Corso Como Comme des Garçons store in Tokyo. The interior design of the Milanese store is recreated, with the same characteristic black and white flowers used as the logo of the marque Italian brand.

fig. 66: Examples of '10 Corso Como Comme des Garçons' products, merging both brands. The third party association benefits both brands because they share a common exclusive value.

Indeed, Kawakubo has great retail flair. A keen architecture aficionado, she employed renowned architects to design her shops well before it became customary. Japanese architect Takao Kawasaki became her associate architect, working in collaboration with other architects, notably Future Systems[429] and KRD[430], to create Comme des Garçons stores.

A true precursor, Kawakubo was amongst the first high-end fashion designers to open stores in emerging areas, such as in the district of Aoyama in Tokyo, where the Tokyo Prada Epicenter is now situated; and in New York's old meatpacking area, which has now become a sought-after area for luxury brands such as Stella McCartney, Paul Smith or Diane von Furstenberg. The architecture of these stores is also very striking. Each retail outlet is different, while still bearing the label's unique, cutting-edge style. Comme des Garçons stores do not make the brand name explicit from the exterior, as in the New York and Tokyo stores, both designed by Future Systems (see *fig. 67* and *68*). Each stores incorporated works of art: the Paris 'Red' store houses a conceptual art installation consisting of moving motorised red cubes occupying an entire room (see *fig. 69* and *70*). Works of art were also regularly exhibited in the Tokyo store, which showcased artists from all over the world.

Kawakubo latest retail projects represented the opposite of super-flagship stores. These projects were daring retail experiments, transforming the presentation of high-end fashion and suggesting an alternative definition of luxury. In September 2004, Kawakubo took the fashion world by surprise by opening Dover Street Market, a 'multi-brand' store, a first for an independent high-end fashion designer. The concept of this store presents a radical approach to luxury retail. Based on the same format as concept stores, Dover Street Market crosses the divide between flagships and concept stores. Operating as a Comme des Garçons flagship, stocking the labels' complete range[431], Dover Street Market also offers some of the most conceptual high-end fashion created by established and emerging designers[432], as well as 'luxury' limited editions of streetwear and sportswear labels such as Nike or Fred Perry. This multi-brand character should not be so unexpected; Kawakubo has always supported the work of other emerging designers, even those who can be seen as potential competitors. She encouraged fellow Japanese designers Junya Watanabe and Tao Kurihara to develop lines for Comme des Garçons[433] to show her appreciation for their work. This same philosophy has been adapted to Dover Street Market. Hence, it would be wrong to assume that Dover Street Market was not developed according to calculated business motivations. By inviting these

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[429] London-based architectural practice run by Jan Kaplicky and Amanda Levette, retail projects include: Marni (worldwide), Selfridges (Birmingham) and Comme des Garçons (New York, 1998 - Tokyo, 1999).
[430] In collaboration with British architects KRD, founded by Shona Kitchens and Abe Rogers designed the 'red' store in Paris.
[431] Comme des Garçons, Comme des Garçons HOMME, Comme des Garçons HOMME DEUX, Comme des Garçons HOMME PLUS, Comme des Garçons PARFUM, Comme des Garçons SHIRT, PLAY Comme des Garçons and Tricot Comme des Garçons.
[432] Dover Street Market's 'stallholders' include: Alma Aguilar, Christian Astuguevieille, Azzedine Alaia, Rose Bakery, Erickson Beamon, Bleibtreu, Judy Blame, Elternhaus Berlin, Boudicca, Cada, Cutler and Gross, Chatav Ectabit, Hiroshi Fujiwara, John Galliano, Anne Valerie Hash, Emma Hawkins, Adam Kimmel, Alber Elbaz for Lanvin, Levi's, Ronnie Loves, Didier Ludot, Carin Mansfield, Margaret Loves Peter, Martin Margiela, Joe McKenna, Nike, Number (N)ine, Peachoo & Krejberg, Nina Ricci, Cameron Silver, Raf Simons, United Arrows, Unity, Casey Vidalenc, Yoshida and Deryck Walker.
[433] Junya Watanabe has been designing the Comme des Garçons Junya Watanabe MAN and Comme des Garçons Junya Watanabe MAN PINK lines. Tao Kurihara has been designing TAO Comme des Garçons.

fig. 67: Exterior of the Comme des Garçons store in New York, designed by Future Systems. Like the Prada Epicenters, no logo or obvious branding was needed, only those 'in the know' would be aware of what they are looking at.

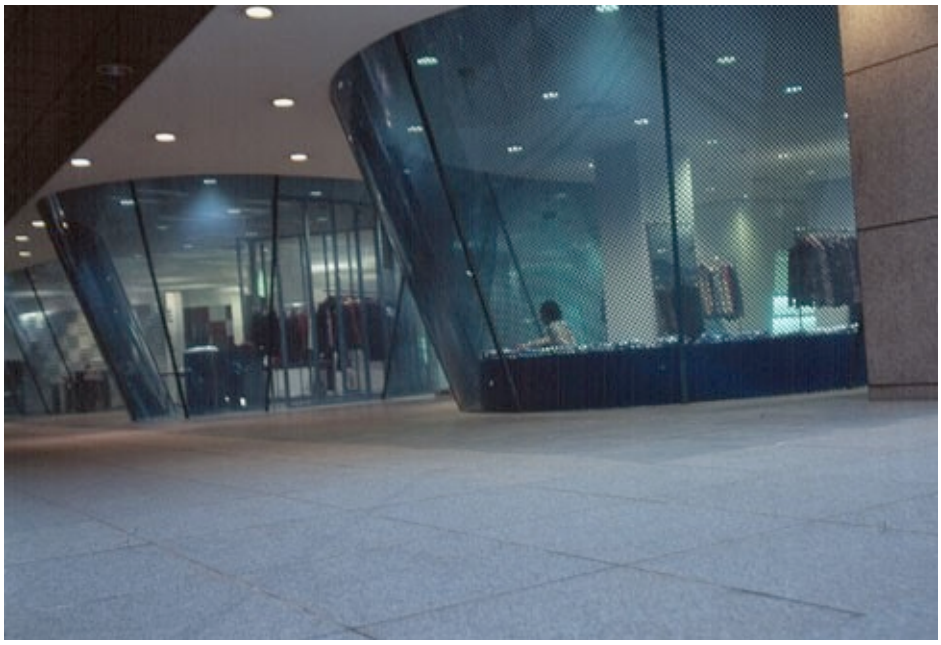

fig. 68: Exterior of the Comme des Garçons store in Tokyo (designed by Future Systems); like in the other Comme des Garçons stores, there are no obvious logos to tell mainstream customers what the store is.

fig. 69: Interior of the Comme des Garçons 'red' store in Paris designed by KRD. The space made more than a passing reference to minimalist and conceptual installation of the 60s.

fig. 70: An installation of motorised cubes made for the Comme des Garçons store in Paris demonstrating that emotive space was given as much importance than functional display space.

young, emerging and established designers, Kawakubo increased the potential for exposure of her own label. These new stars of fashion create pieces that are bold and radical; and as the interest for their work grows, so does the reputation of Dover Street Market, and through it, Comme des Garçons.

Kawakubo's selection of Dover Street Market 'stall holders' also reflects her tastes, and in fact, the collections made by these designers tend to be somewhat similar to her own designs. These designers share the common thread of experimenting with materials, developing new techniques to challenge fashion and its function. It is a mutually beneficial situation: the young designers receive the attention of Comme des Garçons' established clientele and press following; while Kawakubo ensures the avant-garde character of her brand by associating it with fashion's most creative newcomers. By supporting these designers, Kawakubo also manages to appear as a true figurehead of fashion with the capability of endorsing others.

However, each 'stall-holders' is given the liberty to exploit their own stall as they wish. Hadley Freeman described in an article, which described Dover Street Market as 'The Coolest Shop in the World'[434], that twice a year, the store closes to give designers the opportunity to redesign their stalls, known as *tachiagari* (stand up and present in Japanese). Considered a privilege to have a stall, designers come in person, also giving them the chance to meet with fellow stallholders: *'Jonathan and Ronnie Cooke Newhouse bumped into Raf Simons and Marc Jacobs while having tea in the rose bakery'*[435].

Dover Street Market should not be viewed as a flagship. On the contrary, it was created as an alternative to the 'über-chic' character of super-flagships. The architecture in Dover Street Market is distinctive from other stores. Located within former offices, Dover Street Market has preserved its simple and common office façade, blending with the other buildings on Dover Street; rather, it is the interior of the six-storey building that reflects the eclectic mix of the products. *'Picasso meets Shakespeare'*[436] was the heading of Kawakubo's brief to theatre and film set designer Michael Howells for the concept of the store's interior design. Howells reduced the site to its bare structure, leaving bricks and steel beams exposed. To make the space closer to Kawakubo's aspirations, Howells filled the shop with a clatter of theatrical and industrial objects. Portakabins became changing rooms, scaffolding-structures were used as display fixtures, wooden sheds were transformed into tills and stock room areas and a food vending machine was modified to sell the store's own range of t-shirts (see *fig. 71 - 73*). This

[434] Freeman, Hadley, '*The Coolest Shop in the World*', Vogue (UK), April 2007, pp. 260 – 265
[435] ibid., p. 263
[436] Blanchard, Tasmin, 'Shabby Chic', *The Observer*, 3 October 2004:
<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/magazine/story/0,11913,1316699,00.html> (last accessed 9 March 2007)

fig. 71: View of a Portakabin used as a changing room, Dover Street Market, London.

fig. 72 and 73 (below): Views of the 'sheds', used as tills and stockrooms in Dover Street Market, London

industrial and urban atmosphere, compared to a '*construction site*'[437], reinforces the luxurious character of the clothes by making products stand out.

The design of the store has also been described as '*Shabby chic*'[438] by Tasmin Blanchard, art correspondent for *The Observer*. This description accurately pinpoints a style adopted by Comme des Garçons. Kawakubo is concerned in creating an alternative image of luxury and the design of the store is a reaction against the high-budget and use of high-tech and expensive material common in the design of super-flagships, as described in the first part of this chapter has escalated to an excessive level. This anti chic delivery of items could therefore be perceived as a reaction against the 'over-chic' character of flagships.

Rather than attempting to compete with super-flagships, Comme des Garçons decided to go against the trend. Only low-cost materials, such as concrete were used. Kawakubo believed that the 'reclaimed' appearance of the store gives it an individual spirit, unlike the design of super-flagship which she viewed as too ascetic: *'I am interested in the aesthetic of things that have been thrown away. The trend for people taking new materials and making a luxury box lacks soul'*[439].

Dover Street Market distinguishes itself from flagships with its raw design, and separates itself from concept stores by seeking an affiliation with markets. Emblematic of the lowest-end of fashion retail, markets are rough and ad-hoc. The allusion of the store to market places is meaningful as they represent the extreme opposite of high-end fashion retail, not only in terms of products quality, but the atmosphere itself. Markets are informal, unpredictable and convivial, characteristics that Kawakubo wanted to give Dover Street Market. With its bare interior, plywood displays, abundant products, the association of the shop with markets is not overstated. As in markets, the products are changed frequently, displayed and arranged in seemingly uncalculated ways, without clear or distinct separations between stalls. There are no obvious vending points, tills are hidden inside real-sized wooden sheds, thus, employees are to be approached as one would do with market stallholders. Like in markets, Dover Street Market's displays are simple and seemingly makeshift: as for example two chairs and wood board (see *fig. 74*), music flight cases (see *fig. 75*) or empty draws (see *fig. 76*). These displays contrast highly with those of super-flagships, who have invested in creating original displays structures as in the Tokyo Prada Epicenter or the Marni stores using technology and high-cost materials (see *fig. 77* and *78*). However, Kawakubo's aim was predominantly to recreate the atmosphere of Kensington Market, which she believed was key to the development and identity of fashion in London. Closed in 2001, Kensington Market had been the most popular indoor market in London, witnessing the capital's major fashion trends since the sixties to the

[437] Blanchard, Tasmin, 'Shabby Chic', *The Observer*, 3 October 2004:
<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/magazine/story/0,11913,1316699,00.html> (last accessed 09 March 2007)
[438] ibid., the idea of 'Shabby Chic', originally coined by British designer Rachel Ashwell in 1989 and was principally exploited in the field of interior design, with iconic furniture designed by Ron Arad or Tom Dixon.
[439] Ibid.

fig. 74: Two chairs and board, a 'cheap chic' display in Dover Street Market, where creativity is a high-currency.

fig. 75: Music boxes used display used to display the menswear at Dover Street Market, making a passing reference to the 'rock n roll' lifestyle.

fig. 76: Open drawers used to present items at Dover Street Market, London. This display expresses the image of the creative simplicity of markets.

fig. 77: View of the sophisticated display at the Prada store in New York, introducing technology through its '*ubiquitous display*', scan points (top end corner) providing consumers access to a database of information on the products.

fig. 78: The sculptural display structures made by Future Systems have become a trademark of the Marni, and are used in Marni stores and concession outlets throughout the world.

birth of the punk scene in the eighties. Its three floors were a true haven for designers, musicians, trendsetters and artists. Kawakubo attempted to recreate the unbound character of the former London market. Like Kensington market, the exterior of Dover Street Market is minimal and unpretentious and does not reflect the originality of the interior (see *fig. 79 - 81*).

Like super-flagships and concept stores, Dover Street Market is a multi-functional space. Dover Street Market strives to be a hub for creativity, crossing the boundaries between the fields of fashion, art, architecture and design. Although there is no dedicated exhibition space, art is regularly presented in the store mixed with the products. Artists have also been invited to make interventions in the store, such as the Belgian artist Jan de Cock[440] who contributed by creating his characteristic sculptures - aesthetic and utilitarian structures – which are used as shelving and display furniture (see *fig. 82* and *83*). Kawakubo had been interested in his '*rebellious nature and the fact that he does not like to be limited by preconceived ideas about what is art, what is architecture and what is a fashion store*'[441]. Indeed, de Cock's work breaks boundaries, de Cock creates plywood structures inspired by prefab architecture that can be viewed as art, architecture or design. This non-adherence to any set format is important to Kawakubo and has been central to the concept of Dover Street Market. Following this first collaboration, Kawakubo invited de Cock to design a *Jan Comme des Garçons* line and create the interior of a temporary *Jan Comme des Garçons* sculpture/store which opened in April 2005 on Kotto-dori, Tokyo[442] (see *fig. 84)*.

As concept stores, the product selection was tailored to attract a niche and international clientele. The 'stallholders' themselves are from new fashion 'hotspots', such as Spain (Alma Aguilar) or Belgium (Raf Simons). Unlike flagship stores and concept stores that are generally promoted as integrated in their respective cities' culture, like the Prada Epicenters or Colette, Dover Street Market is not developed as a representation of London or of the 'British' fashion scene. Dover Street Market is presented as cross-disciplinary: integrating fashion with art and architecture, and cross-cultural: exposing global fashion and cultural trends.

So far, Dover Street Market has been a very successful project. It has been very beneficial for Comme des Garçons who has received tremendous attention from the press and customers. A smaller version of the store, a 'microcosm' (only a tenth of the London store[443]) with the same interior design theme, opened in Tokyo in September 2006 and an e-shop was launched in January 2007 (see *fig. 85 - 87*).

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[440] de Cock had emerged on the international art scene in 2005 when he had his first major international exhibitions at the Schirn Kunsthalle, in Frankfurt, and at the Tate Modern Gallery in London.
[441] Richardson, Vicky, 'The Rough with the Smooth', *Blueprint*, January 2006, p. 27
[442] Richardson, Vicky, 'The Rough with the Smooth', *Blueprint*, January 2006, p. 27 and Takahashi, Masaaki, 'Comme des Cocks', *Frame*, November / December 2005: <http://www.framemag.com/artcile.php?id=363&mag_id=47> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
[443] McNeill, David, 'Big In Japan', *The Independent Magazine*, (Design Special), pp. 49 - 51

fig. 79 and *80*: Exterior of Dover Street Market, London which bears a resemblance to the conservative exterior of Kensington Market, London in the 1980s (right).

fig. 81: Interior of Kensington Market and its different stalls, in the 1980s which was recreated in Dover Street Market, London in 2004.

fig. 82: View of Jan de Cock's ceiling 'artistic' structure created for Dover Street Market

fig. 83: A Jan de Cock installation in front of the Tate Modern gallery, London: the work presented in Dover Street Market were characteristic of the artist's work.

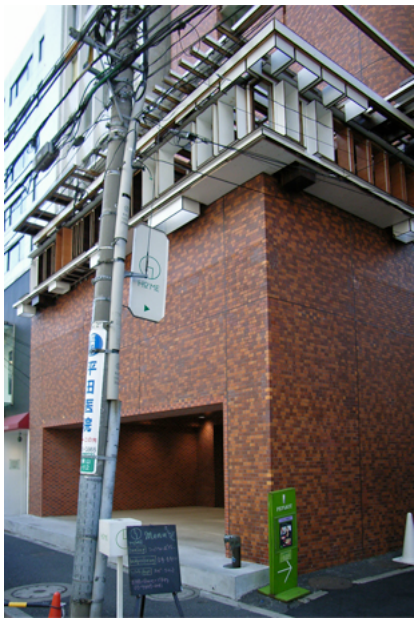

fig. 84: Exterior of the 'Jan de Cock Comme des Garçons' store / sculpture, in Tokyo

fig. 85: Exterior of Dover Street Market, Tokyo, reproducing the London store.

fig. 86 and *87*: Interior of Dover Street Market, Tokyo, introducing elements familiar to the London branch, such as display furniture, sheds and 'vitrines' or glass cabinets.

In 2004, Kawakubo launched another, more audacious retail project, the establishment of 'Guerrilla' stores, series of 'pop-up' (or also known as 'flash stores') temporary stores, throughout the world[444]. Regardless of their commercial success, each store was to close at the maximum, one year after it opened. The ephemeral character of these stores revolutionised high-end fashion retail formats. The Guerrilla stores were able to profit from characteristics which would conventionally be associated with deficient stores, or would be seen as serious setbacks for flagship stores into positive elements: exocentric locations, small sizes, low-scale advertising, ephemeral duration, a limited and dated stock range.

The concept for the Guerrilla stores was inspired from temporary 'pop up' stores, as initiated by Vacant in 2003[445] in New York. However, unlike Vacant or other companies that have since created 'pop-up' stores, Comme des Garçons has taken the concept to a higher level, developing a large-scale and international strategy, which consequently has made the Guerrilla stores truly unique. Comme des Garçons foresaw the impact the stores would create on high-end fashion retail by adopting a name with political connotations for its stores. Like Prada with its 'Epicenters', the name 'Guerrilla' store exposes the brand's intentions. 'Guerrilla' has been defined in Comme des Garçons literature or self-described as '*propaganda*' as: '*a small group of independent people fighting for what they believe in*'[446]. Stripped of any negative overtone, this given definition of 'guerrilla' portrays Comme des Garçons as a brave and independent brand, leader of a countercultural fashion.

Why did Comme des Garçons adopt the term 'guerrilla' to designate its stores? This Spanish term is predominantly associated with the Latin American Marxist armed militias of the sixties. These movement although violent have kept a romanticised and positive image in the eyes of the western world. Figures of these political movements, such as Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, remain icons of the revolutionary, subcultural and subversive, as shown during an exhibition held at the Victoria and Albert museum in 2006 on the image of the 'Che' in the global popular culture[447]. By using this terminology, Comme des Garçons was able to refer to the positive image of the revolutionary. It should also be noted that other brands have also attempted to be assimilated with political concepts: during the FIFA World Cup in 2006, Nike, developed a *'manifesto of good football'* and created a marketing campaign around this theme. During the sixth annual International Retail Design Conference in San Francisco in September 2007, Bob Bridger, vice-president of retail development of Apple computer, Inc. described the new retail concept of the brand as continuing the 'revolution'. These companies, including Comme des Garçons use the connotations of such political language to exploit what can be perceived as the 'counterculture'.

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[444] At time of writing, Guerrilla stores were opened in Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Brooklyn, Cologne, Copenhagen, Glasgow, Hong Kong, New York, Reykjavik, Singapore, Stockholm, Vilnius and Warsaw: <http://www.guerrilla-store.com/> (last accessed 6 January 2008)

[445] Ford, Jen, 'Now You Shop Here, Now You Don't', *The Financial Times* (Weekend), 9 – 10 August 2003, p. 8

[446] anon., 'Guerrilla Store +49 221', October 2005, p. 1; downloaded 12 January 2006 from: <http://www.guerrilla-store.com/plus49221/> (last accessed 9 March 2007)

[447] *'Che Guevara: Revolutionary & Icon'*, Victoria and Albert museum, London, 7 June - 28 August 2006

Despite its seemingly lawlessness and radical character, the Guerrilla stores operate under strict rules, as described in a Comme des Garçons press release:

> 1) The Guerrilla store will last no more than one year in any given location.
> 2) The concept for interior design will be largely equal to the existing space.
> 3) The location will be chosen according to its atmosphere, historical connection, geographical situation away from established commercial areas or some other interesting feature.
> 4) The merchandise will be a mix of all seasons, new and old, clothing and accessories, existing or specially created, from Comme des Garçons' brands and eventually other brands as well.
> 5) The partners will take responsibility for the lease and Comme des Garçons will support the store with the merchandise on a sale or return basis[448].

By adhering to these rules, the Guerrilla stores embody the direct opposite of super-flagships. Conventionally, the closure of a flagship store would symbolise the downfall of the brand, its brink with bankruptcy, but in the Guerrilla stores, Comme des Garçons was able to revert this negative connotation and turn the stores' ephemeral character into a discerning feature. The Guerrilla stores are never described as having closed but as having 'disappeared', leaving possibilities for subsequent 're-apparitions'. By announcing the temporary duration of the stores from their opening, customers are stressed to shop and not to rely on 'getting it later'. Products are given an added sense of exclusivity, momentary, limited in time and number. The ephemeral character of such short-leases not only mimics the brief 'longevity' of fashion and its trends; but also adopts the format of temporary art-installations and performances. These rules also imply that the stores constitute some sort of game. They create a certain level of interactivity, in which consumers are made to feel like participants.

The location of these stores are out of the traditional circuit of fashion cities and are situated in *'exocentric, energetic and marginal areas all over the world'*[449] and is within the peripheral areas of these cities. During a visit to a Comme des Garçons Guerrilla store in Glasgow, I was surprised by how exocentric the location of the store was. It was situated in a mostly residential area, far from the city centre and shopping attractions, in a rather uninviting street filled with car workshops and parts dealers. Even local taxi drivers were not familiar with the area and had to read maps to find the street. However, the difficulty of finding the store stirred a feeling of amusement and anticipation, transformed into a sense of achievement when eventually arriving in the store. The exocentric locations of the Guerrilla stores become a key distinction from other 'pop-up' stores. As stipulated in the second rule, the concept of the Comme des Garçons Guerrilla stores is to 'occupy' (or take over) other spaces. Stores have been opened within a former garage (as in the Glasgow store, see *fig. 88* and *89*), bookshop (Berlin), butchers (Cologne) and fast food restaurant (Hong Kong). In each case, the original interior had been preserved to demonstrate a sense of makeshift, temporariness and 'squatting'. In the Cologne Guerrilla store, for instance, set within a former butcher's shop,

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[448] anon., 'Guerrilla Store +49 221', October 2005, p. 1; downloaded 9 March 2007 from: <http://www.guerrilla-store.com/plus49221/> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
[449] ibid.

fig. 88: Interior of the Comme des Garçons guerrilla store in Glasgow set within a former garage

fig. 89: The Glasgow Comme des Garçons guerrilla store preserved the garage feel of the space, by using 'authentic' elements of a garage to display and decorate the store, such as car tyres, springs or a tool cabinet (as pictured above) to display products

the hooks used to hang the meat carcasses were used to hang clothes (see *fig. 90*). The tiling and bath, most probably used to wash the meat, were restored, to give the store its unique appearance (see *fig. 91*). Yet, there are no signs or logos visible from the outside to give away the presence of Comme des Garçons, only a visit inside would reveal the identity of the occupiers. In fact, in the Cologne store, the shop signs of the previous tenant were preserved (see *fig. 92*). In each of the stores, the decorating budget of these stores never exceeds a few thousand euros. Displays are therefore very simple, products 'dress' up the interiors, as explained a Comme des Garçons press release: '*what counts is the choice of goods and the spirit and the energy, rather than the appearance of carefully designed interiors*'[450]. Products are directly presented on the floor, on top of cardboard boxes or chairs; creating the common look for the Guerrilla stores: 'in today, gone tomorrow' feel. In the first Guerrilla store, a former bookshop in the historic Mitte district of Berlin, local architecture student Christian Weinecke, running the shop, explained that they *'used flea market furniture, and just water pipes for the hanging rails'*, given the store an interior decorating style similar to the aesthetic of randomness typical of second-hand stores. The store itself is far more economical than opening a traditional store, with a monthly rent of $700, and a budget of $2,500 to decorate the shop, Comme des Garçons used the shop as PR stunt, without bearing financial risks. Advertising consisted of 600 posters placed around the city, and essentially relied on word of mouth[451].

These exocentric locations gave Comme des Garçons the opportunity to test out emerging markets and create a loyal clientele that after the closure of the local Guerrilla store, could purchase Comme des Garçons merchandise online or from permanent local stockists. The diverse locations of the Guerrilla stores also reflect the globalisation of high-end fashion. The stores are located in cities that are described as new fashion 'hotspots', following the interest created by popular or emerging designers, such as in Antwerp (Ann de Meulemeester, Martin Margiela or Raf Simons) Athens (Sophia Kokosalaki), Madrid (Alma Aguilar), Stockholm (Ann-Sophie Back), or Saint Petersburg (Alena Akhmadullina). By multiplying outlets worldwide, Comme des Garçons has been flattering and reassuring consumers outside of traditional markets that they are part of a fashion subculture. Indeed, the opening of Guerrilla stores in some of these cities have welcomed as major fashion events.

The Guerrilla stores revised retail procedures more than concept stores have. The management of the stores is unconventional; opened like franchises, Comme des Garçons invited its local contacts - artists, designers or students - to run the stores. Because they are not professional salespersons, there is an informal atmosphere, making consumers feel more at ease.

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[450] anon., 'Guerrilla Store +49 221', October 2005, p. 1; downloaded 9 March 2007 from: <http://www.guerrilla-store.com/plus49221/> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
[451] Long, Kieran, 'Guerrilla Retailing', *Icon*, May 2004: <http://www.icon-magazine.co.uk/issues/012/guerrilla_text.htm> (last accessed 21 March 2005)

fig. 90: Interior of the Cologne Comme des Garçons guerrilla store with butcher's hooks used to display items

fig. 91: The Cologne guerrilla store: the original interior was preserved to give the store a clinical and brutally fashionable feel.

fig. 92: the exterior of the Cologne guerrilla store: no indication of the Comme des Garçons brand name, but rather the neon sign of the previous tenant was preserved to stir more speculation on the identity of the store.

The entire stock of the shop is changed every two weeks, the merchandise is presented, in: '*a new way, that is not beholden to seasons, or other industry dictates*' according to a press release for the Cologne store[452]. Consumers cannot therefore know what to expect in the store, giving the stores more individuality. Unlike flagship stores that have to some extent the same stock, each Guerrilla stores is unique. It also gives Comme des Garçons the chance to liquidate unsold items from past collections. It also fits with a trend for high-fashion brands to re-edit former lines to satisfy consumers' interest for vintage wear. This interest also exposes customers' disinterest for what is presently offered to them. Consumers strive to be different and find individuality in the unique style of vintage wear, in its unique cuts and colours. Vintage-wear consumers do not browse but 'find' clothes. This sense of discovery and play was reclaimed by Comme des Garçons in the Guerrilla stores. Discovery is central to the concept of the Guerrilla stores, with their exocentric locations, stores are found and products are 'encountered'.

The Guerrilla stores have been publicised through unconventional methods. Similarly, to the communication system used in flash mobs[453], a buzz is created so the stores can be promoted from word to mouth within a targeted community. Messages are sent out via the internet to artists, intellectuals or journalists, making potential customers active in marketing the store, while stimulating a sense of ownership of the store for this community. Thus, the Guerrilla stores can, to another extent, be reminiscent of the 'flash or secret sales' of designers labels. These sales were kept 'private', by invitation-only to an exclusive group of customers and then spread from word-to-mouth within that selected group.

Club nights were also organised at different times to publicise the stores (at the openings, during the sales or at the closures). The Guerrilla stores have somewhat secretive and small-scale launches that cannot be compared to the opening receptions of super flagships. Yet, ultimately, the success of the Guerrilla stores demonstrated that a great deal of attention can be received with little investment or use of traditional advertising methods.

Employees of the Guerrilla stores are predominantly designers or artists themselves, working in retail only as a 'day job'. There is a unique spirit in these stores. The late opening hours (1 - 8 or 2 – 9 pm) reflect the lifestyle of the label's clientele, closer to the lifestyle of clubbers rather than city workers, reflecting the lifestyle of the creative class. The advantage of such long opening hours, as McGauran noted in her study of cross-national differences in the shopping

[452] anon., 'Guerrilla Store +49 221', October 2005, p. 1; downloaded 9 March 2007 from: <http://www.guerrilla-store.com/plus49221/> (last accessed 9 March 2007)

[453] Flash mobs, were initiated on 27th May 2003, from an email sent by Bill Wasik, senior editor of Harpers' Magazine, to his mailing box asking for the message to be forwarded. Flash mobs which can be regarded as public art performance, involving a groups of strangers, contacted via the internet or SMS, to meet in a determined location for a usually short period of time to perform a specific act, such as pillow fights, Wasik, Bill, 'My Crowd: Or, Phase 5', *Harper's Magazine*, 2006, pp 56 - 66

experience in Paris and Dublin[454], facilitates local shopping, creating greater links between the staff (and the store) and the local community. This fits with the idea that Comme des Garçons wanted to create these stores to develop new fashion and 'cultural' hotspot, targeting local creative practitioners.

Pierre Martineau[455], a scholar who took an early interest in marketing and retail, suggested that retail outlets have *'a "personality" composed of functional and psychological attributes'*[456]. This personality is according to Martineau *'projecting an image close to the targeted customer's self-image'*[457]. In his study of Comme des Garçons, Sudjic, explained that Kawakubo's designs appeal to artists and 'independent-minded' people:

> These are clothes which appeal to those who see themselves as outside the conventional idea of fashion. Worn by New York artists, Swiss architects, London advertising millionaires and the more independent-minded of Los Angeles film people, they make a statement about the wearer without being a label that carries with it a whole fantasy life for the social insecure... like all high fashion, they contain aspects of luxury, but their origin is not immediately obvious and they are by no means an overt status symbol.

This suggests that the Comme des Garçons stores could have been developed to represent the creative personality of their consumers, whom can be characterised as part of the creative class.

With its latest retail projects, Dover Street Market and the Guerrilla stores, Comme des Garçons was able to create a less pretentious, alternative image of high-end fashion retail. With their smaller sizes, marginal locations and ad-hoc interiors, Comme des Garçons minimised costs, arranging room for adjustment and even failure, not leaving the Japanese label under great financial pressure as experienced by the brands which have opened super-flagships. The success of these projects has inspired a number of other high-end fashion brands to develop smaller retail outlets, making Comme des Garçons a forerunner rather than an outsider. Following in the Guerrilla stores' footsteps, '*improbable classics'*[458], a temporary and low-key Prada store was opened in 2006 for a week, concurring with the Art Basel fair. Located in Basel, Herzog and de Meuron's hometown, the store's interior was designed by the Swiss duo, (the shop was opened close to a Comme des Garçons Guerrilla store). The shop sold items that had never been put on the market, including limited edition 'Basel 2006' Prada products. This store is the first in a planned series of 'improbable classics' Prada stores that

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[454] McGauran, Anne-Marie, 'Retail is Detail: Cross-national Variation in the Character of Retail Selling in Paris and Dublin', *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, vol. 11, no. 4, October 2001, pp. 437 – 458

[455] Pierre Martineau (1905 - 1964) was interested in the image and personality of the store, and is famous for having written an article: 'The Personality of the Store' in the *Harvard Business Review*, 1958, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 47 - 55

[456] Martineau, Pierre (1958), cited in Birtwistle, Grete., Clarke, Ian., and Freathy, Paul, 'Store Image in the UK Fashion Sector: Consumer Versus Retailer Perceptions', *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, vol. 9, no. 1, January 1999, pp. 1 – 16

[457] ibid.

[458] Westcott, James, 'Shabby Chic', *ArtReview*, August 2006, p. 97

will be opened throughout the world, and possibly within existing Prada stores, to coincide with other cultural events.

Impermanence in high-fashion retail has since been developed in different ways. Parisian concept store, French Trotters, was based on a radical retail concept. The store is opened on a permanent basis but its stock changes according to ephemeral themes. Every season a new international city is presented, with a product selection to suit the theme, accompanied with an exhibition of artists from the selected city. Such retail projects show that traditional retail formats will be increasingly challenged. In this case, the product selection does not follow seasons but themes. Products are presented temporarily like art exhibition.

These new retail projects are developed as spaces of experimentation and interaction with customers, leading for reflections on the role of shops and shopping as a cultural consumption. However, by transforming retail formats and creating 'third places'[459], hybrid retail concepts between the shop and home, the gallery or museum, retailers are changing the shopping experience and ultimately consumers. During his analysis of commerce and culture, Stephen Bayley remarked that innovative retail techniques can change the identity of the consumers: '*before 1850 the middle class were stigmatized as the bourgeois, after the creation of the department stores, the simple bourgeois became the more complex... consumer*'[460]. So, in the same perspective, it could be argued that concept stores have made consumer become visitors.

However impressive and imposing super-flagship stores may be, I showed that they do not express luxury successfully. In fact, these larger stores make brands more inclusive; as entire product ranges can be presented, products are more easily available and ultimately, more accessible, significantly deterring the exclusive character of high-fashion brands. This flaw is demonstrated by the need for so-called 'V.I.P.' rooms to be incorporated in the design of flagship stores. The role of these rooms is to, first, physically separate important customers from others, particularly necessary in the case of famous clients who require a greater degree of privacy. Secondly, this segregation enables brands to make the shopping experience of the elite clientele different from that of ordinary customers. However, 'V.I.P.' rooms are not sufficient as they only target a limited number of customers excluding other potential high spending but low profile customers.

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[459] The idea of a third place has been central to Starbucks coffee company's image. Howard Schultz, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the company explained that their stores had '*become the third place in all the communities in which we do business. And what I mean by that is the place between home and work*', cited in Clifton, Rita and Maughan, Ester (eds.), *The Future of Brands,* New York University Press/ Interbrand Newell and Sorrell, New York, 2000, p. 3

[460] Bayley, Stephen (ed.), *Commerce and Culture: From Pre-Industrial Art to Post-Industrial Value,* Penhurst Press Ltd., Tunbridge Wells, 1989, p. 46

To suit such limited range of products, some fashion houses have been developing smaller scale, more intimate retail outlets, which transposes the idea of exclusivity in architectural terms. While super-flagships were able to attract mass-media coverage and be successful, concept stores, smaller in sizes and costs, exocentric or temporary, are winning consumers' attention. Concept stores have significantly changed the format of fashion retail, influencing other retailers to conceive and adopt a new philosophy for their retail approach. The delivery style of products has therefore become a message about the brand. However, there are limitations to the pop-up stores, consumers may grow frustrated by such concept. For a start, they may not want to 'play games' to find stores.

The latest retail concepts described in this chapter - super-flagships, concept and 'pop-up' stores - have contributed to the creation of hybrid retail spaces, transforming the shopping experience, turning consumers into visitors. Consumers are starting to have different expectations and are no longer seeking only commodities but an experience. This changes the focus of shopping and retail from the tangible to the intangible and experiential. The future of retail as further discussed in chapter 6, shows how far this trend will taken, but it likely to leave a lasting impact on shopping and consumer psychology.

Concept stores have significantly changed the format of fashion retail, influencing other retailers to conceive and adopt a philosophy of retail and consumption. The delivery style of products to customers is becoming a message about the brand. The success of concept stores has transformed other retail formats. Large retail spaces no longer signify opulence. For example, the Fendi flagship on New York's Fifth Avenue is only two-stories. At its opening, Michael Burke, CEO explained the store's small scale by describing high-end fashion retail as now about *'being intimate and unique'*[461]. This downsizing of flagships exposes a '*flagship fatigue*'[462]. It could also reveal a more important and threatening trend for retailers, a 'shopping fatigue'. Consumers are more demanding. In reaction to the excess of the nineties, the mere presence of the brand name of an item of clothing no longer suffices to give a sense of luxury. High-end fashion labels have had to make their merchandise more valuable to justify costs, making use of better quality fabrics and production techniques, increasing 'brand details' in the fabrication as zips or stitches. Consumers do not want mass-produced luxury clothing, but clothes that are unique or give them a sense of individuality. This attitude accounts for the growing market of second-hand clothing[463].

This chapter showed how art has been used by retailers to transform the retail landscape. In the first part of this chapter, I examined the links between the commissioning of high-architectural 'flagship' stores and the commissioning of works of art by retailers. I argued that

[461] Betts, Kate, 'Reimagining Luxury', *Time*, Style & Design supplement, Winter 2005, p. 4
[462] Clivaz, Sébastien, 'Surprises in Stores', *Wallpaper*, May 2006, p. 66
[463] Gregson, Nicky and Crewe, Louise (eds.), *Second-Hand Cultures*, Berg, Oxford, 2003

both were part of a common strategy for brands to be associated with culture and to give their shops an individual character. I showed that to offer consumers an added experience, retailers have established in-store galleries, using art to 'entertain' and 'educate' consumers, and most importantly to enhance the public character of their stores, making the store visit cultural. However, I raised the question as to whether turning stores into visitor attraction could ultimately have adverse effect, making stores too accessible, a detriment to the image of exclusivity adopted by high-end fashion brands.

In the second part, I addressed whether lower-budget and experimental approaches made by other high-end fashion brands have been more successful than the high-scale and high-budget flagship stores to raise the perceived value of brands and their commodities. In particular, I investigated Comme des Garçons' retail presence, studying its 'Guerrilla' stores and how they mimic art exhibition formats, by opening for short duration and being established in exocentric locations. I argued that the sense of 'play' involving the customers' participation to 'encounter' the stores, these Guerrilla stores attempted to emulate conceptual works of art. I also described the approach adopted in concept stores. I showed how these stores function as a retail representation of fashion magazines, and that because of this concept store directors take on the same role as magazine editors, editing the store selection as magazine editors edit fashion trends. I demonstrated that in such stores, art is used to establish the cultural context of the trends presented; and for this reason, buyers in concept stores act as curators.

Having determined the role of works of art in contemporary retail environments, I go on to question why particular works of art are selected by brands, and what messages they give. Do works of art have a particular link to the brands that commissioned them or simply display them in their stores? Are works of art selected by brands to be 'read' in connection to the brand image and identity? These are the questions that I attempt to answer in chapter 3.

3. Positioning Art as a Commercial Code

When displayed outside the preserve of the art institution, works of art can be seen in a different manner and be assimilated to the other visual elements placed beside them. Thus, positioned in a store, works of art could convey a predominantly commercial message. High-end fashion retailers have understood the advantages they can draw from this state of affairs and set themselves to use art as a universal language, practical in the context of globalisation, as well as a means of authenticating their commodities as luxury items. Henceforth, Kant's definition: art is beauty and serves no purpose, is obsolete since in some instances, works of art can be used to promote commodities, taking the same function as advertisements. By way of argument, I analyse in the first part of this chapter *XV Seconds* by the British artist Sam Taylor Wood, commissioned by the London department store Selfridges; and in the second part, I explain how art can be associated with capitalist ideology and national identity through the study of luxury French brands: Agnès b, Chanel, Hermès and Louis Vuitton, and the use of art in their Japanese branches.

a. The Placement of Art in Retail as Advertising: an Analysis of *XV Seconds* by Sam Taylor-Wood for Selfridges

XV Seconds by the British artist Sam Taylor-Wood was unveiled in May 2000 at Selfridges. The purpose of this commission was not just to support or encourage the production of contemporary art, but to be associated with it. *XV Seconds* served to uphold the image of Selfridges, make it seem exclusive. Rosie Millard, author of *The Tastemakers* suggested that art had been Selfridges' tool to redress the store's financial situation: *'it's unarguable that he* (Vittorio Radice, former Chief Director) *tempted them* (the customers*) with contemporary visual art, which effectively rebranded the shop as fashionable, dangerous and desirable'*[464]. This shows that art was not used to decorate the store or educate consumers but to communicate to them through the connotations art conveys. Radice claimed that the commissioning of works of art was an inevitable process as capitalistically driven mass communication culture is transformed into commodity: '*art should be part of everyday life. More people go shopping than go to the museums, so why shouldn't shops borrow from museums and put art inside them? I want to give people a wider experience than just shopping. Because speaking as a retailer, which is what I am, then if they get an added experience, they will come back and buy something'*[465]. In this statement lies the principle reason why Selfridges commissioned works of art: the use of art was not only to receive exposure but to distinguish the shop from the others. What Selfridges aimed for was to stand out from its

[464] Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: UK Art Now*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2001, p. 31
[465] ibid., p. 31

competitors, because even if the products are massed produced, widely available, a sense of individuality should be given to the store. And, it must be because of its unique image that people choose to shop at Selfridges rather than somewhere else as Martin Illingworth, Head of Store Design and Development at Selfridges explained:

> The public is very responsive these days to good quality retail design. We can deliver a product the public wants, but it's not just about the merchandise, it's how you display the merchandise – the environment they buy the merchandise in, if you give the public some acknowledgment, some respect - they are spending their hard-earned money and you give them the environment they want to spend the money in - they'll spend it in your store and not somebody else's store[466].

Still, why did Selfridges display a work of art and not a traditional advertisement? What advantages do works of art have over advertisements? Works of art connote creativity, originality and a detachment from commerciality.

In Ways of Seeing, John Berger examined advertisements that referred to works of art and found that: '*a work of art also suggests a cultural authority, a form of dignity, even of wisdom, which is superior to any vulgar material interest, and (...) says two almost contradictory things at the same time: it denotes wealth and spirituality. It implies that the purchase being proposed is both a luxury and a cultural value*'[467]. However, not all works of art are disengaged from the commercial world, commissions in particular can be created to profit the companies who commanded them. Hence, such works of art are created under a conflicting duality, they connect commerce and culture and *XV Seconds* falls in this category. It was created with the same purpose as an ordinary advertisement, to promote the department store and its products. It has become a growing trend in other sectors too, for advertising messages to be 'disguised' in seemingly non commercial media. German car retailers, BMW[468] and Mercedes[469] have produced short films or fake 'trailers' to promote their cars[470]. In these films, the car becomes a character, part of the product placement effort. The commercial message is therefore less 'flagrant', consumers are not to be 'persuaded' into buying the cars, but they are lead to take this decision. Bettina von Hase, current art adviser for Selfridges (who was not involved with the Sam Taylor-Wood project) explained that although they are not commercial messages per se, such 'hybrid' projects are perhaps more effective: *'obviously, there is a commercial element to this – to attract more shoppers and to encourage them to spend more time in the store. art projects also work much better than advertising in terms of gaining exposure, from Sam Taylor-wood's XV Seconds project (2000) to Spencer Tunick's nude installations (2003)*[471].

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[466] anon., 'Selfridges Covers Up', *RDP* (Retail Property and Development), April/May 2000, pp. 22 – 23
[467] 'Analogy between Painting and Advertisement' in Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, London, Penguin, 1972, p. 135
[468] In 2000, BMW commissioned eight eight-minute shorts films by internationally renowned filmmakers such as John Woo, Guy Ritchie, Tony Scott and Wong Kar-Wai. These shorts films were broadcasted on the internet on a dedicated website. In 2002, the films were compiled and release under the title, *The Hire* (2001), and DVDs were distributed worldwide.
[469] In 2002, as a response to BMW's *The Hire*, Mercedes produced a trailer for a 'fake' film, *Lucky Star*, directed by Michael Mann, featuring Benicio del Toro. This short film was released in cinemas and on the internet, 'fooling' consumers, but nevertheless, getting their attention.
[470] Mercedes *'Lucky Star'* commercial was described in Pilloy de Chenecey, Sean, 'Image is Nothing', *Blueprint*, January 2003, pp. 48 – 49
[471] McDermott, Catherine and Loveday, Donna (ed.), 'Discussion Between Lauren Parker, V&A and Bettina von Hase, Selfridges: Shopping vs. Art', *Blueprint* '(Curating Contemporary Design' conference - Special Issue), June 2006, p. 85

Artists whose works are placed in the retail context do not see their quality lowered or their nature changed. Many significant and high-profile artists have made successful collaborations with retail outlets in what I would argue, has become a global and contemporary phenomenon, such as Jenny Holzer for Helmut Lang[472], New York; Barbara Kruger, Spencer Tunick and Sam Taylor-Wood for Selfridges, London, Carsten Höller for Dior in Tokyo and Olafur Eliasson for Louis Vuitton in Paris. In no way did their commercial work affect their popularity or tarnish their reputations. For artists, being exhibited in a retail environment may be particularly effective: taking advantage of a store's global presence and clientele. The value of retail spaces to artists is that it gives artists and their work greater exposure, making their work accessible to people who do not normally go to galleries. Von Hase explained that artists not only benefited from the exposure, but they enjoy the ability to communicate to the public at large: *'artists really like that and they like the fact that viewers are not thinking about art when they come into the store, which can be a refreshing change from the reverential environment of a museum or gallery. It's for everybody, and there is something very democratic about that'*[473]. She described how this exposure can be critical for artists and their work. Hase cited Wang Qingsong's *Follow Me* series of window displays made in 2006. She explained that the artist chose to use products from Selfridges to investigate *'into the global obsession with brands, logos, and shopping'*; and *'for him it was a critical part of the work that it was shown in a department store'*[474].

Great budgets are being set, perhaps equalling those of art institutions, a wide network of people are involved in this process. It is no longer a spontaneous act arranged between retailers and local artists, through physical contact. Rather, stores have artistic teams dealing with creative agencies, galleries or agents to negotiate projects. Installations are planned months ahead, with a view of matching a season, style, event or change in the brand's image. And with the greater budgets offered and untypical spaces, artists can create works of greater scales, receiving the attention of both the press and the public. It represents for artists an opportunity to have their work covered in the popular press, and for retailers to be acclaimed in the arts press.

Described as the largest photograph ever made, its imposing scale was not only a remarkable technical achievement; it made an implicit and symbolic statement that art can be functional. *XV Seconds* was designed to cover the store's façade during a six month-renovation, justifying its unconventional dimensions[475] (see *fig. 93)*. Nick Cross, Head of Marketing at Selfridges, explained they had to '*clean the building*' and saw the commissioning of a work of art as a

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[472] This store closed in 2004 following Prada's acquisition of Helmut Lang and the departure of Helmut Lang himself from the company.
[473] McDermott, Catherine and Loveday, Donna (ed.), 'Discussion Between Lauren Parker, V&A and Bettina von Hase, Selfridges: Shopping vs. Art', *Blueprint* '(Curating Contemporary Design' conference - Special Issue*)*, June 2006, p. 86
[474] ibid., p. 86
[475] The dimension of *XV Seconds* were 150 metres long, 24 metres high, filled 6,000 square metres and weighed over two tons, information collected from different sources: Bishop, Rachel, 'Selfridges Wraps the Building in World's Largest Artwork', *Selfridges press release*, May 2000, p. 19; Gibbons, Fiachra, 'Rock Around the Shop: Elton John's Big New Image', *The Guardian*, 13 June 2000, p. 17; and V, Lorna, 'Wrapper's Delight', *Time Out* (London), 22 May 2000, p. 27

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Characters (left to right):

1 Chloe Kinsman
2 Giorgio Locatelli
3 Jane Horrocks
4 Sophie de Stempel
5 Phoebe Grigor
6 Chris Gentry
7 John Honess
8 Ray Winstone
9 Stephen Galloway

fig. 93: Sam Taylor-Wood, *XV Seconds*, 2000

11 12 13 14 15 16 / 17 18 19

10 Jodie Kidd
11 Richard strange
12 Ray Winstone
13 Erin O' Connor
14Elton John
15 Stephen Galloway
16 Timothy Spall
17 Timothy Spall
18 Alex James
19 Richard E. Grant

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

20 Amanda Ooms
21 Sophie de Stempel
22 Annushka Shani
23 Mebrak Tareke
24 Alek Wek
25 Adrian Dunbar
26 John Gordon-Sinclair
27 Fay Ripley

'*brilliant way of covering up an eyesore and doing something really interesting*'[476]. Other brands had exploited the tarpaulin material covering building renovations or constructions to place large size advertisements. Louis Vuitton, in particular, had taken advantage from such situations to stir anticipation for its future stores' openings. The Paris flagship was transformed into a giant branded suitcase to conceal the construction site (see *fig. 94*). Nevertheless, Selfridges was the first store to invite an artist to design an original 'cover' or 'wrapper' as journalists repeatedly described. This comparison with packaging is highly symbolic. By physically 'wrapping' the building, the photography expressed the idea that Selfridges embraces art completely. Selfridges was turned into the three-dimensional reality of the work of art. To enter the store was to enter the photography's world. Taylor-Wood's piece also had a resonance with the work of Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Wrapping is also central to their work. They have been known for wrapping buildings as the Reichstag in 1972 and geographical sites (the coast of Little Bay, Australia in 1969) since the late sixties. This similarity gives more credibility or value to *XV Seconds* as a legitimate work of art. Due to store's public character, the commission was presented as constituting a form of public art, with Selfridges in the role of the *mécène*. Nick Cross explained that Selfridges' intention was to bring: '*to the twenty million customers who visit Selfridges each year the excitement of public art on a grand scale*[477]'. However, could *XV Seconds* be regarded as a genuine piece of public art? Was the store's intention truly for all customers to enjoy and benefit from the display of works of art?

On the one hand, its monumental size made it possible for it to be seen by all, particularly due to Selfridges' prime location on Oxford street, England's busiest street. However, paradoxically, although the piece could be viewed by all, it was only aimed at a minority. Only the people already aware of the piece's artistic status could have regarded it as public art. *XV Seconds* was not displayed in the right conditions for it to be appreciated as such. Vito Acconci, the American architect and artist distinguished the roles of museums and public spaces and their influence on the understanding of art: '*a museum is a "simulated" public space; it's auto-directional ands uni-functional, whereas a "real" public space is multi-directional and omni-functional*'[478]. Hence, because of museums or other art institutions' uni-functional character, the art exhibited can be understood and viewed as such. Whereas the art displayed in 'real' public spaces may not always be seen as such, it needs to be supported with information helping viewers to recognise art outside of its traditional context. In fact, because of 'real' public spaces, such stores' 'multi-directional' characters, viewers could confuse art with their other directions, particularly, those recognised as primary functions of such spaces. In the case of Selfridges, the primary functions are commercial and art could have been interpreted under those conditions. For these reasons, *XV Seconds* can be read on two levels. As any other work of art, it can primarily be interpreted with depth and attention to the analysis of the composition to uncover the artist's messages. It can also be interpreted on a more superficial

[476] Gibbons, Fiachra, 'Rock Around the Shop: Elton John's Big New Image', *The Guardian*, 13 June 2000, p. 17
[477] V, Lorna, 'Wrapper's Delight', *Time Out* (London), 22 May 2000, p. 27
[478] Acconci, Vito, 'Leaving Home - Notes on Insertions into the Public' in Matzner, Florian (ed.), *Public Art: A Reader*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Ostfildern-Ruit, 2004, p. 29

fig. 94: View of the Louis Vuitton flagship store in Paris during its renovation, with 'branded' over-scaled tarpaulin covers used to hide the construction site. It became a tourist attraction in its own right, the year it was made up

level as an advertisement, which is the way passers-by, without prior knowledge of the piece's creator or its artistic nature would have most likely viewed the piece. Hence, one could apply Judith Williamson's methods of deconstructing advertisements as developed in *Decoding Advertisements*[479] and Kathy Myers' analysis of a branding strategy[480] to analyse *XV Seconds* and understand it in commercial terms, demonstrating its use as advertising. This analysis therefore involves an analysis of the composition, the settings, models' gazes and the relevance with the product and the target consumers. Every detail of the commission appeared to have been carefully considered to praise the department store: the choice of the artist, the composition and theme of the piece and the featured characters.

In commissioning this piece, Selfridges obtained as much from the reputations of the featured celebrities than of the artist; as Cross suggested, Taylor-Wood's work precisely represented: *'the bravura and imagination of today's British artists which we* (Selfridges) *admire*[481]*',* and the purpose of the commission was to be associated with it. The care given to promoting the authorship of the artists, contrasts with the anonymity of the creative practitioners who develop commercial advertisements. Judith Williamson noted that the advertising creatives, which she referred to as artists, *'are employed for their skills. In that sense, their authorship is irrelevant'*[482]. Williamson explained:

> Advertising seems to have a life of its own; it exists in and out of media, and speaks to us in a language we can recognise but a voice we can never identify. (...) Obviously people invent and produce adverts, but apart from the fact that they are unknown and faceless, the ad in any case does not claim to speak from them, it is not their speech. Thus there is a space, a gap left where the speaker should be; and one of the peculiar features of advertising is that we are drawn in to fill that gap, so that we become listener and speaker, subject and object[483].

The authorship of the artist is therefore significant in transforming what could be perceived as a commercial message into a work of art.

Vittorio Radice explained that in this era elevating visual culture, artists have a greater influence: '*it is a totally visual culture. - Everything is conveyed by the image. (...) art has become the medium of choice, because people understand it. They see the artist as a celebrity. They know these people. - And they point up to things like the Sam Taylor-Wood piece and say, I want to be like this person'*[484]. Like whom? The artist or the celebrities represented? Both. *Selfridges* equally benefited from the celebrities and from the artist. Sam Taylor-Wood[485] had been carefully and consciously

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[479] Williamson, Judith, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd., London, 1995
[480] Myers, Kathy, 'Towards a Theory of Consumption: Tu - A Cosmetic Case Study', in Robertson, George (ed.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, 1996, pp. 167 - 186
[481] Bishop, Rachel, 'Selfridges Wraps the Building in World's Largest Artwork', *Selfridges press release*, May 2000, p. 19
[482] Williamson, Judith, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, Marion Boyas publishers Ltd., London, 1978, p. 14
[483] ibid., p. 14
[484] Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: UK Art Now*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2001, pp. 30 – 31
[485] Born in 1967, Sam Taylor-Wood graduated from Goldsmiths College in 1990. In 1997, she won the Illy Café prize for the most promising young artist at the Venice Biennale. In 1998, she was nominated for the Turner prize for *Atlantic*, a three-screen projection of

selected to create the monumental piece for Selfridges as her very identity tied in with the image the department store sought to project. One of the leading female persona of the *yBas*[486], an unstructured group of artists who, in the mid-nineties revolutionised the British Art scene[487], Taylor-Wood's work is regularly exhibited, nationally, internationally, within both collective and individual exhibitions. Yet, it is her social life that may have attracted Selfridges. Her marriage to Jay Jopling, a leading art dealer and owner of the London White Cube gallery, has been widely publicised in the popular press. She is regularly seen attending high-society parties and functions[488] and socialising with celebrities such as Sir Elton John[489], Kate Moss or Stella McCartney. Sam Taylor-Wood embodies the successful artist, talented and attractive, she has become part of the celebrity world she often represents in her work.

In fact, she claimed that the individuals represented in *XV Seconds* are her friends, elucidating why they had all agreed to pose and for free[490] (also saving Selfridges a substantial amount of money). For this reason, it could even be suggested that the artist could have been chosen for her contacts. Being part of the *yBas* is not an anodyne detail; this movement saw artists becoming involved with the commercial world. Many made commissions for companies, created or inspired advertising, or even modelled for products[491]. Ben Weaver from the creative agency *General Assembly* who arranged the commission maintained that: '*this was a partnership between Selfridges and the artist, there was no question of their having any influence over the design, or of their logo being included. If there had been she would not have made the piece, and people like Sir Elton John would not have given up a day to come to her studio and be photographed. There is still, and should be, a gap between branding and art*'[492]. In reality, the commissioning of *XV Seconds* revealed that Selfridges knew it would gain more from the piece being created as a work of art rather than as an advertisement. The fact that *XV Seconds* did not have any captions, differing from traditional advertisements, made it more intriguing, as a 'guerrilla marketing' approach, as explained in chapter 2 subverting traditional formats have been welcomed by consumers.

The artist's integrity was never compromised, although she admitted that the *'only stipulation was that there should be none of my usual sprinkling of sordid sex scenes'*[493]. Although, Taylor-Wood considered this piece as an '*amazing challenge*', she said: '*the Selfridges' commission, XV Seconds, (...) [and other] commercial projects, I treat them separately to my art. I would never exhibit them in a gallery*

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the breakdown of a relationship between a man and a woman. In 2002, she was the youngest artist to have a solo show at the Hayward Gallery, London.

[486] Short for 'young British artists', a term originally coined by Charles Saatchi, the influential art collector, to name an exhibition curated in his gallery of the work of his young 'protégés'.

[487] Rosie Millard described the yBas as: '*the new generation of young British artists – the yBas – had invented a different way into art; they were concerned with ease of comprehension rather than perplexing intelligence. Because people found it unthreatening and potentially enjoyable, they were willing to buy into it. Even if they hated it, people felt they could have an opinion, because they understood what was going on*', in Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: UK Art Now*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001, p. 25

[488] Januszczak, Waldemar, 'Would You Like it Gift-Wrapped?', *The Sunday Times*, 7 May 2000, p. 8

[489] For whom she directed a music video (*I Want Love*, 2001, featuring Robert Downey Jr.), which she described as one of her best pieces, cited in Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002, p. 48; accompanying the '*Sam Taylor-Wood*' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002

[490] Jury, Louise, 'Store Wraps Itself in World's Biggest Snap', *Evening Standard*, 12 December 1999, p. 5

[491] Tracey Emin featured in Bombay Sapphire Gin and Vivienne Westwood campaigns.

[492] Kennedy, Maev, 'And Now, a Few Words from our Sponsor: Just Give us a Mention', *The Guardian*, 4 September 2001, p. 23

[493] Day-Lewis, Tamasin, 'While Selfridges Swept', *Vanity Fair*, May 2000, pp. 100 - 105

context because they are for a different audience and are made to help with the marketing of a product'[494]. The fact that she acknowledges *XV Seconds* separately, demonstrates that it does not bear the same nature as the rest of her work, confirming the impetus of the commission as an advertisement. Nevertheless, *XV Seconds* can be seen alongside the artist's work which were produced during the same period, the photographic series: *Five revolutionary seconds I - XIV*[495] (see *fig. 95*).

The subject of *XV Seconds* was designed as an apparent metaphor for Selfridges. The grand backdrop in which the characters were captured imposed an initial feel of *grandeur*. The venue, Peacock House in London[496] (previously used by the artist[497]) was built in 1905 by the Arts and Craft architect Halsey Ricardo[498], during the same period as the department store[499] and emerged as an allegory for Selfridges (see *fig. 96* and *97)*. Its grand interior, in particular, its marble pillars mirrored the architecture of Selfridges. The lavish features of the house (marble pillars, wall ornaments, fireplaces and windows) seemed to belong to a museum or other national heritage properties (estimated at 29 million, Peacock House was voted 4th most expensive home in the UK in 2006[500]). However, the set for the photography was almost empty with the exception of a small number of tables and chairs, creating a puzzling feel, appearing as if the house was in the process of being moved into or out of.

The photographic image was elongated, making the characters appear as if they were in separate but identical rooms; mirroring the department store's windows situated below. The characters portrayed, were directed to give the impression of being captured during an action, giving the photography a sense of instantaneity, 'freezing' the subjects. Thus, all dressed in items from Selfridges, the characters imitated the shop's display mannequins. The doors featured in *XV Seconds*, almost all open, evoked Selfridges' entrances. The size of the photography itself, equalling the store, was evocative. The proportions were of monumental

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494 Sam Taylor-Wood interviewed by Clare Carolin, in Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002, p. 48; accompanying the '*Sam Taylor-Wood*' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002

495 This series began in 1995 and like *XV Seconds* was named after its shooting process. In this series, Taylor-Wood photographed interiors, peopled with a number of '*handsome, frail, self-immobilizing figures, caught in some sort of dream world between fantasy and trauma*', Sam Taylor-Wood interviewed by Clare Carolin, in Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002, p. 48; accompanying the '*Sam Taylor-Wood*' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002

496 Peacock House, 8 Addison road, in Holland Park, London and was built between 1905-1907 by the Arts and Craft architect, Halsey Ricardo. The house's most striking feature is Ricardo's 'trademark' glazed turquoise and green brickwork used throughout the property, both indoors and outdoors.

497 Sam Taylor-Wood used the same room in Peacock House in an earlier piece: *Soliloquy I* (1998) in which she portrayed *'an ordinary person's fantasy of the affluent world'*, Sam Taylor-Wood interviewed by Clare Carolin, in Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002, p. 48; accompanying the '*Sam Taylor-Wood*' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002

498 Halsey Ricardo (1854-1928) was a partner of William de Morgan (1839-1917), the renowned potter of the Arts and Crafts movement between 1888 and 1889. Ricardo was a great believer in colour and glazed materials for city building: '*in the country and those favoured cities where houses have gardens (…) the local building materials will probably supply us with colour enough to set off and harmonize with the palette set by Nature. But in the street, where all the colour there is of man's own making, it should be full and strong*', cited in Davey, Peter, *Arts and Crafts Architecture*, Phaidon press limited, London, 1995, p. 143

499 Selfridges was built in 1909 and was designed by the American architect Daniel Burnham (architect of the Flatiron building in New York and Union Station in Washington, D.C) in a neoclassical style.

500 Pearman, Steve, 'Halsey Ricardo: the Indian Summer of Arts and Crafts', originally published in the *Sunday Times*, 26 March 2000: <http://www.hughpearman.com/articles/halsey.htm> (last accessed 6 May 2005)

fig. 95: Sam Taylor-Wood, *Five Revolutionary Seconds XI*, 1997

fig. 96: Exterior of Peacock House in Holland Park, London, built by the Arts and Craft architect Halsey Ricardo in 1905 in the same period as Selfridges (below).

fig. 97: Exterior of Selfridges: designed in 1907 by Daniel Burnham in a neo-classic style, Selfridges bears a similitude to the design of Peacock house with its grand columns and wide windows. The store was designed to celebrate the grand leisure pursuit of shopping.

size, which is conventionally used for political or religious propaganda. Like other monumental sized art, *XV Seconds* was intended to be seen by a maximum number of people.

Reflecting the store, *XV Seconds* was developed to give an impression of abundance. Multitudes of accessories were incorporated in the set: oriental pots, antique wooden boxes, vases, flower pots, a birdcage, fabrics and rugs, plates filled with food. The exotic character of some of the items, such as the oriental rugs, the Moroccan-style birdcage, Chinese-style pots and boxes suggested the exoticism and travel. All these artefacts, displayed in an unruly way also made the room look like a bazaar.

With *XV Seconds*, Selfridges fulfilled two aims, not only was it saved from being hidden underneath scaffoldings, it received great exposure, stealing the limelight of Oxford Street. No figures were available. However, it can be assumed that from the extensive press coverage, the piece attracted customers to the stores, and also got attention from Selfridges' target-market, London's 'art crowd', interested in contemporary art and most probably with high-disposable income. In fact, it is sure that *XV Seconds* was a major advertising coup, generating implicit and free advertisement for the store through the press' attention, *Vanity Fair*[501], notably, dedicated six pages to show *XV Seconds* in details, saving Selfridges significant amounts of advertising costs. Yet, what may have grabbed the media and the public's attention above all, was the number of celebrities represented in *XV Seconds*.

XV Seconds featured a cast of twenty-four contemporary celebrities[502] (some of whom Taylor-Wood had worked previously[503]) as 'modern-day gods', which according to the artist was to form: '*a contemporary version of the Elgin marble frieze from the Parthenon, peopled with modern-day 'gods' to adorn a temple of shopping*'[504]. The great number of subjects reflected the idea of abundance and availability that can be found in *Selfridges*. These individuals varied in age, origin and professions, reflecting the diversity of *Selfridges*' clientele, whilst increasing the chance for the viewer to identify with them. However, Taylor-wood said the: '*Selfridges' piece was to work alongside the shop and for that especially I felt I had to use people who were well-known in order to capture public imagination on a massive scale*'. Celebrities were therefore used to support the narrative and catch the public's attention. *XV Seconds* drew on ordinary persons' fantasies of the affluent world.

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[501] Day-Lewis, Tamasin, 'While Selfridges Swept', *Vanity Fair*, London, May 2000, pp. 100 - 105

[502] The cast of *XV Seconds* included: musicians: Elton John, pop groups Blur's bassist, Alex James and Menswear's guitarist Chris Gentry. Actors: Adrian Dunbar, Stephen Galloway, Richard E Grant, John Gordon-Sinclair, Timothy Spall, Richard Strange, and Ray Winstone. Actresses: Jane Horrocks, Amanda Ooms and Fay Ripley. Models: John Honess, Jodie Kidd, Erin O'Connor, Mebrak Tareke and Alek Wek. Dancer Steven Galloway, Chef Georgio Locatelli, Gallerist Annushka Shani, Journalist Chloe Kinsman, Artist Sophie de Stempel and Filmmaker Phoebe Grigor.

[503] Taylor-Wood worked with Ooms in the video art pieces, *Pent-up* (1996) and *Sustaining the Crisis* (1997) and Dunbar and Winstone in the video, *Third Party* (1999).

[504] Bishop, Rachel, 'Selfridges Wraps the Building in World's Largest Artwork', *Selfridges* Press Release. London, May 2000

Comparisons could be made with Alison Jackson's work, an artist who also represents in her work the public's vision of high society. Jackson has produced paparazzi-like images featuring celebrity look-alikes, setting them in situations pushing to an extreme the public's idea of these celebrities' private lives; for instance, she represented the Queen reading a Corgi breeders' magazine whilst sitting on the toilet, or the Beckhams and the Blairs in beachwear playing volleyball. In *Prince William* (1999), she portrayed the Prince with 'King' written in lipstick on his chest by an anonymous girl (see *fig. 98*). In fact, Jackson was also later invited by Selfridges to stage a live performance in the shop windows (17 December 2003). So, rather than portraying celebrities in an almost documentary style as in the photographic work of Tina Barney (see *fig. 99*). Unlike Barney who portrays celebrities and other members of high social milieu in their true and realistic settings, Taylor-Wood represents celebrities in her work, in surrealist tableau, materialising the widespread conception of celebrities indulging in sex and drugs. *XV Seconds* gave the impression of a party, elucidating the *'dysfunctional narrative'*[505] and exposing the subjects as intoxicated. The theme of the party has been reiterated throughout Taylor-Wood's work. She has portrayed it as part of the lifestyle of the higher strata, suggesting excess and sin.

Like in advertisements, it can be suggested that the cast of celebrities portrayed was tailored to reflect the image of the brand. The celebrities were used as archetypes, as explained Taylor-Wood: '*people who are known for very particular reasons*'. Many of them had worked in television or cinema, and were famous for being typecast into a genre of film and role, making it easier for the public to project their own memories of the characters portrayed by the actors.

As Taylor-Wood explains, their presence had become:

> A short cut to an idea. As soon as you see Ray Winstone (...) you know you're talking about a particular genre of film and also a particular person: a gruff, macho, masculine character. All the different characters that you know him to have portrayed are there in front of you (...) you can project all these other roles and ideas onto him[506].

Taylor-Wood attempted to merge the public's conflicting visions of celebrities, mixing reality and fiction, their own private lives with the characters they have portrayed. She further added that *'having someone like Ray Winstone is like saying 'gritty, English realism'.(...) Ray tends to play the hard east bloke who's a bit of a brute. When you look at him you typecast him without knowing him because you're conditioned by what you've seen before'*[507]. Most of the characters in *XV Seconds* were chosen for the 'archetypes' they represent; as Ray Winstone and his image of the villain or the Sudanese model Alek Wek, notoriously considered as a stereotype for negritude and model John Honess as the angelic androgynous boy. Elton John, the most recognisable of all,

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[505] Button, Virginia, *The Turner Prize*, Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd., London, 1999, p. 19
[506] Sam Taylor-Wood interviewed by Clare Carolin, in Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002, p. 48; accompanying the '*Sam Taylor-Wood*' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002
[507] Hentschel, Martin and O'Pray, Michael, *Third Party: Sam Taylor-Wood*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, London, 2000; accompanying the 'Third Party' exhibition, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, 1999, p. 106

fig. 98: Alison Jackson, *Prince William*, 1999. Using look-alikes, Alison Jackson's photography mimics paparazzi shots that fill gossip magazines. By adopting this photographic style, Jackson commented on the celebrity culture and the blurring of our perceptions of reality and fiction.

fig. 99: Tina barney, *Julianne Moore and family*, 1999. In her work, Tina Barney portrays high-class social milieus, as in this picture representing the actress Julianne Moore in her home, creating a revealing image that is true to reality. This sophisticated photographic style bears more resemblance to the work of Sam Taylor-Wood, who does not diminish celebrities but on the contrary, grants them the status of gods and icons.

successfully embodied lasting fame and achievement. Models Jodie Kidd and Erin O'Connor captured the western cannons of beauty, pregnant documentary filmmaker Phoebe Grigor represented motherhood. Taylor-Wood said: '*I didn't want to go for people who were too obvious. Having Elton john was enough, I thought. So I wanted recognisable people, without hitting you over the head with celebrity, without it being too much of a 900ft Hello*!'[508] Had the artist portrayed very famous celebrities, the public would have been more aware of their private lives, and would not have allowed their imagination to run. Also, as implied by the artist, had there been too many 'flagrant' celebrities, the high-status of the piece could have been lowered and be more directly assimilated with ordinary advertisements. Taylor-Wood aimed to project a different image of celebrities' representation and not create a '900 ft Hello!' Although she decided to represent celebrities, she chose to capture them in the most artistic style. Unlike paparazzi or red-carpet shots of celebrities, Taylor-Wood made them to look unaware of the camera, they did not pose but looked seemingly captured in action. Moreover, they were not smiling, unlike typical celebrity photo shots. An analogy could also be made with fashion photography. The subjects appeared to be in different rooms, evoking the different pages of a magazine fashion spread. Like fashion photography, *XV Seconds* was highly stylised, the clothes worn by the subjects have been carefully selected to match the personalities attached of the characters they portrayed. The females wore evening gowns or sexy short dresses, creating a sense of glamour, to be desired by male and envied by female viewers. The men dressed more conservatively than the women but wore them casually. Many did not wear ties and some were portrayed with bare chests and feet.

Taylor-Wood described the idea of portraying celebrities in *XV Seconds*: '*the Greeks depicted gods and goddesses on the outsides of their temples, and so I thought I would use our current cultural icons on the outside of a retail temple. I wanted it to be something that people who don't necessarily know about art can identify with. But also I wanted it to be quite unsettling, rather than commercially pandering in an easy way*'[509]. The piece may have differed from traditional advertisements but it used some of its symbols. Characters' expressions were more typical of advertisements. Berger description of models' gazes in advertising can be found in *XV Seconds*: '*being envied is a solitary form of reassurance*'[510]. It depends precisely upon not sharing your experience with those who envy you. You are observed with interest but you do not observe with interest – if you do, you will become less enviable. It is this which explains the absent, unfocused look of so many glamour images, *'they look out over the looks of envy which sustain them*'[511]. This appears to be how the subjects were represented; they remained undisturbed by the viewers' presence, looking away, completely indifferent, left to their own thoughts. This total ignorance or unawareness reinforced celebrities' 'superiority'. To gain their attention would be to become their equal, part of their world. *XV Seconds* seems to suggest that the most realistic way to resemble them would be to copy their style and buy their clothes available from Selfridges. Some of these

[508] anon., 'The Splendid Art of Shopping', *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 May 2000, p. 7
[509] Picardie, Justine, 'It's a Wrap', *Vogue (*UK), London, 5 May 2000, p. 51
[510] Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin, London, 1972, p. 133
[511] 'Analogy between Painting and Advertisement', Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin, London, 1972, p. 133

celebrities could not be recognised by all, and perhaps, only amongst a certain milieu whom, most probably, represented the store's target-market. It can also be imagined that the people, aware of the subjects as celebrities and who failed to recognise them, would perhaps have felt the need to examine the piece further. Why did they represent celebrities? In *Celebrity*, Chris Rojek explained celebrities' involvement with the commercial world as giving a face to commodities: '*capitalism mobilizes desire. Celebrities humanise desire*[512]', and as Taylor-Wood suggested people can be ' a short-cut' to ideas[513].

And although celebrities have often been represented in Taylor-Wood's work, the commercial character of *XV Seconds* made the presence of celebrities appear as an endorsement of Selfridges and its products. As Rojek has explained, in a capitalist and consumerist society, the leitmotiv is to buy, and often things that are not necessary. In this instance, everything is turned into commodity, and for everything to be consumed, advertising came about to stimulate need or desire, leading to purchase. But with the event of mass-production, the multiplication of goods and choices, fiercer forms of advertising were developed, including the endorsement of products by famous personalities, transposing the people's admiration for them to the goods, according to Rojek: '*the market inevitably turned the public face of the celebrity into a commodity. Celebrities are commodities in the sense that consumers desire to possess them*[514]. Celebrities fill the space left from the loss in faith and authority, Rojek suggested:

> As modern society developed, celebrities have filled the absence created by the decay in the popular belief in the divine rights of kings, and the death of God. Celebrities replaced the monarchy as the new symbols of recognition and belonging, and as the belief in god waned, celebrities became immortal[515].

This belief supports Taylor-Wood's description of *XV Seconds* subjects as '*modern day-gods*'. The artist explored society's new 'morals', implying that celebrities are now worshiped as living god or goddesses, and that consumerism is a new 'religion', and shops its temples. Subjects' superiority was orchestrated, pedestrians were made to look up to see them, and take the time to see the great size of the building. That sense of exclusivity is, in a manner a market proposition, something to aspire to, not immediately attainable by the masses. Journalist Waldemar Januszczak[516] also suggested that the title of the piece could also ironically refer to Warhol's fifteen minutes of fame theory. *XV Seconds* showed a desire for commodities, for fame and immortality.

Sam Taylor-Wood's work draws direct inspiration from the history of art and popular culture. *Wrecked* (1996) was an adaptation of the *Last Supper* (1498) by Leonardo da Vinci (see *fig. 100*). In this piece, the artist represented her friends as the apostles and, controversially, a topless

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[512] Rojek, Chris, *Celebrity*, Reaction Books Ltd., London, 1999, p. 189
[513] Hentschel, Martin, *Third Party: Sam Taylor-Wood*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, London, 2000, p. 106
[514] Rojek, Chris, *Celebrity*, Reaction Books Ltd., London, 1999, p. 13
[515] ibid., p. 13
[516] Januszczak, Waldemar, 'Would You Like it Gift-Wrapped?', *The Sunday Times*, 7 May 2000, p. 8

woman as Jesus. In *Pietà* (2001), which imitated Michelangelo's masterpiece (1499), Taylor-Wood portrayed herself as Mary, holding the American actor Robert Downey Jr as the dying Christ (see *fig. 101* and *102*). Consistent with such pieces, Sam Taylor-Wood introduced in *XV Seconds* numerous references to masterpieces throughout the history of art, scenes from Christian history and from the cinema. Altogether, these multiple references made the narrative more complex and ultimately more difficult to 'read'. A reliable interpretation of *XV Seconds* would have therefore necessitated a solid knowledge of the history of art and popular culture. Thus, only a small proportion of the viewers would have had the knowledge and time required to recognise the references made. These references made the piece stand out from other traditional advertisements, which very rarely necessitate viewers to have a strong intellectual or cultural background.

The first and foremost reference is to the Elgin marble frieze from the Parthenon (see *fig. 103*). And due to this analogy with the Parthenon Frieze, a suitable manner to read *XV Seconds* would be to follow Jenifer Neils' method of interpretation of the Parthenon Frieze[517]. In her book, she reads the situation, analyses the 'players' based on historical facts and the Greek mythology. Hence, *XV Seconds* should also be read linearly, each situation and character described, with analogies drawn, and references to elements of the history of art and popular culture.

Other masterpieces were referred to including: Ingres' *Bather* (1808) enacted by Sophie de Stempel[518] (character 4), (see *fig. 104)*. John Honess' androgyny (character 7) was accentuated to evoke Raphael's angels depicted in *Cherubini (1514)*. Phoebe Grigor (character 5) with her arm resting on her pregnant belly could have alluded to Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Wedding* (1434). Grigor's expression, dress and long curly blond hair could also reminisce Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus (*1485), (see *fig. 105)*. References to Christian history were also made: The position adopted by Chris Gentry (character 6) appears to refer to the crucifixion of Christ. Jodie Kidd effortlessly reaching Stephen Galloway's hand (characters 9 and 10) could be seen as making a direct reference to Michelangelo's renowned painting: the '*creation of Adam*' (1508-1512), (see *fig. 106);* although the journalist Waldemar Januszczak[519] suggested that Kidd imitated the pose taken by the female nude in Edouard Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) (see *fig. 107*). Chloe Kinsman and Giorgio Locatelli's positions (characters 1 and 2) could be reminiscent of the *Baptism of Christ* as painted by Piero della Francesca (1442), (see *fig. 108*).
Allusions to lesser-known works of art could also be observed. Alex James (character 16) seemed to imitate Batoni's portray of *Thomas William Coke* (1774), (see *fig. 109*). Erin O' Connor's position and dress (character 13) could evoke the universe of the cabaret as most

[517] Neils, Jenifer, *The Parthenon Frieze*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001
[518] As confirmed in Sam Taylor-Wood interviewed by Clare Carolin, in Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002, p. 48; accompanying the '*Sam Taylor-Wood*' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002
[519] Januszczak, Waldemar, 'Would You Like it Gift-Wrapped?', *The Sunday Times*, 7 May 2000, p. 8 and Rosenblum, Robert, *Ingrès*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1967, p. 31

fig. 100: Sam Taylor-Wood, *Wrecked,* 1996, was an adaptation of Leonardo da Vinci's iconic masterpiece, *The Last Supper* (1498)

fig. 101.

fig. 102.

In *Pietà,* 2001, Sam Taylor-Wood re-enacted Michelangelo's masterpiece (1499), portraying herself as the Virgin Mary holding the American actor Robert Downey Jr as the dying Christ.

fig. 103: View of the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum, London

fig. 104: Sam Taylor-Wood made a reference to Ingres, *The Bather of Valpinçon* (also known as the Large Bather), 1808 (left) in *XV Seconds*, (see detail, on the right)

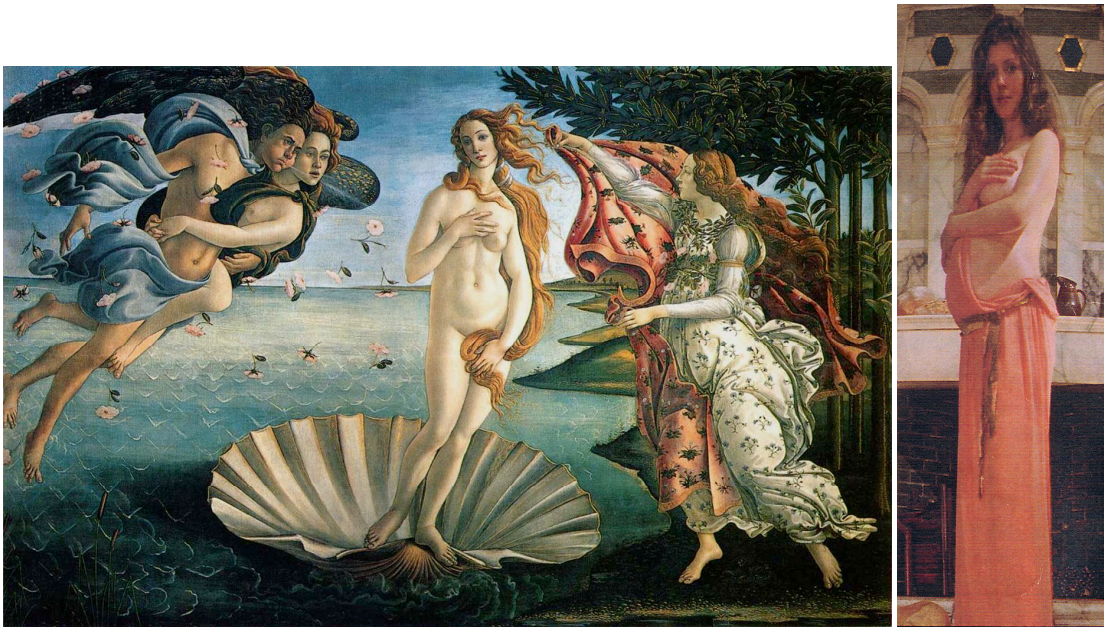


fig. 105: Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus,* 1485 (left) and Sam Taylor-Wood's contemporary adaptation in *XV Seconds,* 2000 (right)

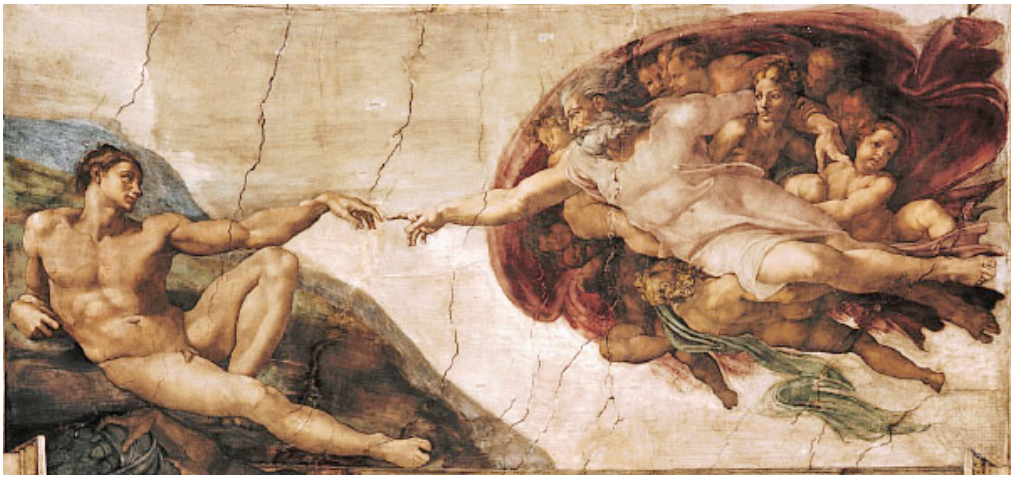


fig. 106: Michelangelo, *Creation of Adam,* 1508-1512, which inspired Sam Taylor-Wood's *XV Seconds*, 2000 (below)

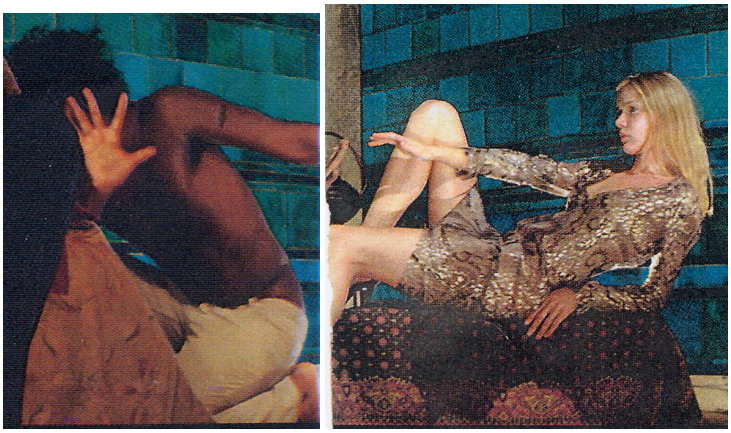


fig. 107: Edouard Manet, *Déjeuner sur l'herbe,* 1863 which is also said to have inspired Sam Taylor-Wood's *XV Seconds,* 2000

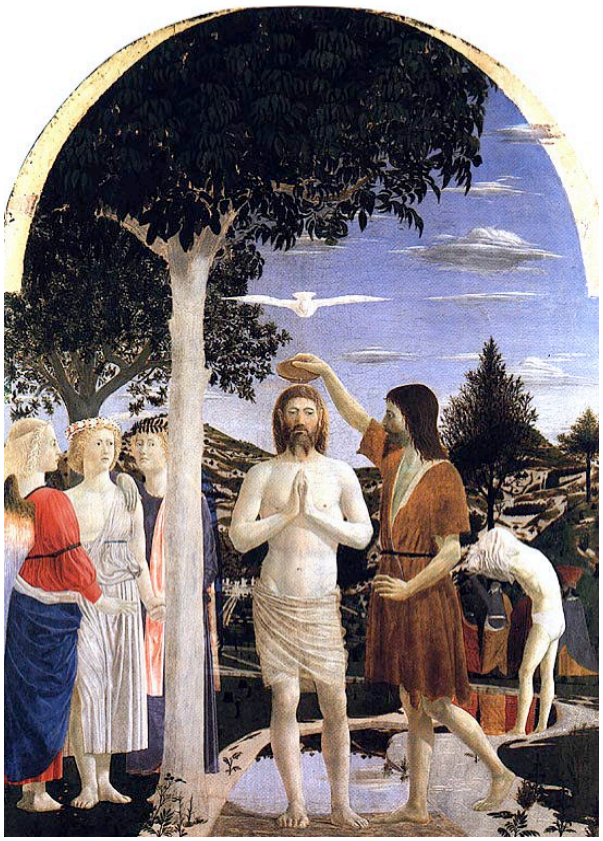


fig. 108: Sam Taylor-Wood appears to have made a reference to Piero della Francesca's *The Baptism of Christ,* 1442 (left) in *XV Seconds,* 2000 (right)

famously depicted in Toulouse-Lautrec's paintings, as in the *Dance at the Moulin Rouge* (1890) and more recently, in Baz Luhrmann's film *Moulin Rouge* (2001). According to the artist, Elton John (character 13) sitting majestically like a king on a throne, was adopting the pose of Louis-François Bertin, the newspaper editor painted by Ingres in *Monsieur Bertin* (1832), (see *fig. 110)*. This is a key reference as Bertin had been described by Ingres as the '*Buddha de la bourgeoisie*'[520] and through this pose, Taylor-Wood turned John into his contemporary equivalent.

References to popular culture could also be perceived. Ray Winstone (character 8) sitting on a chair, his eyes closed pointing his index to the side of his face, like pointing a gun to his temple, appeared to be enacting the end scene of the cult film *Taxi Driver* (dir. Martin Scorsese, 1976, USA)[521], in which anti-hero Travis Bickle, performed by Robert de Niro attempts an impossible and desperate suicide (see *fig. 111)*. Alek Wek dancing with Adrian Dunbar (characters 23 and 24) may be suggesting the famous disco-dancing scene between actors John Travolta and Uma Thurman in *Pulp Fiction* (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1994, USA). Taylor-Wood also incorporated numerous symbols, including a large fish 'embraced' by Amanda Ooms (character 18), which could be regarded as a symbol of nature or of the Christian followers. Most characters were shown barefooted which could symbolise piety. Other elements bore no direct explanation, such as the charcoal held by Fay Ripley (character 26), which could only be understood as a symbol of labour or the warmth of the home[522]. The animals (foxes, goats, cats and dogs) represented in disproportionate sizes throughout the picture evoked the long tradition of the presence of animals in either scenes representing the mythology, or in portraits of aristocrats. Food has been scattered around the set, including bowls of grapes, lobsters and a large ham, evoking the idea of a feast, suggesting abundance and luxury as often represented in still-life paintings, particularly characteristic of the Baroque period.

Nevertheless, without any recognitions of the references made, the piece could still have been appreciated. Like parodies, *XV Seconds* could have been appreciated on two levels. It could have been enjoyed for the overall beauty of the piece, for its lavish décor and for its striking lighting and colours. Such an appreciation, without depth, resembles how viewers come to like advertisements, often without any knowledge of the author(s), the location of the shot, the technique used, etc. But art often requires a deeper level of analysis to be fully appreciated. Viewers need to be 'connoisseurs', justifying the use of labels in art institutions to introduce works of art. In the case of *XV Seconds*, the awareness of Sam Taylor-Wood as the author could have drastically changed viewers' opinions or understanding of the piece. *XV Seconds* is very much aligned with the artist's work. In fact, the complexity of the references made in the piece gave it credibility. *XV Seconds* was developed as a work of art, but given advertising

[520] Gibbons, Fiachra, 'Rock Around the Shop: Elton John's Big New Image', *The Guardian*, 13 June 2000, p. 17
[521] As confirmed in Sam Taylor-Wood interviewed by Clare Carolin, in Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002, p. 48; accompanying the '*Sam Taylor-Wood*' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002
[522] Carr-Gomm, Sarah, *The Hutchinson Dictionary of Symbols in Art*, Helicon - Duncan Baird Publishers, Oxted, 1996

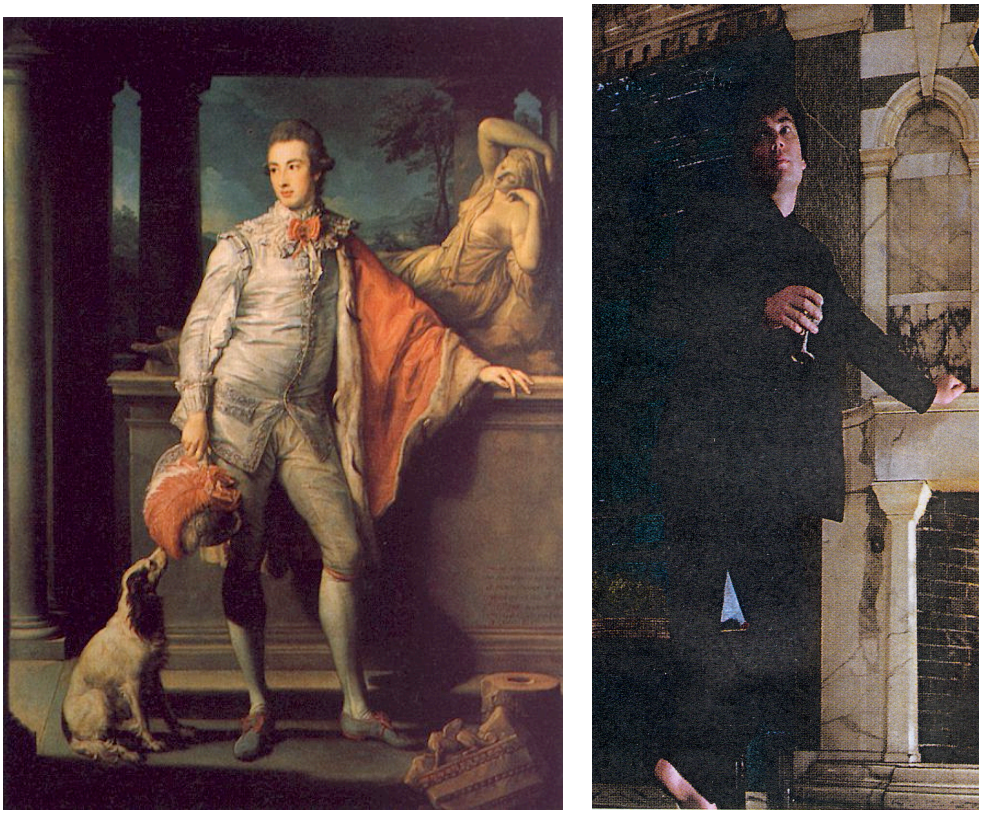


fig. 109: Sam Taylor-Wood appears to have made a reference to Batoni's *Thomas William Coke*, 1774 (left) in *XV Seconds*, 2000 (right)

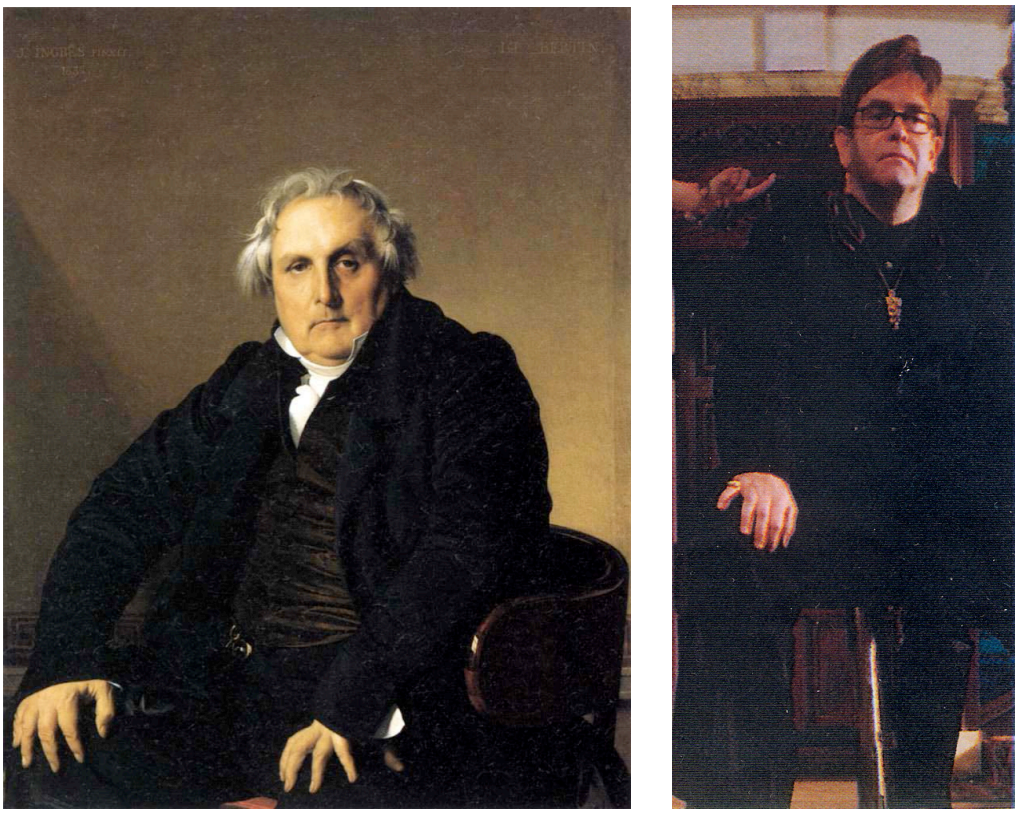
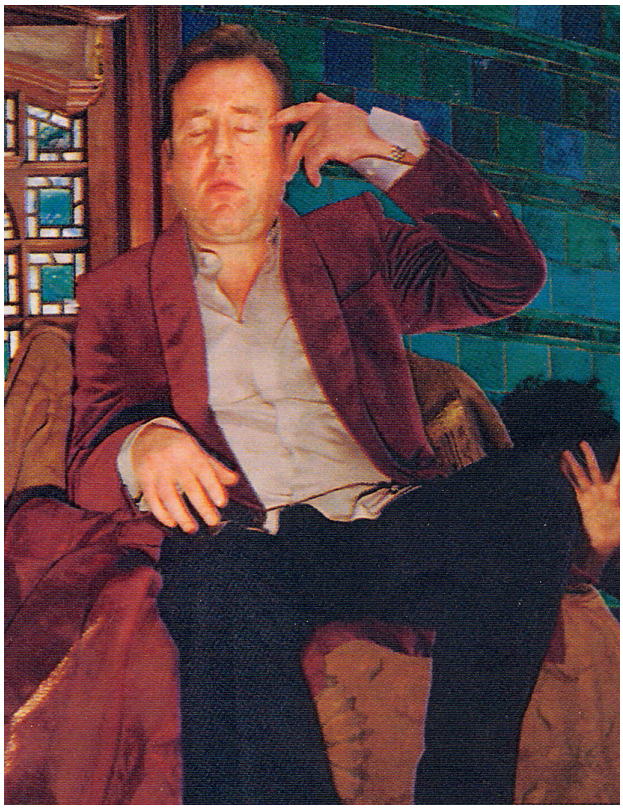


fig. 110: Sam Taylor-Wood was inspired by Ingres' *Monsieur Bertin*, 1832 (left) in *XV Seconds*, right (right)

fig. 111: Sam Taylor-Wood made references to contemporary culture, in *XV Seconds*, 2000 (below) she referenced the famous scene from the film *Taxi Driver,* 1976 as pictured above in which the character performed by Robert de Niro fakes suicide.



functions. The viewers who did not recognise or understand the work, would have seen it as a complex and intellectual piece. This gave an elitist image to Selfridges and suggested that its products are exclusive. And the viewers who would have recognised the references made and the artist's style would have given credibility to Selfridges' involvement with art.

XV Seconds formed a distorted advertisement; neither an advertisement, yet nor quite a work of art, even its creator preferred to differentiate it from her work. Nevertheless, *XV Seconds* illustrated a possible symbiosis between art and commerce. Taylor-Wood's work ingeniously competed with other advertisements by using their methods but surpassing them by undoubtedly remaining a piece of art. *XV Seconds* was able to maximise the attention for the store in a way that ordinary advertisements could not have achieved, illustrating how the format for advertising can be extended. More effective than 'ordinary' advertisements (billboards, posters, press or television commercials), *XV Seconds*, as a work of art was able to engage further with the viewers. The absence of direct product references or captions freed viewers from the visual saturation of logos and conventional commercial messages existing in urban settings, which as Lazar Dzamic observed, it is '*estimated that an inhabitant of London or New York is bombarded with more than 1,000 advertising messages every day*'[523]. Hence, the dual nature of *XV Seconds,* seemingly liberated from commercial intent, made it more striking and refreshingly 'different'.

As Myers recognised the context in which we view images can transform their meaning. She explained that the cosmetic campaign she examined would be interpreted differently according to where it was seen: *the way we perceive the Tu model, the pleasure derived from looking at her, would vary depending on whether the image appeared in a porn magazine, a family photo, or a fashion magazine*[524]. In the case of *XV Seconds,* the work attracted a commercial connotation that it would not have had, had it been exhibited in an art institution.

The analysis of *XV Seconds* by Sam Taylor-Wood, commissioned by Selfridges, illustrated how works of art bear a meaning in relation to the brands that have commissioned or simply exhibited them in their stores. The study of *XV Seconds* showed that the piece not only reflected Selfridges' brand identity but communicated positive commercial messages to its customers. In this perspective, I showed that works of art displayed in stores should be considered in the light of the brands they are juxtaposed with and that they should therefore be 'read' as advertisements, rather than be interpreted as traditional works of art. However, the success of *XV Seconds* in terms of bringing publicity and exposure to Selfridges demonstrated that works of art may be more powerful than conventional advertisements. In fact, the use of art may be a 'refreshing' way to communicate to consumers, who have shown

[523] Dzamic, Lazar, 'Hard Sell', *Blueprint,* October 2003, p. 48
[524] Myers, Kathy, 'Towards A Theory of Consumption: Tu – a Cosmetic Case Study' in Robertson, George (ed.), *The Block Reader in Visual Culture*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 184

to be responsive. Works of art appear to be used by retailers because of their visual nature, employed as non-verbal means of communicating with consumers. In the second part of this chapter, I consider whether the use of art as a commercial instrument to communicate to consumers has any particularly significance with the internationalisation of brands and the diversification of the consumer identity.

b. Models of Practice: French Brands and the Use of Art in their Japanese Flagships

The first part of this chapter established that some retailers have used art as a tool to attract and communicate with consumers. The analysis of *XV Seconds* by Sam Taylor-Wood, commissioned by Selfridges, demonstrated that within a commercial context, art can function as advertising and can be interpreted as making commercial messages.

In the second part of this chapter, I explore why high-fashion retailers have opened galleries or cultural centres predominantly within locations that have high percentages of international consumers.

Why study French brands in Japan? French high-end fashion brands have been particularly active in developing links with culture by establishing cultural centres in their stores and organising art exhibitions in Japan. For this reason, I chose to consider the reason why French brands have used art in Japan and whether it plays a role in communicating to this specific market. Why do French brands focus on Japanese consumers? As I go to explain, Japan represents the world's biggest market for luxury goods. And my premise is that the Japanese may be particularly receptive to the display of art in retail environments.

Throughout this chapter, I oppose the 'Western' and 'non-Western', using the 'West' to refer to the 'first world', more specifically high-income countries of capitalist economies in the northern hemisphere: North America (Canada and the USA) and Europe and in the southern hemisphere: Australia and New Zealand; and the 'non-West' to grossly denote countries outside these regions. As the focus of this chapter is on Japan, I evoke the 'East' to describe Japan in particular, rather than the Asian region as a whole.

I chose to put an emphasis on Japanese consumers' perception of works of art displayed in stores as my presumption is that art has been employed by French brands to connote the Western world and its values, to make their brands seem 'exotic', a positive and significant attribute for the popularity of high fashion brands amongst Japanese consumers. I therefore consider the concept of the 'exotic' from the point of view of the Japanese.

Borrowing the distinction between the 'other' and the 'similar' addressed by French ethnologist Martine Segalen[525], I discuss the 'other' as representing the 'West', in relation to a supposedly identical 'we' - 'we Japanese' or 'we Asians'. This perspective of the West as the exotic has also been raised by anthropologist and was the subject of an exhibition, 'Exotic Europeans' at the South Bank Centre in 1990-1[526]. This exhibition presented artefacts depicting Caucasians as 'exotic' beings from a non-western perspective (essentially from African and Asian perspectives). Investigating the role of art in retail from a non-western point of view is important to understanding the appeal for western brands in 'emerging regions' such as Asia and the Middle East and how it may be encouraged by Western brands. My premise is that in relation to this thesis, the use of art in retail can serve to reflect the western values and exotic character of brands to the Japanese.

The world's most famous high-end fashion brands appear to be brands that are long-standing, with a heritage and tradition. In 2000, Moore et al[527] identified 114 international fashion houses of which over 80 percent originating from Italy, the USA, the UK and France. Moore et al wrote that:

> By way of explaining this concentration, industry experts suggested that the large size of each of these national markets, each with sizeable proportions of wealthy consumers prepared to pay the premium prices typical of fashion design houses, meant that it was inevitable that these countries should produce and sustain a disproportionately high number of fashion design houses in the first place. The fact that these fashion design houses were also the most likely to trade internationally was partly explained by the fact that each of these countries (with the possible exception of the USA) have long enjoyed a global reputation for excellence in fashion design manufacturing and retailing[528].

So, according to Moore, the country of origin of brands can directly contribute to its successful exportation and implantation abroad. This suggests that brands could be actively promoting the origin of their brands, and even celebrate it as part of their brand identity.

In *The Cult of the Luxury Brand*, Radha Chadha and Paul Husband, business consultants and experts on the Asian luxury market, explored '*Asia's love affair with luxury*' and tried to explain why and how Asians have become the leading consumers of luxury goods. The Japanese in particular represent not only the region's most avid consumers of luxury goods, but most probably the world's, accounting for over 40 percent of global sales[529]. This widespread popularity of luxury goods in Asia, and particularly in Japan is a result of numerous factors, primarily of globalisation. The popularity of luxury goods in Asia is also highly dependent on

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[525] Martine Segalen's notion of the 'other and similar' (l'autre et le semblable) was discussed in Ha, Marie-Paule, *Figuring the East: Segalen, Malraux, Duras, and Barthes,* State University of New York, Albany, 2000

[526] Drew, Joanna and Malbert, Roger (eds.), *Exotic Europeans*, The South Bank Centre, London, 1991; accompanying the 'Exotic Europeans' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 1990 - 1991

[527] Moore, Christopher. M, Fernie, John and Burt, Steve, 'Brands without Boundaries: The Internationalisation of the Designer Retailer's Brand', *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 34, no. 8, 2000, p. 922

[528] ibid., p. 925

[529] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand*: *Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 2

tourism, demonstrating the interrelationship between globalization and tourism, as Victor Azarya wrote: *'tourism is both a cause and a consequence of globalization'*[530]. In fact, two simultaneous phenomena have caused the popularity of Western brands in Asia: internationalisation, driven by retailers who sought to expand their brands and exploit the new and unsaturated markets existing in Asia. While at the same time tourism increased as air travel became more affordable, travel times shortened and economic prosperity grew, directly contributing to the wider presence of Western luxury goods in this part of the world. The analysis of global sales of luxury goods shows that there are two significant and distinct patterns of consumption: 'domestic consumption', in which commodities are purchased locally, and 'international consumption': purchases made by consumers whilst travelling abroad, as tourists. The proportion of each consumption pattern is variable, altering according to brands and their originating countries, but also dependent on the state of tourism and any exogenous factors affecting it. For instance, 50 percent of Louis Vuitton's global sales were said to come from Japanese tourists (whilst travelling abroad), whilst only 38 percent were made within Japan[531]. Consumers behave differently in both situations, producing very different consumption models and consumer profiles, creating a clash between 'local' and 'international' consumers. Thus, brands have attempted to cater for their different consumers by projecting distinct images to attract the diverse clientele and satisfy their different requirements and tastes.

What makes the purchase of luxury goods abroad so appealing? Consumers' motivations can be economic, most luxury goods are less expensive in Western countries, and particularly from brands' originating countries as there are no duty charges[532]. I would argue that the appeal for 'international' sales is social. The purchase of luxury goods, in particular high-end fashion brands has been strategically developed as the souvenir *de rigueur*. Luxury brands have followed patterns of tourism, opening stores in tourist areas, and often designing them with tourists in mind rather than locals. For instance, Louis Vuitton's Champs Élysées store hardly serve French consumers, rather an estimated 80 percent of total sales come from tourists[533], to the extent that as discussed earlier, stores can function as tourist attractions.

In spite of that, the intrinsic links between tourism and shopping have not been unanimously recognised. For instance, John Swarbrooke and Susan Horner, authors of *Consumer Behaviour in Tourism*[534], did not discuss the close relation between tourism and shopping in their book, a gap I believe should be addressed. They defined tourism as a: *'a short-term movement of people to places some distance from their normal place of residence to indulge in pleasurable activities'*[535], engaging

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530 Azarya, Victor, 'Globalization and International Tourism in Developing Countries: Marginality as a Commercial Commodity', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 6, November 2004, p. 949

531 Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 2

532 Western luxury goods can be almost 40 percent more expensive in China because of taxes and brands' own mark-up, cited in Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006

533 Chandler, Ray and Kano, Cindy, 'Recession Chic', *Fortune*, 29 September 2003, pp. 26 – 27

534 Swarbrooke, John and Horner, Susan, *Consumer Behaviour in Tourism*, Butterworth and Heinemann, Oxford, 2001

535 ibid., p. 4

the transport, hospitality and leisure industries, but failed to include the retail industry. They did not recognise shopping as part of the principal motivations for tourism which they listed as follow: visiting friends and relatives (VFR), business, religious, health, social, educational, cultural, scenic, hedonistic, activity and special interest[536]. Shopping is still regarded as secondary or consequential activity to other forms of tourism; hitherto, with the significant reduction of transportation costs, some tourists now only travel to shop: 'retail tourists'. In fact, shopping opportunities can be a direct impetus for people to travel and visit places away from their homes. Nonetheless, shopping has become undeniably and inherently beneficial to the economies of the most visited destinations in the world.

Official bodies have even developed incentives (tax reductions or alleviations and 'shopping festivals'[537]) to establish cities or entire countries as so-called 'shopping havens' to encourage inbound tourism, such as the cities of Dubai, Singapore[538] or Hong Kong[539]. Short-term package 'shopping trips' have been launched by tourism agencies to respond to the growing demand. Travel tours dedicated to the purchase of specific items have been organised. For instance, tours have been organised from Japan to Vietnam, so tourists can acquire tailor-made *Ao Dai*, the traditional Vietnamese costume which has become popular with Japanese women; or the day-trips arranged from Dover to Calais so British tourists can buy cheap 'beer and wine'. Still, people rarely travel to fulfil single objectives. The underlying reasons distinguished by Swarbrooke and Horner for tourism should not be regarded as sole motives, the different forms of tourisms are often entwined. In the perspective of this research, I would specifically argue that there are intrinsic links between 'retail' and 'cultural' tourism. Cultural tourism characterises the flux of tourists that travel to experience the 'authentic' culture of the destinations they visit. It is habitually discussed from a Western point of view, describing Western consumers who experience indigenous cultures through the visit of craft centres or factories, the tasting of local foods, etc. This form of tourism has stimulated a 'revival' of local traditions and even the establishment of 'ethnoparks' instigating discussions on the ethical character of tourism and its effects on indigenous cultures[540]. However, considering non-Western tourist patterns, there is evidence to suggest that the tourists who visit the Western world are also primarily 'cultural tourists'. The world's most popular tourist destinations, in descending order: France, Spain, the US and Italy[541], have high densities of cultural and heritage sites. But, as it is essentially experience-based and centred on the provision of services, the intangible character of cultural tourism heightens consumers' need for ownership. 'Cultural tourists' therefore combine cultural activities with store visits. Tourists are more likely to be interested in purchasing commodities that they view as

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536 Swarbrooke, John and Horner, Susan, *Consumer Behaviour in Tourism*, Butterworth and Heinemann, Oxford, 2001, pp. 29 – 39

537 The Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF): <http://www.dubaishoppingfestival.com/dsf/dsf-dubai.htm> (last accessed 15 May 2007)

538 The Singapore Sales Week: <http://www.greatsingaporesale.com.sg/english.html> (last accessed 12 May 2007)

539 *'Hong Kong is "shopping haven", with no sales tax, justifying why there are more than 23 million tourists visiting HK annually, spending $12 billion':* Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, pp. 111 - 112

540 Azarya, Victor, 'Globalization and International Tourism in Developing Countries: Marginality as a Commercial Commodity', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 6, November 2004, p. 949

541 World Trade Organization (WTO), 2003 figures cited in Azarya, Victor, 'Globalization and International Tourism in Developing Countries: Marginality as a Commercial Commodity', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 6, November 2004, p. 952

'materialising' the local culture. A common strategy adopted by retailers, in particular in the high-end fashion industry, has been to promote associations between their brands and the culture of a country or region[542]. A significant proportion of tourists who travel to Western countries therefore purchase Western products, particularly luxury commodities, suggesting that luxury is associated with Western culture.

Profiting from this trend, the luxury industry has promoted products as cultural artefacts, and art has been employed as part of this strategy, inserting commodities into a cultural framework. As discussed in chapter 2, some luxury brand outlets have been developed as cultural attractions to promote store visits as a cultural activity, to the extent that Louis Vuitton put forward the 'cultural character' of its Champs-Élysées store to obtain a dispensation from the French government to allow Sunday openings[543]. However, brands and stores must form part of the local cultural experience; alone, stores could not raise the local cultural status as Graeme Evans explained stores cannot be substitutes for public culture:

> Brand competition and the price of maintaining visibility in a fickle market also ensures that a single, dominant product or experience is likely to be diluted, so that Nike Town and Sega World may form part of a city's retail and tourism offer, anchoring a downtown zone or entertainment complex, but limited to their youth markets they are unlikely to achieve brand identity to sustain or create cultural city status, or substitute for public culture[544].

This has become more evident in the context of the globalisation of economic markets, for example, Hermès or Louis Vuitton are marketed as indelibly French, Burberry as English, BMW and Mercedes as German, Rolex or Omega watches as Swiss, and so on. Such characters form part of brands' 'core' rather than 'extended' identities. Core identity elements were defined by Jean-Noël Kapferer, author and brand expert, as: '*organized into more durable patterns of meaning, constitute the associations that are most likely to remain constant as the brand travels to new markets and products*'[545]. Ali Yakhlef described extended identity as representing the: '*components that provide texture and completeness and are more likely to change from one context to another*'[546]. In other words, brands' geographic associations become intrinsically linked to brands' identities, part of their global advertising strategy and unlikely to be changed. Still, geographic associations can be represented differently in diverse contexts as they bring to mind different ideas to different consumers. For instance, French high fashion brands have promoted their 'Frenchness' as part of their brands' identities, but have altered to correspond with local perceptions of 'Frenchness'.

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[542] Yakhlef, Ali, 'Global Brands as Embodied "Generic Spaces", *Space & Culture*, vol. 7, no. 2, May 2004, p. 238

[543] Collomp, Florentin and Visseyrias, Mathilde, 'Le Vuitton des Champs-Élysées Prié de Fermer le Dimanche', *Le Figaro*, 1 June 2006: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/eco-entreprises/20060601.FIG000000206_le_vuitton_des_champs_elysees_prie_de_fermer_le_dimanche.html> (last accessed 22 March 2007); and Ducourtieux, Cécile and Lauer, Stéphane, 'La Justice Ordonne la Fermeture le Dimanche de Soixante-Quatre Magasins d'Usine Center' *Le Monde*, 16 June 2006: <http://www.lemonde.fr/web/artcile/0,1-0@2-3234,36-783934,0.html> (last accessed 26 March 2007)

[544] Evans, Graeme, 'Hard-branding the Cultural City: From Prado to Prada', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 27, no. 2, June 2003, p. 421

[545] Kapferer, Jean-Noël, 1992, cited in Yakhlef, Ali, 'Global Brands as Embodied "Generic Spaces", *Space & Culture*, May 2004, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 238

[546] Yakhlef, Ali, 'Global brands as embodied "Generic Spaces"', *Space & Culture*, May 2004, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 238

However, there may be risks for brands to pursue nationalistic association. Since the early 2000s, Chinese and Korean consumers have rejected Japanese brands following the Japanese government's denial of atrocities committed by the Japanese empire during the Second World War. Still, the most apparent example is the rise of anti-Americanism throughout the world which surfaced following the war in Iraq in 2003, affecting the popularity of American brands most readily associated with US values, in particular: Coca-Cola or McDonald's. In 2001, *Time Magazine* reported that 61 percent of French and 58 percent of Germans respondents felt negatively towards U.S. firms[547]. Simon Anholt, author of *Brand America* observed: '*for most new U.S. brands in the past 10 to 15 years, it's remarkable how low-key they are about their country or origin*'[548]. He even claimed not being able to *'remember a brand being launched that was proud to be American'*. This affirmation is incorrect. Brands with a strong pro-American identity such as American Apparel have been launched in recent years, but these brands uphold new perceptions of American culture. In the case of American Apparel, a new image of American corporation is being promoted: environmentally conscious, with strong work ethics and a multi-cultural outlook. American apparel has been successful primarily because its production methods go against the (highly criticised) capitalist production methods employed by most other American brands such as Nike. American Apparel claims to be 'sweat-shop free'. Its workers are not exploited. They are paid well beyond the minimum wage ($12-13 instead of $5.15), with subsidised lunches, free English classes, chair massages and bicycle loans[549]. The company also alleges to be environmentally friendly, using only organic cotton and selling all its scrap fabric to be re-used. Its factory, located in downtown Los Angeles is partially solar-powered and otherwise lit with eco-bulbs. Its advertising campaigns feature non-professional models, mostly ethnic minorities, with Latin American or Asian origins (see *fig. 112*), who are not representing a stereotypical American beauty, unlike other brands have portrayed in their advertising campaigns such as Abercrombie & Fitch (see *fig. 113*).

To counteract nationalistic associations that may cause brands to be perceived in negative terms, products and services have been adapted to suit the local market. To go against accusations of promoting a homogenised global culture, American brands have changed their strategy adapting themselves to the local market, for example, McDonald's has been active in creating hybrid version of local popular dishes as the Falafel in Israel as Uri Ram discussed[550].

Anne-Marie McGauran noted cross-national differences in the delivery of goods and thus, consumers' shopping experiences[551]. She compared the experiences of consumers shopping in high-street clothes stores in Paris and Dublin. She found that the differences were not only created by company policies, but due to different governmental policies. In Paris, McGauran

[547] Gumbel, Peter, 'Branding America', *Time*, 28 February 2005, p. 48
[548] ibid., p. 49
[549] American Apparel official website: <http:www.americanapparel.net> (last accessed 21 March 2008)
[550] Ram, Uri, 'Glocommodification: How the Global Consumes the Local - McDonald's in Israel', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 1, January 2004, pp. 11 – 31
[551] McGauran, Anne-Marie, 'Retail is Detail: Cross-national Variation in the Character of Retail Selling in Paris and Dublin', *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, vol. 11, no. 4, October 2001, pp. 437 - 458

fig. 112: American Apparel uses non-Caucasian models in its campaigns to promote a non-stereotypical view of the United States and show its multiculturalism so the brand can be associated to a global culture rather than just 'America'

fig. 113: Abercrombie & Fitch uses Caucasian models in its advertising campaign to represent a traditional and stereotypical image of 'American' beauty, and associate the brand with a traditional image of 'America'

observed that service in Paris was of higher quality, due to the more professional advice of shop assistants. The reason being that the labour legislation in Ireland are more relaxed make it more easy and cheaper to employ staff, whereas in France, labour is more expensive, with employers therefore putting more emphasis on hiring skilled staff. Hence, in Dublin, there were 82 percent of students, and only 42 percent in Paris. Similarly, there were fewer part timers in Paris (35 percent) than in Dublin (61 percent). Factors such as governmental child support also accounted to the difference in employment patterns. The geography of a city (population density, levels of residential inner city) affects the type of consumers. Other factors McGauran observed including transports, wealth (home-ownerships, income, credit levels), differences such as length of lunch hours and opening hours. These differences demonstrate how important the local is to the functioning of a store.

To avoid such situations, retailers have altered the nature of their brands' geographic associations. Luxury brands have been developed to evoke countries on a non-ideological or political level, only hinting at positive cultural values. Brands have cultivated links with values that can be more easily abstracted from the political debate, notably with music (Burberry and its 2007 campaign shot by Mario Testino featured young British rock stars) or, the focus of this study, art. Bernard Arnault, Director of LVMH explained that the display of art in some Louis Vuitton outlets supports the corporation's ideology; art representing *'the best means through which to manifest our* (Louis Vuitton) *belief in freedom'*[552]. This explains why Louis Vuitton has displayed art in its new Chinese or Indian outlets, countries where there is a more apparent lack of freedom due to the strong censorship enforced by governments. The freedom expressed in Western art could be seen as a positive feature of the Western world.

Following the tremendous economic prosperity of the late 1980s, Japan saw the burst of the 'bubble economy' and fell into a lasting economic recession in the 1990s, considerably affecting spending patterns and causing a significant decrease in outbound tourism. Indeed, although Japanese tourists are important consumers, they are a relatively low number, as pointed out by Swarbrooke and Horner: '*Japan, perhaps surprisingly in view of the stereotypes of the Japanese tourist, generates, in reality, relatively low levels of outbound demand. This is largely experienced by the high cost of living in Japan and the long hours worked*'[553]. Sales of low-range and mid-range products were particularly afflicted and companies such as McDonald's were forced to cut their prices[554]. Paradoxically, sales of luxury brands did not diminish but thrived, with a multiplication of new outlets and an upsurge in sales, leading some brands as Louis Vuitton[555]

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[552] Saint Bris, Gonzague, 'Bernard Arnault: "L'Art est la Meilleure Façon de Marquer Notre Foi en la Liberté"', *Le Spectacle du Monde*, November 2001, available on LVMH website, (under the 'Patron of the Arts and Social Solidarity' section in 'Culture, Arts and Heritage'): <http://www.lvmh.com> (last accessed 22 April 2007)
[553] Swarbrooke, John and Horner, Susan, *Consumer Behaviour in Tourism*, Butterworth and Heinemann, Oxford, 2001, p. 141
[554] Chandler, Ray and Kano, Cindy, 'Recession Chic', *Fortune*, 29 September 2003, pp. 26 – 27
[555] In 2004, the brand that accounts for more than two thirds of the income of LVMH (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy): Alexandre, Alix, 'Louis Vuitton, a Hundred and Fifty Years of Passion', *France-Diplomatie*, <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/france_159/label-france_2554/themes_3713/business-life_3896/sectors-and-companies_3897/louis-vuitton-hundred-and-fifty-years-of-passion_6232.html> (last accessed 3 June 2005)

to raise their prices by up to 5.5 percent[556]. However, whilst sales of luxury products climbed in Japan, they stagnated or even decreased in the rest of the world. In fact, the decrease in the outbound tourism from Japan could be a factor of the reduction of global sales of luxury products (once more demonstrating the intrinsic links between tourism and retail). It is a fact the high-end fashion industry, in particular European labels, currently relies on the Japanese market to sustain[557]. Journalist Troy McMullen suggested that if the majority of new flagship stores of luxury brands were being built in Asian cities, including Tokyo and Seoul is due to the fact that the *'luxury giants hope to lure top-end shoppers who have cut back on travel'*, with reasons including *'the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome and the strengthening of the euro against the dollar and yen'*[558].

Why are the Japanese particularly avid consumers of luxury products? Is it that they really value luxury commodities? Or is it that retailers have focused their attention on the Japanese market and have developed successful strategies to nurture Japanese consumers' loyalty for their brands? The phenomenal popularity of luxury labels in Japan appears to be the result of both these two conditions. The opening of new outlets revealed that luxury brands had a minimal presence on the Japanese market and suggested that retailers would have previously relied on purchases made by Japanese tourists whilst travelling abroad. But as Japanese consumers became less financially able to afford to travel, retailers were compelled to develop sales locally. Albeit most high fashion brands were already present in the Japanese market, they opened more retail outlets, especially in provincial cities. Moore et al identified this as the second of four stages of the internationalisation of brands[559].

The first stage being the preliminary market entry and implementation of a brand, through wholesaling of limited haute couture collections and ready-to-wear lines presented within prestigious local department stores. The second stage, which represents the current situation for most high fashion brands in Japan, characterises the opening of flagship stores within capital cities, typically within premium shopping streets and locations. The third stage relates to the circulation of diffusion lines, often under different names (DKNY, Emporio Armani or Kenzo Jeans), first in department stores and exclusive boutiques within the capital and then to key provincial cities. Finally, the fourth stage involves the opening of diffusion line stores. However, it is unlikely that the most selected high fashion brands will go through the third and fourth stages as they rely on making their brand exclusive.

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556 Chandler, Ray and Kano, Cindy, 'Recession Chic', *Fortune*, 29 September 2003, pp. 26 – 27
557 Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006
558 McMullen, Troy, 'Louis Vuitton Brands Its Space', *Wall Street Journal* (Europe), 13 June 2003, p. 6
559 Moore, Christopher. M, Fernie, John and Burt, Steve, 'Brands without Boundaries: The Internationalisation of the Designer Retailer's Brand, *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 34, no. 8, p. 922

To make up for Japanese consumers' inability to travel, Western high fashion retailers have sought to convey 'exotic' qualities to their brands to make their consumption an act of 'escapism', giving more value to the commodities. The 'exotic' values of Western brands appear to be significant to Japanese consumers, especially considering they have been facing a long lasting recession, and that most 'salary men' (and women) work very long hours leaving little leisure time. The Japanese have had a fascination for the West from a very early stage. Since the first encounters with foreign cultures in the 17th century, the *Japanese showed deep curiosity and fascination with everything European from Christianity to playing cards*'[560] instigating an initial and widespread interest for the Western world.

Japanese consumers have shown to prefer the representation of Caucasian rather than Asian models in advertising campaigns. This trend has been explained as demonstrating the Japanese's preference for Caucasians physical features, representing for them the 'ultimate' image of beauty. The increasing numbers of cosmetic treatments and plastic surgery undergone by the Japanese to obtain Caucasians physical features substantiated this theory: epicanthoplasty (eyelid construction), buttock augmentation, mammoplasty (breast implants), hair perms and colorations, skin whitening or artificial tans, etc. However, instead of taking the radical view that the Japanese view Caucasians physical features as ideal beauty traits and wish to resemble them, I would rather make the suggestion that Japanese consumers' preference for the representation of Caucasians models further demonstrates that they value the 'exotic' character of Western products. The exotic character of Western high-end brands has been central to their popularity, Kyojiro Hata, president of Louis Vuitton Japan[561] suggested that now that the French brand was so widely known (and owned) in Japan, was a threat to their future success: *'there is a risk that people consider us a Japanese brand'*. In other words, Hata insinuated that the French brand had to maintain its exotic, Western character to remain desirable. The French name of the Japanese label Comme des Garçons, reflects the appeal of the West, France in particular in Japan. This appeal for the exotic is not limited to the Eastern world, many Western brands have developed an image of the exotic in their own countries as the French fashion labels Creeks or Chevignon, which feed on stereotypes of the American Far-West and Rock'n' Roll fifties styles.

The importance of the exotic and 'feeling foreign' for the popularity of foreign brands in Japan represent the underlining reason why retailers engage with art. Sally Price, an art anthropologist, believed that each culture has a culture-specific aesthetic[562]. Price also made a distinction between *'culture-specific aesthetics'* and *'period-specific aesthetics'*. Art theorists such Michael Baxandall have shown that the reception of the art of particular periods in the history of Western art was dependent on how the art was 'seen' at the time, and these 'ways of seeing'

[560] Watanabe Toshio, 'Southern Barbarians or the Red-Haired People: the Japanese View of Exotic Europeans', in Drew, Joanna and Malbert, Roger (eds.), *Exotic Europeans*, The South Bank Centre, London, 1991, pp. 65 - 69
[561] Hata, Kyojiro, *Louis Vuitton Japan: the Building of Luxury*, Assouline, Paris, 2004, p. 73
[562] Price, Sally, 1989, cited in Gell, Alfred, *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, pp. 1 – 2

change over time[563]. This explains why brands have chosen to display contemporary art in their stores as way of facilitating the current position of their brand, demonstrating its relevance in global contemporary culture.

High fashion labels, particularly French fashion brands have strategically established spaces dedicated for art exhibitions and cultural events within their flagship stores to develop the consumption of their products as a cultural experience and with the objective to reinstate the 'exotic' character of their brands. Thus, in 2001, Hermès opened an art gallery and a museum in its Tokyo flagship. In 2004, Chanel established the Chanel Nexus Hall, dedicated for the display of art and cultural events such as concerts and film projections. Rather than adopting a new image tailored for Japanese consumers, mixing Western and Eastern identities, Chanel decided on emphasising its French character. In 2006, the centre curated 'A Woman's Obsession'[564], an exhibition of photographs by the French artist Chantal Stoman representing Japanese women and their '*obsession with shopping*'. The subject of this exhibition portrayed the Japanese woman as the 'other', from the point of view of a Westerner, reinforcing Chanel's identity as a Western brand (see *fig. 114*). This perspective could have somewhat alienated consumers, but could have also made them feel as if they were abroad, more specifically in France, where they are regarded as tourists and representing the 'other'. With this exhibition, Chanel did not simply represent the 'exotic' but made its consumers experience it by making them feel as 'others'.

This approach has also been utilised by Lacoste, the French high-end sportswear brand who in 2001, commissioned Wong Kar Wai, the acclaimed Chinese art-house film director to direct an advertising campaign (see video 5). Characteristic of the director's style, the advertisement bore some resemblance with Kar-Wai's award winning and most famous film: *In the Mood for Love*[565] (*Fa Yeung Nin Wa,* dir. Wong Kar Wai, 2000, HK). The narrative of the advertisement could also be interpreted along the lines of this film evoking a love affair. In this case, it appears to be a romantic encounter between an unknown Caucasian female (possibly French) and an Asian male, portrayed by Chang Chen, a popular Taiwanese actor (who has previously starred in Kar Wai's films[566]). Both characters can be viewed by consumers from a Western and Eastern perspective as 'exotic' and become aware of being seen as the 'other' in the eyes of cultures.

The reliance on the perception of Western luxury brands as exotic to confer value to luxury products is very delicate and can even be problematic. As described earlier once brands

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563 Baxandall, Michael (1972), in Gell, Alfred, *Art and Agency: an Anthropological Theory*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 2

564 'A Woman's Obsession', photographs by Chantal Stoman, Chanel Nexus Hall, Ginza, Tokyo, 7 - 26 February 2006

565 A French co-production, this film received a great success in France receiving the 'César' for the best film and being nominated for the 'Palmes d'Or' at the Cannes film festival in 2000.

566 Chang Chen has had an extensive acting career and has starred in few of Wong Kar Wai's films *Happy Together* (*Chun Gwong Cha Sit*, 1997, Hong Kong), *2046* (2004, China), and in '*The Hand*', part of the *Eros* (2004) collection of short films directed by international directors and in the music video for DJ Shadow, *Six Days* (2002)

fig. 114: Photograph by Chantal Stoman, part of the series 'A Woman's Obsession' which depicts Japanese women's relationship with high-end fashion brands. In this picture, Stoman contrasts traditional Japanese costume with contemporary international high-end-fashion.

become familiar, part of the retail landscape, consumed in mass, the exotic image of brands start to wane. Several issues can contribute to this diminishment. First, there is a crisis of the authenticity of high fashion as some brands have outsourced the manufacture of their products outside brands' originating countries. At the same, rising numbers of increasingly elaborate counterfeits have swamped the market not only affecting brand image and sales, but also brands' implementation strategies on emerging markets. The value of high-end fashion is also at risk through retailers' launch of cheaper, mass-market diffusion lines. The relationship high-end fashion retailers cultivate with art can redress to some extent these situations by enhancing consumers' perception of high-end fashion.

Due to high fashion brands' search for the cheapest production methods to increase their profit margins, some high fashion products are now manufactured outside brands' originating countries. Douglas Young, a London-trained Hong Kong designer and founder of GOD, a furniture and homeware brand observed that: '*a lot of foreign brands are made in Asia, shipped abroad, stamped with foreign label and then shipped back*'[567]. As Young suggested, high fashion retailers can no longer rely on the production of their products to be associated with a country's culture or heritage, inducing a crisis of the authenticity of the products. The links with brands' originating countries are therefore fabricated and could be deconstructed as the 'myths' uncovered by Roland Barthes in *Mythologies*[568]. Jane Pavitt examined this 'mythologisation' of brands, describing American brands such as Levi's or Coca-Cola which incorporate in their advertising campaigns a stereotypical image of America[569]. In this context, products become 'totems' as Barthes argued[570].

High fashion brands give the illusion of being attached to a country's culture and art plays a key role in sustaining this perception. The brand's association with its originating country is reinforced at two levels, domestically and internationally. Domestically, brands have to appear as part of the local culture. Flagship stores are often designed in traditional architecture as the Louis Vuitton store on the Champs-Élysées or the Dior store in avenue Montaigne. As stated earlier, in popular tourist cities such as Paris, some stores are designed to attract tourists more than locals. In the case of Louis Vuitton, it seems that whilst tourists shop in the Champ-Élysées store, Parisians prefer to shop in the Avenue Montaigne outlet. The personnel is also part of this myth, where shop assistants are hired as exhibits of the local culture. As described by Victor Azarya whilst referring to the Kenyan or people from other 'cultural tourism' regions often seen as tourist exhibits[571].

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[567] Koor, Anna, 'With GOD on his Side', *Blueprint,* October 2001, p. 99
[568] Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, Vintage, London, 2000
[569] Pavitt, Jane, 'In Goods We Trust?' in Pavitt, Jane (ed.), *Brand.new*, V&A Publications, London, 2000, p. 18 - 51
[570] Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies*, Vintage, London, 2000
[571] Azarya, Victor, 'Globalization and International Tourism in Developing Countries: Marginality as a Commercial Commodity', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 6, November 2004, p. 960

Advertising campaigns have a dual function. By using national stars as brand ambassadors, retailers have been able to simultaneously attract and be relevant to the local market while sustaining an exotic character in the eyes of foreigners. For instance, Chanel has used Vanessa Paradis, the French actress and singer, as the face of its perfume 'Coco Mademoiselle' (see *fig. 115* and *116).* A national star, she is instantly recognised by the French, but probably not to foreigner consumers. However, they can still appreciate her beauty. In this context, the star serves different purposes. For the French, aware of her career and personal life, Paradis connotes different ideas (talent or motherhood). However, to the foreign consumers who may not know her, her identity and personality become 'abstracted'. She is only seen on a superficial level as 'beautiful', 'feminine' and 'Western'.

Internationally, most high fashion brands receive an endorsement from governmental representation abroad, high-end fashion stores' opening parties are conventionally attended by high-ranking members of the embassy. In fact, the opening party of the Louis Vuitton Omotesando store in Tokyo was followed by an 'official' reception in Tokyo's national museum: '*converting the grounds into five tents, each offering a taste of a country's cuisine, ambience, and entertainment – for example a full desert scene was recreated in the Turkish tent, complete with a camel attendance*[572]. The opening party of the Hermès store in Shanghai was, according to Chadha and Husband, *'one of the most talked-about parties (...), a spectacular with high-tech trapeze "elastonauts" flown in from Paris and hooked to the roof of Plaza 66's cavernous atrium – people gasped in disbelief as they "flew" from the air. Equally spectacular was the sit-down dinner for 800 guests that followed, hosted by the French consulate in the grounds of an old French colonial house'*[573]. Chanel also worked with local bodies to promote France in Japan. Chanel worked in collaboration with the French institute in Japan as it organised an exhibition of photographs by Stoman, which were subsequently exhibited at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF)[574], ultimately giving further credibility to the artistic value of Stoman's work and Chanel's involvement with art for exhibiting it first.

Even architecture has been exploited to evoke the exotic. Ralph Lauren's flagship store in Tokyo stands out because of its traditional Italian architecture (see *fig. 117*). Even brand names are highly important to sustain association of brands with their originating countries. The personnel speak foreign languages or in the very least have been trained to pronounce the brand's name accurately. The stores themselves are referred to in French as the 'Maison Hermès' in Tokyo. Names of product ranges remain in French as in Agnès b's collections. Her international catalogues are bilingual (in French and in the local language). The Agnès b Summer 2005 catalogue, entitled *été* 05, featured the caption: *'very French'* on its cover, demonstrating the significance of the French character of the brand to market itself. This has

[572] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 262
[573] ibid., p. 158
[574] 'A Woman's Obsession', photographs by Chantal Stoman, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, 11 November - 3 December 2006

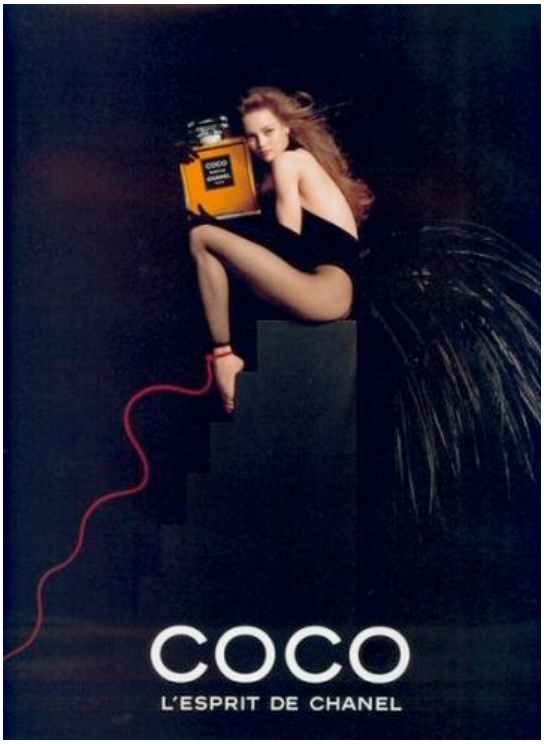

fig. 115: Vanessa Paradis was used as the face of Coco in 1990s, the Chanel perfume, from an early stage in her career. This long-standing relationship with the brand gives more credibility to Paradis' appreciation of the Chanel and its products.

fig. 116: As Vanessa Paradis' career evolved so did her relationship with Chanel. Paradis became a brand ambassador, endorsing other Chanel products.

fig. 117: The design of the Tokyo Ralph Lauren store was inspired by traditional Western architecture to match the 'exotic Western' image of the brand in Japan

been done to the extent that French brands project an ethnocentric image, making French culture superior, a standard to attain.

However, there is evidence to suggest that consumers, in particular the Japanese have been presented with over-stereotypical or fictional images of the West to the extent that they are not even representative, even creating a clash between the image presented and the reality. This is evident in the 'Paris syndrome'[575] which represents the psychological shock faced from disappointment from overly-high expectations of Paris. This syndrome, identified almost twenty years ago by Doctor Hiroaki Ota, a Japanese Paris-based psychiatrist, head of the Franco-Japanese Association of Psychiatry and Social Science[576], believes that it affects up to one hundred Japanese tourists a year[577] (with up to a dozen requiring hospitalisation!). Japanese women in their 30s, on their first trip abroad more predominantly suffer from this syndrome. Coincidentally, this profile relates to luxury goods' most important consumers: the 'parasite singles'. This term, coined by Masahiro Yamada[578], professor at Tokyo Gakugei University was used to refer to the estimated 8.3 million single women in the 25 – 34 age bracket, living with their parents; because they have fewer responsibilities, these women have high levels of disposable income and more leisure time. My assumption is that in this context 'parasite singles' would be more likely to be receptive and aware of the arts, as they are more likely to have some free time and cash, which could explain why high-end fashion retailers try to 'seduce' these consumers with art.

Art is employed as part of the myth that brands are exclusive. Indeed, there is a tension between high fashion retailers' desire for their brand to be perceived as exclusive while in reality, to maximise profits, retailers become involved in product line extensions, diffusion lines with widespread distribution, which ultimately devaluates the brand's value. This is known as the exclusive-inclusive paradox[579]. In other words, the less accessible, luxury commodities appear to be, the more desired they become. However, scarcity is no longer an attribute of luxury. Serge Brunschwig, former managing Director of Louis Vuitton believed that the French high fashion brand established its luxurious character on the high quality and craftsmanship of its products and its '*century and half of French heritage*'. Many other brands also rely on their history to develop their images. This is why brands attach so much importance to being linked with the heritage and culture of their originating nation. Art can facilitate the

[575] The 'Paris syndrome' was named in reference to the 'Stendhal syndrome', named after the 19th French author, Marie-Henri Beyle (1783 - 1842), better known as Stendhal, who was positively psychologically overwhelmed by the beauty of Florence, Italy during his first visit in 1817.
[576] Association Franco-Japonaise de Psychiatrie et Sciences Humaines.
[577] 12 patients on average annually are actually hospitalised: Wyatt, Caroline, '"Paris Syndrome" Strikes Japanese', *BBC News Online*, 20 December 2006: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/Europe/6197921.stm> (last accessed 18 January 2007)
[578] Masahiro Yamada, 'Parasaito Shinguru No Jidai' ('The Age of "Parasite" Singles'): <http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/~kt1980/book/parasite_single.html> (last accessed 3 January 2006); and Masahiro Yamada, 'The Growing Crop of Spoiled Singles', *Japan Echo*, vol. 27, no. 3, June 2000: <http://www.japanecho.co.jp/docs/html/270314.html> (last accessed 3 January 2006)
[579] Moore, Christopher. M, Fernie, John and Burt, Steve, 'Brands Without Boundaries: The Internationalisation of the Designer Retailer's Brand', *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 34, no. 8, p. 919

associations with a nation's heritage. And, it can be used to symbolise the unique character of their brands.

Art enables a better perception of authenticity. Art is seen as original, and unique and used by high fashion to confer these characteristics to their commodities. Authenticity represents an important attribute of high fashion, particularly due to increasing spread of counterfeits. Sales of high fashion counterfeits could be as high as sales of authentic items. Although as Hilton et al remarked estimates of counterfeits are probably an understatement of the problem as many cases do not reach the public domain, in most cases, no legal action is taken as issues are settled out of court[580]. And as fakes are increasingly elaborate, art is employed to elevate the shopping experience and help consumers distinguish the high fashion retail experience from others. Counterfeiting represents a large segment of the fashion business, both legitimate and illegitimate. Hilton et al distinguished four types of fake luxury goods:

- *Vanity fakes*, copies that have a low quality and that can be easily recognised as fakes. Such products are damaging to the brand image although they are not considered as directly affecting sales as they are generally purchased by consumers who would not otherwise be able to purchase the authentic products.

- *Overruns* represents fakes that are made from left over material of the authentic products, that have a better quality than *vanity fakes* and that can be detrimental for sales.

- *Condoned copies* refer to imitations of high-end fashion designs produced by other, usually mid to low-range designers and fashion houses. *Condoned copies* include mass-produced 'replicates' made by high-street fashion chains made by low to mid-range fashion brands at affordable prices. This is legitimate and even accepted by fashion houses who benefit from the publicity and who see it as nurturing consumers to aspire to purchase the 'real' thing.

- *Copies made by the fashion houses themselves* are products that can hardly be recognised as fakes, they represent the cheaper versions of the most exclusive pieces, made for mass-production, yet still sold at high prices.

Although to some extent, counterfeits play a role in spreading the popularity of brands, once they become more elaborate, they start to represent a real threat to the sales of authentic luxury commodities. As Chadha and Husband explained, counterfeiters have become more sophisticated as consumers become more aware of luxury brands. 'Fake high-end brand stores' are being opened by highly organised counterfeiters within department stores of provincial Chinese cities, where the entire retail presentation of brands are copied and stocked with a dubious mix of real and fake products[581]. This example indicates the importance of the store visit in giving authenticity and credibility to luxury goods. With fake luxury brand stores, consumers are not only fooled about the authenticity of the commodities, but of being in a

[580] Hilton, Brian, Choi, Chong Ju and Chen, Stephen, 'The Ethics of Counterfeiting in the Fashion Industry: Quality, Credence and Profit Issues', *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 55, 2004, p. 349

[581] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 278

'genuine' branded environment. To prevent such situation, retailers have altered their global retail image, the store experience becomes an important factor and strategy to the image of brands. Art can contribute to make the store experience unique and distinguishable. The presence of art in store environments can contribute to increasing the perceived value of the commodities.

High fashion retailers have used art as part of a strategy to 'deverbalise' commercial messages. Globalisation has provoked the multiplication of markets and the diversification of the consumer profile. Consumers can no longer be regarded according to homogenous groups sharing the same identities and preferences. Following demographic data has become unreliable: for instance, 18-25 year olds in one part of the world are very different from consumers in the same age group according to de Mooji in *Global Marketing and Advertising*[582]. Retailers have therefore been faced with the difficulty of trying to reach increasing numbers of consumers but with distinct, and occasionally conflicting, cultural references. So, to avoid confusion and reach maximum numbers of consumers across cultural and language barriers, retailers have focused on visual communication, relying on consumers' visual literacy[583]. Commercial messages are now predominantly constructed along visual codes, with an emphasis on: logos, pictogram, signs or icons.

Although, this deverbalisation of commercial messages has been regarded as part of a concern for brands to be more democratic and accessible to the masses, the use of visual language overcoming illiteracy[584], I would argue that high fashion retailers' use of art as a visual language fulfils a distinct purpose. Art is being employed as the most elaborate of visual languages, to make complex visual references, which can be only understood and recognised by an educated elite. It also demonstrates that there is a hierarchy of visual codes, engaging different degrees of proficiency to read and understand non-verbal communication.

The most basic visual elements: icons and pictorial diagrams, which tend to be very simple, so they can be understood by the greatest numbers of people across cultures, justifying their so-called universal character. Next are symbols, which are more complex and less widely understood, as they are referential and receive their meaning according to the context in which they are placed. In other words, symbols can have pluralistic meanings and can only be understood according to a particular context. Symbols are not only 'read' but analysed, and require familiarity with visual conventions in which the meaning of symbols are construed, as demonstrated by Barthes, Berger[585] or Williamson[586] in their respective works. And although visual language is seen as facilitating global communication, signs are deeply embedded in their

[582] de Mooji, Marieke, *Global Marketing and Advertising – Understanding Cultural Paradox*, (2nd ed), Sage publications, London, 2005, p. 21
[583] Evamy, Michael, 'Iconic Boom', *Blueprint*, June 2003, pp. 62 – 66
[584] ibid., pp. 62 - 66
[585] Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin, London, 1972
[586] Williamson, Judith, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd., London, 1995

local culture. In fact, de Mooji viewed semiotic habits as defining culture: '*culture is the shared ability to recognize, decode, and produce signs and symbols, so culture also is a combination of semiotic habits. Differences in semiotic habits delineate cultures*'[587]. Following this idea, the visual language used or created by corporations also established a corporate culture. Fashion companies in particular have been increasingly using logos[588]. Brands themselves can be viewed as symbols, especially high fashion brands that are conventionally accepted as status-indicators. Art as employed by high fashion retailers represents the most complex form of visual language. It is also referential, requiring not only an awareness of high culture but an understanding of it. Retailers use high culture to target a niche market, not only wealthy consumers, but those also part of an educated elite. These consumers represent for high fashion brands the best 'role models'. These consumers are not only likely to have a high-spending power but they are also to be part of the lifestyle brands seek to be associated with. And as first discussed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, people are more likely to engage in specific activities according to their economic situation and social background. In this perspective, art is used by retailers to avoid an unwanted clientele of people that may not be representative of their image. In fact, popularity with the 'wrong clientele' could be greatly detrimental to high fashion brands. For instance, in England, Burberry has greatly suffered from its association with the so-called 'chavs' as so did Lacoste in France, with its popularity amongst the *racaille* (French expression for thugs).

The display of art within stores is part of a long tradition in Japan. Department stores in particular have been very active in promoting an awareness of the arts in Japan. The role of department stores (referred to as *depâto* in Japanese) as patrons of culture in Japanese has been investigated by a number of Western scholars, notably Millie Creighton[589], Brian Moeran[590] and Thomas Havens[591]. In her study of *depâto*, Creighton concluded that: '*their employees and customers agree that department stores in Japan do not just exist to sell goods or display merchandise; they offer 'something more'. (...) it includes an entertainment and an educational function; it involves the sponsorship of the performing arts, and attempt to revitalize community crafts; it offers an attempt to fulfil the cultural and intellectual needs of the populace, not just their desire for consumer goods*'[592]. Creighton explained that *'department stores have a primary role in the circulation of art in Japan'* as *'providing cultural or artistic treasures is related back to the belief that merchants have the responsibility to respond to social needs'*[593]. Moeran observed that exhibitions in department stores do make any

[587] de Mooji, Marieke, *Global Marketing and Advertising – Understanding Cultural Paradox*, (2nd ed), Sage publications, London, 2005, p. 45
[588] ibid., p. 21
[589] Creighton, Millie, 'Something More: Japanese Department Stores' Marketing of 'A Meaning Human Life', in Macpherson, Kerrie. L (ed.), *Asian Department Stores*, Curzon Press, Richmond, 1998, pp. 206 - 230
[590] Moeran, Brian, 'The Birth of the Japanese Department Store', in Macpherson, Kerrie. L (ed.), *Asian Department Stores*, Curzon Press, Richmond, 1998, pp. 141 – 170
[591] Havens, Thomas. R. H, *Artists and Patrons in Postwar Japan: Dance, Music, Theatre, and the Visual Arts, 1955 - 1980*, Princeton University Press, Guilford, 1982; and Havens, Thomas, R. H, *Architects of Affluence: The Tsutsumi Family and the Seibu-Saison Enterprises in the Twentieth Century Japan*, Council on East Asian Studies - Harvard University / Harvard University Press, London, 1994
[592] Creighton, Millie, 'Something More: Japanese Department Stores' Marketing of 'A Meaning Human Life', in Macpherson, Kerrie. L (ed.), *Asian Department Stores*, Curzon Press, Richmond, 1998, p. 206
[593] ibid., p. 210

profit, and Creighton argued that *depâto* follow an ethic, and use the exposure from exhibitions to attract consumer's attention[594].

Japanese consumers are therefore comfortable with the presence of art in a commercial context. High-end department stores in particular, have been known for their close and distinctive relation with art[595]. The most renowned Japanese department stores established art galleries early in their history. However, the recent unannounced closures of art galleries in the prominent department stores, Isetan and Seibu could anticipate the end of this relation. Although no explanations were given for the closures, it can be assumed that the galleries were not commercial viable and no longer part of the image of these stores. Japanese department stores have been experiencing financial difficulties and the closure of the galleries allowed the expansion of the retail surface, crucial to the financial viability of these stores. However, because of its long-lasting nature, younger consumers could view the relationship between art and department stores as being 'old-fashioned'. This is why there are clear distinctions between the way Western high fashion brands and Japanese department stores display and engage with art. For a start, a key difference is that works of art exhibited within Japanese department stores tend to be within commercial galleries, with the aim to be sold. However, in high fashion stores, art bears has no commercial purpose. Because of this distinction, consumers come across the works of art with distinct motivations. In high fashion stores, art is 'encountered', 'found' almost coincidentally by consumers, as it is rather unlikely that customers would visit high fashion stores only to see works of art. Consumers' chief objective is to shop, the 'cultural' character of their visit is only a secondary. This was in fact central to the argument for the denial of a dispensation which would have allowed Louis Vuitton to open its Champ-Élysées store on Sundays[596]. In department stores, consumers are expected to be connoisseurs, with a prior knowledge of the works of art as they are likely to be interested in purchasing them. Consumers are also usually aware of exhibition themes prior to visiting to the gallery. Because department stores are concerned in establishing sales, the galleries' personnel has an expertise, capable of answering customers' questions regarding the pieces exhibited. In high fashion stores, the personnel are often not aware of the origin and nature of the works of art displayed within the stores. Only high fashion brands' independent galleries have trained staff with knowledge of the work of art and the companies' relation with art. This discrepancy lies in the fact that in department stores' galleries, sales assistants are hired to

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[594] Moeran, Brian, 'The Birth of the Japanese Department Store', in Macpherson, Kerrie. L (ed.), *Asian Department Stores*, Curzon Press, Richmond, 1998, p. 161

[595] Havens, Thomas. R. H, *Artists and Patrons in Postwar Japan: Dance, Music, Theatre, and the Visual Arts, 1955-1980*, Princeton University Press, Guilford, Surrey, 1982; Havens, Thomas, R. H, *Architects of Affluence: The Tsutsumi Family and the Seibu-Saison Enterprises in the Twentieth Century Japan*, Council on East Asian Studies- Harvard University / Harvard University Press, London, 1994; Moeran, Brian, 'The Birth of the Japanese Department Store', in Macpherson, Kerrie. L (ed.), *Asian Department Stores*, Curzon Press, Richmond, 1998, pp. 141 – 156 and Aso, Noriko, review of Rikiya, Miyano, *Etoki Hyakkaten 'Bunkashi* (An Illustrated Cultural Record of Department Stores), Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha, Tokyo, 2002 in the *Social Science Japan Journal*, 26 October 2005, pp. 298 - 300

[596] Collomp, Florentin and Visseyrias, Mathilde, 'Le Vuitton des Champs-Élysées Prié de Fermer le Dimanche', *Le Figaro*, 1 June 2006: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/eco-entreprises/20060601.FIG000000206_le_vuitton_des_champs_elysees_prie_de_fermer_le_dimanche.html> (last accessed 22 March 2007); and Ducourtieux, Cécile and Lauer, Stéphane, 'La Justice Ordonne la Fermeture le Dimanche de Soixante-Quatre Magasins d'Usine Center' *Le Monde*, 16 June 2006: <http://www.lemonde.fr/web/artcile/0,1-0@2-3234,36-783934,0.html> (last accessed 26 March 2007)

help sell the works of art, whereas in high fashion outlets, the staff is only employed to sell clothes or accessories.

The types of works of art presented also differ. In high fashion outlets, only contemporary pieces are presented. Art is part of a branding strategy. Works of art must be innovative and original; qualities retailers seek to transmit to their own goods. In department stores, works of art tend not be contemporary, rather traditional art is privileged. The display of art is not restricted to the visual arts but includes the decorative arts, in particular Japanese traditional pieces: ceramics, glass, metal or wood. In fact, the display of traditional art makes the popularity of department store galleries, who organise annually or bi-annually exhibitions of traditional Japanese art to display pieces considered part of the national heritage. Works of art in these exhibitions, usually not for sale, are well received, establishing galleries' returning visitors. Japanese department stores have played an important role in developing appreciation for high culture. Some stores have organised exhibitions of the calibre of national public institutions[597]. The reputations of stores have also helped develop the reputation of emerging new artists.

Although large investments have certainly been made by high fashion brands, works of art are often poorly presented, not given any special care. Works of art in high fashion stores are displayed almost in an *ad hoc* manner, in the same way that are the commodities. The art is displayed as part of the stores' interior architecture and design. There is little concern for the preservation of the pieces, the lighting is not lowered, and works are only occasionally labelled, altogether giving works of art more of a decorative use. This contrasts with Japanese department stores, which present works of art in museum like conditions: inside glass cabinets or cases, with dimmed lighting, temperature-controlled environments and with informative labels. However, although less care is given to works of art displayed within high-end fashion store, retailers do not want their stores to become substitute for public cultural institutions, but rather to make the store visit more entertaining. The display of art in high fashion stores is more effective in ameliorating consumers' experiences as pieces are 'more immediate', presented in less 'conceited' and less 'preserved' ways than in public cultural institutions.

Art has been employed by retailers because, across cultures, art tends to be the objects perceived as having the highest value. In fact, in most cultures, art is the reserve of the elite. Retailers aspire for their products to be perceived as works of art, to enhance the luxurious character of their brands. Especially as described earlier, luxury products are built on the 'exclusive-inclusive paradox', with the image of being exclusive whilst in reality being mass-produced.

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[597] During 1954-1979, nineteen of the fifty largest art exhibits in Tokyo took place at department stores, cited in Havens, Thomas. R. H, *Artists and Patrons in Postwar Japan: Dance, Music, Theatre, and the Visual Arts, 1955-1980*, Princeton University Press, Guilford, Surrey, 1982, p. 140

With notable exceptions, art is hardly ever mass-produced which would in fact risk it being not defined or recognised as such. Thus, art is usually original and retailers have used this characteristic to enable better differentiation from other brands. This is important in the context of globalisation, which has been viewed as weakening local cultures in favour of a homogenised global culture. The widespread and global distribution of generic brands and products have been seen as forming standardisation or, 'the McDonaldization of society', a term coined by George Ritzer in 1996[598] to describe the process by which he believes society is taking on the characteristics of fast-food chains. The phenomenon of 'McDonaldization' is connected with the process of 'Americanization' as U.S. corporations were the first to make their products widely available on a global scale. America represented the pre-eminent post-war model of material culture, the distribution and purchase of American products called for the adoption of American capitalist values. Today, the purchase of American products can still have political or ideological aspects, explaining why the most famous and oldest American brands found globally, such as Coca-Cola or Nike were particularly affected by the anti-American sentiment following the onset of the Iraq war.

Both Ali Yakhlef and Marc Augé see globalisation as creating standardisation not only in terms of object but in terms of space. Augé described *'non-places'* as characteristic of globalisation. He defined 'non-places' as places that have no relation to their local culture: *'if a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place*[599]. Such spaces therefore include homogenous environments such as airports and branches from global chains of restaurants, hotels or shops such as McDonalds' and Starbucks Coffee. Augé particularly examined retail spaces to illustrate what he perceived as non-places. Yakhlef saw such spaces as establishing a '*virtual culture*' creating familiarity for those outside the local culture: '*spaces that ensure that travellers never feel lost no matter where they happen to be, and that they belong to a community defined by mobility*'. Such spaces '*gain a sense of orientation*' so they can be readily recognised, facilitating navigation in the global space. However, this is essential Westerncentric.

The view that the non-place can feel familiar is true only from a Western point of view. For non-Westerners such 'non-places' could be seen as exotic, offering an alternative to their 'places'. Rather than feeling familiar, for some people these places are attached to the 'other' culture. McDonald, for instance, which is often used to illustrate the negative effect of globalisation and the homogenisation of the retail landscape, is a generic brand only to the extent that it offers generic products within a standardised retail environment. However, McDonald, as one of the ultimately Western perceived brand, it is likely that some non-Westerns find it 'exotic'.

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[598] Ritzer, George, *The McDonaldization of Society*, (New Century Edition), Sage Publications Inc., London, 2000
[599] Augé, Marc, *Non Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso, London, 2000, pp. 77 – 78

Similarly, Yakhlef's description of generic brands as forming spaces that is '*acontextual, alocal and ahistorical*'[600] is only partially true. 'Non-places', such as airports or shopping centres may be appear as 'generic' from a Western perspective, but not for non-Westerners, for whom such spaces are signifiers of the 'exotic other', Western culture. This is the case for high-end fashion retail stores, whose brands although available across the world, have different meanings and values on a local level. Nonetheless, international high brands' retail outlets can be considered as 'non-places' to the extent that they can be perceived as 'detemporalized and deterritorialized'[601]. Stores are developed to follow the volatile nature of fashion. They therefore resemble contemporary art galleries, 'white-cubes', which are designed as 'non-spaces' to enable the reception of diverse works of art. Fashion stores and art galleries both need to be 'blanked' out to facilitate the projection of new images, new styles in the case of fashion and new artists or works of art in the case of art galleries. Supporting the view of high fashion outlets non-places, is the purposeful character Augé gave non-places, spaces that engage visitors into 'contractual' relationships: '*the user of a non-place is in contractual relations with it (or with the powers that govern it). He is reminded, when necessary, that the contract exists. One element in this is the way the non-place is used: the ticket he has bought, the card he will have to show at the tollbooth, even the trolley he trundles round the supermarket, are all more or less clear signs of it*'[602]. What characterises these spaces is their contents rather than their structures, which is why they have been so standardised. Yakhlef believed that this was key to the success of international brands:

> Global capitalism's success or survival is dependent on its ability to disembody and eliminate contextual variances, the aim being to produce generic spaces that promise global currency, recognition, and functionality. Embodiment and context specificity would narrow its range of application, militate against consistency, and incur extra costs. Conceived of as generic spaces, which are liberated from their contextual, cultural settings, and spatio-temporal coordinates, global brands are meant to be easily transportable and readily removable from one to another[603].

The standardisation of retail environments appears to work best for low to mid-range fashion brands. In fact, I would distinguish two trends. On the one hand, numerous companies have focused on developing standardised retail environments to enhance consumer awareness and familiarity, and facilitate the internationalisation of their brands. This is particularly the case of low to mid range fashion brands. In most of these brands' outlets, there are no variations in the interior design, Yakhlef illustrated this process through the study of Best Western hotels throughout the world, which he identified as creating a homogenisation of needs and consumption patterns. Yakhlef described each hotels as having the same colour soaps and towels[604].

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[600] Yakhlef, Ali, 'Global Brands as Embodied "Generic Spaces", *Space & Culture*, vol. 7, no. 2, May 2004, p. 243
[601] ibid, p. 247
[602] Augé, Marc, *Non Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity,* Verso, London, 2000, p. 101
[603] Yakhlef, Ali, 'Global Brands as Embodied "Generic Spaces", *Space & Culture*, vol. 7, no. 2, May 2004, p. 243
[604] ibid., p. 243

Stores are interchangeable, obliterating the local culture or brands' originate culture. For instance, outlets of the Spanish high street brands Zara or Mango clearly fall under the definition of 'non-places'. They have, throughout the world, the same features: stores are designed with the same interiors, offer the same products, sale assistants wear the same uniforms and there is no feeling or demonstration of the Spanish origins of these brands. Stores are cultureless. Yet, uniform retail formats become brand attributes, part of their trademarks, as Benetton, Gap, Ralph Lauren and Pizza Hut, which are envisioned through their retail environments. In this context, stores become like logos, visual representations of brand.

On the other hand, whereas mid to low range fashion brands focus on raising consumer awareness and brand recognition, high fashion brands have put their emphasis on differentiation. In the past few years, high fashion brands have invested in making their stores less generic and homogenised. Each store must feel unique. Hence, as described in chapter 2, high-end fashion brands have heavily invested in high architecture to make their store distinctive. However, it was felt that the homogeneity of stores' environment fell in the banal, having a negative effect on the brand image.

Thus, in 2001, Prada opened the first of a series of stores that would 'transform' the shopping experience. This could be seen as part of the evolution of the internationalisation of brands. First, brands open generic stores to create familiarity, and once they are firmly implemented on a market, with widespread recognition, brands seek to differentiate themselves from other brands and even, from having only a static image. High fashion brands benefit from large advertising budgets and do not rely on their store to generate consumer awareness and brand recognition. In fact, the success of these stores showed that retail differentiation enables better brand recognition than generic retail environments. High fashion brand recognition is developed with a higher degree of sophistication. High fashion brands no longer adhere to a proscribed retail image; only a 'branded atmosphere' is recreated within the stores. For instance, although each Comme des Garçons outlet in the world is unique, designed differently, there is a common feel. Although different products are stocked, to suit local demand and preferences; a standardisation of the service can be felt. The delivery of goods becomes standardised instead of the retail environment. Although sale assistants do not wear uniforms, there are visible and common traits amongst the personnel. Members of staff appear to be selected for their individual and eccentric fashion styles. Stores are no longer about a branded image but a branded experience.

This new strategy adopted by high fashion stores goes against the perception of retail outlets as 'non-places'. Stores are not generic or homogenised. The display of art within stores confer on them characteristics of 'places', in other words, stores can become 'contextual, local and

historical'. This is necessary as consumers show the need to be in 'places' following the visit of 'non-places'. Non-places can be intimidating rather than comforting. As Augé puts it: '*in the concrete reality of today's world, places and spaces, places and non-places is never absent from any place. Place becomes a refuge to the habitué of non-places*'[605]. Art can enable the 'localisation' of the 'non-place' as the Stoman exhibition in the Chanel centre, which merged the local Japanese culture with the French perspective in which Chanel was founded. It becomes historical through art as art is mostly 'dated', representative of its era and culture. Art can therefore significantly modify the store experience. I would even argue that the display of art in outlets helps unite between the 'non-place' and 'place', creating a tertiary culture. The anti-globalisation discourse as been weakened as it has been shown that globalisation does not create a standardisation but a complexity of cultures which Ulf Hannerz referred to as a '*creolisation*' of culture[606]. Societies become more complex as people uphold their traditions whilst adopting elements of new cultures that are more relevant for their own culture. In this perspective, globalisation does not create generic brands but more diverse images and different consumers.

The '*trickle-down*' theory of the dissemination of fashion proposed by Georg Simmel in 1904[607] and is, according Chadha and Husband still relevant to the Japanese market, '*the core of the trickle-down theory remains relevant to Asian society today*[608]', although as stated by Chadha and Husband it is '*no longer a natural sociological process - it is carefully engineered by luxe companies*'[609]. High fashion retailers rely on the trickle-down model for the adoption and diffusion of their commodities. Retailers expect that the upper strata will influenced the lower strata of the social system in choosing brands and adopting fashion styles. In this perspective, retailers believe that the lower classes imitate the styles adhered to by the elite in an attempt to give the impression of their adherence to the higher classes of society. As fashion styles are adopted by the wider spectrum of society and become too common, the upper strata follows new styles to be distinguished from the lower strata. Fashion is therefore about both status-marking and aspiration. However, the Japanese market is unique and there appears to lesser degree of distinction between classes in terms of fashion. Japanese society is famously cohesive and the antagonist views opposing consumer sovereignty against consumer persuasion do not apply at such an extreme level in Japan. Consumers are neither persuaded and nor are they sovereign. Rather the Japanese consumption of luxury brands is the sign of intense peer pressure. Consumers appear to be influenced by other consumers: '*when a fashion trend occurs in Japan, it spreads very fast and becomes universal, and almost everyone will be wearing it. This a phenomenon that is unique to the homogenous Japanese society and rarely found in other societies*[610]. In other words, Japanese consumers across social classes will be more likely to follow the same styles, but the extent to the adherence will reveal signs of affluence. For instance, the lower

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605 Augé, Marc, *Non Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso, London, 2000, p. 107

606 The concept of 'creolisation' of culture was first discussed by Ulf Hannerz in 1992: Hannerz, Ulf, *Cultural Complexity*, Columbia University Press, 1992, pp. 264 - 265

607 Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 5, September 2006, p. 804

608 Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 94

609 ibid., p. 251

610 Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, September 2006, vol. 54, no. 5, pp. 789 – 790

classes will afford the less expensive products from high fashion brands' diffusion lines as purses, wallets or scarves, while members of the social elite will distinguish themselves by purchasing the more expensive items, and even having made-to-order items. So unlike the traditional models of the diffusion of fashion, Japanese consumers favour homogenisation. High classes will not change styles to differentiate themselves from the lower classes but will only seek the highest quality products within particular styles. This is demonstrated by the fact that Japanese have remained faithful to luxury brands for long periods although their popularity grew. For instance, Chadha and Husband found that a staggering 94 percent of Tokyo women in their 20s own a Louis Vuitton piece[611], 92 percent own Gucci, 57 percent own Prada and 51 percent own Chanel[612].

These figures demonstrate that the traditional model of trickle down does not truly apply. Malcolm Gladwell's *'tipping point'* model (1999) which draws on the principle of disease epidemics to explain social epidemics appears better adapted to define the Japanese consumption of high fashion[613]. Following this model, fashion could be compared to an infectious virus, which is then initially 'contaminate' a number segment of people who then 'transmit' it to larger spectrum. Gladwell observed three factors to this model: *'the infectious virus itself, the people who transmit the virus, or the environment in which the virus is operating'*[614]. The diffusion of high fashion trends in Japan follow this pattern. First, trends emerge within the elite and becomes exposed to the rest of the public because these trends are adopted by a group of people that I would refer to as 'influencers', part of the upper strata and social elite, as celebrities, artists, journalists, and rapidly 'affecting' other social groups. In the case of the Japanese market, the people who are more likely to 'transmit' high fashion 'viruses' appear to be the 'parasite singles'. Then, parasite singles imitate these trends in an attempt to climb the social ladder. Parasite single represent the best target group, as the most important consumers of luxury goods, they are receptive to high fashion, informed and a high spenders. Finally, the styles will *'trickle down'* to the rest of the population who will seek to fit in. This model bears resemblance to the *'trickle across'* theory proposed by Herbert Blumer in 1969 of fashion 'sliding' sideways from group to group[615].

Moreover, confirming the idea that parasite singles are a driving force of the diffusion of fashion in Japan is the fact the dissemination of fashion in Japan appears to be female-dominated. This has been demonstrated in Yuniya Kawamura's study of teenage girls, which she identified as the driving the subcultural fashion phenomena. In fact, parallels can be draw between the consumption patterns of Japanese teens and parasite singles. I would suggest that

[611] According to a survey conducted in September 2003, 44 percent of Japanese women between the ages 15 to 59 own a Louis Vuitton bag, cited in Hata, Kyojiro, *Louis Vuitton Japan: the Building of Luxury*, Assouline, Paris, 2004, p. 70
[612] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 1
[613] ibid., p. 252
[614] Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, September 2006, vol. 54, no. 5, p. 804
[615] Aspers, Patrick and Skov, Lise, Encounters in the Global Fashion Business, *Current Sociology*, September 2006, vol. 54, no. 5, p. 804

the 'parasite singles' are most probably former *Kogals*[616], *Ganguros*, *gothic Lolitas* or *Yamambas*, some of the original and most significant subcultures or fashion movements which first emerged in the 1990s. Although Kawamura believed that: '*teens see the assertion of individual identity as more important and meaningful than that of group identity, which used to be the key concept in Japanese culture*'[617]. It has also been demonstrated that in fact, teenage girls were also driven to consume to 'fit in': '*if you can get 5 percent of girls to buy a particular item, soon almost everyone else will*'[618]. While teens feel pressured to fit in with their schoolmates, it is likely that parasite singles feel the need fit in with their work colleagues.

Another distinction of the Japanese market as observed Kawamura, there is a '*direct relationship between the consumption and production of fashion*[619]'. In the same way that Japanese teens influence the production of fashion, luxury brands could be influenced by the consumption of 'parasite singles', their consumption patterns directly influenced or shaped production. Louis Vuitton's Murakami bag for instance seemed particularly targeted for the Japanese clientele, and for young women in particular.

In fact, the context of globalisation, rather than seeing fashion or trends as spreading across groups or classes, 'infecting' people. The diffusion of fashion could seen on a global scale, as spreading across the same groups or classes across geographic regions. Kawamura wrote that fashion styles adopted by Japanese teens can influence other teens in the Asian region, and I would argue possibly, across the world. Kawamura reported a buyer from Hong Kong saying: '*telling a teen customer that an item is popular in Japan is a big selling point in Hong Kong*'[620]. Indeed, in the same way, the phenomenon of 'parasite single does not appear to be limited to Japan, as in across Asia, the biggest spenders on high fashion are young women between the ages of 20 and 30[621].

Art may come as a first sign of what Chadha and Husband anticipate as the '*super-elitization of luxury*'[622]. They expect that higher classes will want more from high fashion, initiating a return to the original characteristics of fashion: exclusive and with high quality. Chadha and Husband therefore predict a revival of haute couture, as the highest spending consumers will seek handcrafted, made to order and customised products, rather than machine-made and mass-produced items. This particular pattern of consumption represents the last of a five-stage

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616 'Kogal' – term associated with the term Enjo-Kosai, which translates literally as assisted dating. Teen girls meet older men for sex in exchange for expensive designer label gifts or money to finance their shopping spree, cited in Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, September 2006, vol. 54, no. 5

617 Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, September 2006, vol. 54, no. 5, p. 787

618 Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 82

619 Kawamura, Yuniya, 'Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion', *Current Sociology*, September 2006, vol. 54, no. 5, p. 800

620 ibid., p. 785

621 Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006, p. 20

622 ibid., p. 284

model of the evolution of the consumption of luxury products in Asia[623] (see table 3). Chadha and Husband believe that these five stages will be followed by other countries in the region (see table 4). However, I would propose a 6th stage to this model: a 'distinction' stage. As Luxury brands will become more widespread on the Asian market and that the most affluent consumers will be experiencing the 'super-elitization of luxury', I expect that consumers will seek further ways to distinguish themselves and demarcate their status. I envisage that consumers will want to demonstrate not only their wealth but their education. Signs of 'education' will become a way of distinguishing 'old' and 'new' money. As remarked by Chadha and Husband, Asian consumers' relation with luxury is still rather novel: *'this is Asia's first and second generation of wealth'*[624]. However, those descending from former aristocratic circles or the political elite will want to be distinguished from the 'nouveaux riches'. In this perspective, I believe the most affluent consumers prefer brands that show overt signs of 'education' or 'cultural capital' to use Bourdieu's expression. Asian consumers in particular that have received a Western education (attending American or British universities) and become fluent in English or other Western languages[625] are more comfortable and aware of Western cultures, and therefore seek a higher degree of refinement than just obvious brands logos[626]. These young consumers are therefore already in the later stage of the consumption of luxury goods as Chadha and Husband have identified (see table 3). This appears to be particularly true to China and surrounding countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea. These countries have encouraged, if not made it compulsory, the one-child policy, with resulting effect: the *'little emperor syndrome'*[627]. This represents the coming of age of the first generations of children of the one-child policy who have enjoyed a high quality of life as their parents gave them all they could. As sole heirs, these young consumers enjoy a higher purchasing power than previous generations.

High fashion retailers have engaged with art and high culture in an attempt to advertise their brands to the elite in a more sophisticated way. Rather than reaching the masses through mass-communication, advertising on billboards magazines, radio or television. High fashion brands' association with art constitute more a more subtle form of Advertising. It is more selective and can more easily target specific segments of consumers as described in the fist part of this chapter, through the analysis of *XV Seconds* by Sam Taylor-Wood.

The relation between art and Western high fashion brands in Japan offers a model of what may happen in the future to new and emerging markets as India or China. These two

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[623] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006; p. 43
[624] ibid., p. 40
[625] Bennett, Catherine, 'Home Alone', *The Guardian*, 9 November 2004: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2004/nov/09/china.catherinebennett> (last accessed 23 May 2006)
[626] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006
[627] Chandler, Clay, 'Little Emperors', CNN Money, 4 October 2004: <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2004/10/04/8186784/index.htm> (last accessed 25 May 2006) and Lee, Melissa, 'Luxury Retailers Court China's "Little Emperors"', MSNBC Business, 7 August 2007: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/20165004/> (last accessed 10 August 2007)

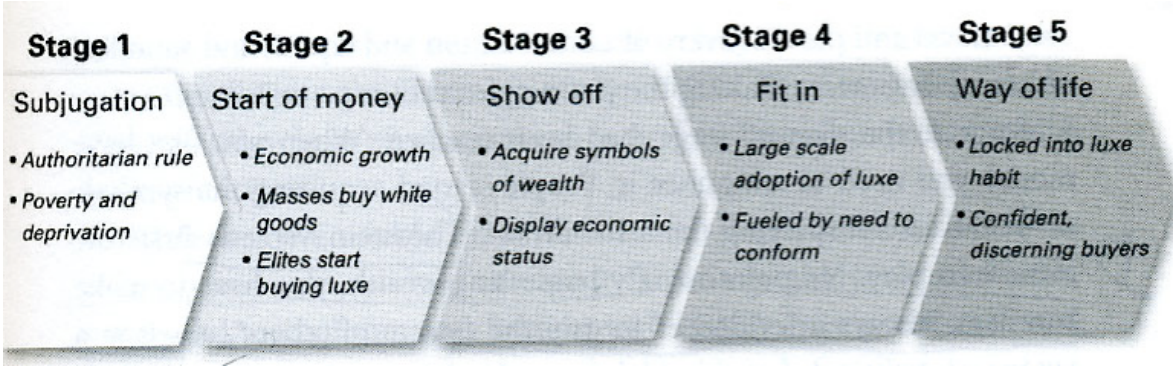
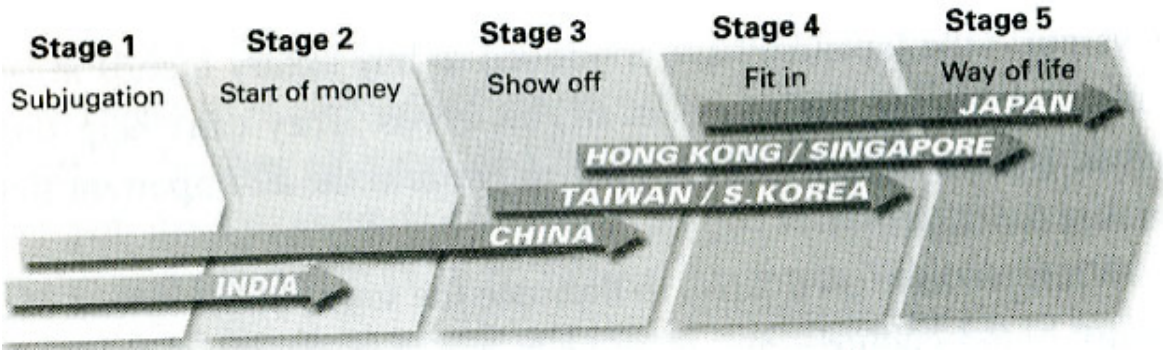


Table 3 and 4: The five-stage model developed by Chadha and Husband showing stages of luxury goods consumption in Japan since the Second World War (above). Chadha and Husband's chart of the evolution of luxury goods consumption in Asia (below). The chart categories the developing position of Asian countries as they consume luxury goods.



countries represent the most important markets for high fashion brands as a large high-spending class of consumers is emerging. There is a great potential for sales of high fashion brands to thrive as these market are young, unsaturated and particularly receptive to luxury brands and Western signs of affluence. In both countries, the elite covets commodities that can be an indicator of their status and wealth. Status is particularly important considering that both countries are facing a critical re-alignment of class structures, seeing the effects of the abolition of the caste system in India and the post-Mao politics and recognition of private property in China. Unlike the Japanese market, the dissemination of fashion in China and India currently clearly follows the '*trickle-down*' model. These societies are very heterogeneous, with strong class distinctions. The new and emergent middle class appears to be highly status-driven and sees fashion as way to climb the social ladder. To mark their new social status, the new middle classes of these countries will become more readily able to purchase luxury products, the higher classes will seek more advanced and sophisticated means of marking and their wealth, and distinguish themselves. This is when high fashion retailers are likely to engage with art to elevate the perceived value of high fashion to ensure their brands remain preferred marks of social distinction. Chanel has already shown signs of adhering to this belief by collaborating with artists and displaying art in its new flagship store in Hong Kong, the prime tourist destination of mainland Chinese tourists. Indeed, tourism should also play a key role in developing awareness and interest for high fashion brands. In these early stages of Chinese or Indian mass tourism, Western brands can currently indicate that consumers have travelled abroad, a sign of affluence. Chinese tourists already outstrip the numbers of Japanese tourists[628] and appear to be just as interested in purchasing high fashion whilst travelling abroad. Chinese tourists are also primordially cultural tourists, receptive to Western high culture. France is by far the most popular destination for the Chinese in Europe with half a million Chinese tourists visiting France in 2005[629]. Chinese tourists' interest for French culture will no doubt be also exploited by French high fashion brands in developing strategies to receive attention and drive sales.

In all probability, these new markets will have an accelerated growth and will rapidly level with consumers of luxury goods in the rest of the world. Chadha and Husband expected that recently emerging markets such as China are likely to go through the stages of the consumption of luxury goods (as depicted in table 4) more quickly than countries such as Japan did[630]. Still, the expansion of luxury brands will not be only limited to Asia but other developing countries and regions such as Russia and the former Soviet block. It can also be expected that as these markets will mature, art will continue to play a role in enhancing luxury brands' image. Still, the question remains that once the association between art and high-end fashion is no longer novel and original, what will be the next element used by retailers to distinguish and mark high fashion brands' high status?

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[628] Macartney, Jane, 'Wave of Chinese Tourist Shoppers Floods the High Street of Europe', *The Times*, 15 July 2006, p 50
[629] against 22,000 who visit Britain, as described in Macartney, Jane, 'Wave of Chinese Tourist Shoppers Floods the High Street of Europe', *The Times*, 15 July 2006, p 51
[630] Chadha, Radha and Husband, Paul, *The Cult of the Luxury Brand: Inside Asia's Love Affair with Luxury*, Nicholas Brealey, London, 2006

In the first part of this chapter, through the analysis of *XV Seconds* by Sam Taylor-Wood, commissioned by Selfridges, I demonstrated that art is used retailers to communicate commercial messages about their brands. This showed that works of art displayed in retail environments should be considered in the light of the brand identity and image, interpreted as advertising, 'read' as texts and not just visuals as have done John Berger, Judith Williamson and Kathy Myers in their respective work.

In the second part of this chapter, I considered the use of art in retail as a way of communicating the brand image and its origin in attempt of enhancing the 'exotic' character of brands in non-western markets. Through the study of high fashion French brands and their use of art in their Japanese outlets, I concluded that retailers have relied on the visual nature of art to communicate with consumers across cultures. I also described how works of art can persuade consumers of the authenticity and luxurious character of their products. However, the display of works of art in retail environment should not be considered in isolation. Brands have attempted to become associated with culture through other steps, most notably, the sponsorship of exhibitions, and these efforts may have also contributed to shaping the 'exotic' image of brands and given them a cultural value. I therefore consider in chapter 4, whether the display of art in retail environments fits with a general strategy by brands to become associated with culture. And ultimately, I question if and why associations with culture benefit high-end fashion brands.

4. Fashion Retailers as Patrons of the Arts and Cultural Tastemakers

High-end fashion houses aspire for their products to be perceived as works of art, the utmost symbol of luxury, by their target market. To reach this objective, I have observed that brands engaged with culture on different levels and follow gradual stages. First, fashion houses have taken the passive role of patrons, sponsoring art events and exhibitions, to have their names associated with culture. Then to authenticate their support of culture, brands have established art awards, galleries or cultural centres, becoming active curators of culture. Simultaneously, high-end fashion houses have transformed the image and role of their retail outlets by commissioning high-architectural designs and incorporating art in their stores. Finally, in collaboration with renowned artists they have been producing commodities which they present as works of art, receiving an endorsement by the art world and its followers. Over and above all, fashion institutions have cultivated the debates deliberating fashion as art and designers as artists.

This chapter presents each of the steps taken by high-end fashion houses to develop the image of their products as art. I unveil how it has become acceptable for art to be displayed in stores and why fashion, more than other commercial sectors, can be associated with art. I demonstrate how essential it is for fashion houses to reach these different degrees of involvement with art to avoid being accused of exploiting art, affecting the artists involved and their own integrities.

a. The Corporate Sponsorship of Art by High-end Fashion Brands

Sponsorship is the most conspicuous form of involvement with culture adopted by fashion houses. Like other major corporations, high-end fashion brands welcome sponsorship of cultural events as alternative, non-commercial channels to communicate with consumers and facilitate public relations. Art institutions are influential and have the ability to create implicit messages to suit the commercial objectives of brands. Most exhibitions and events supported by fashion brands tend to have links with fashion directly or indirectly. In any case, sponsorship deals are never entirely altruistic; companies only support events that they believe would be successful, to feed on the publicity generated and show their brands in the best of lights.

Burberry, for instance, supported two exhibitions related to fashion at differing degrees, whilst both being highly connected with the brand. 'AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion'[631] at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York presented British fashion from 1976 to 2006. Clothes were exhibited in 'tableaux', displayed on mannequins arranged in scenes with the museum's English period rooms as a backdrop. The modern clothes exhibited contrasted with the Eighteenth-century theme and interiors which illustrated how British contemporary fashion has preserved traditions and also transgressed them (see *fig. 118* and *119*). As one of the oldest brands exhibited, Burberry was portrayed as part of both, the history and future of British fashion. The theme of the exhibition also echoed Burberry's motto: *Prorsum* the Latin for 'forward'. Clothes from Burberry's then latest collection, Fall/Winter 2007, created by the young British designer Christopher Bailey were displayed supporting the label's belief in the adaptation of classics to create innovative fashion. In particular, a trench coat, Burberry's signature design[632], adapted with fur-trimmings was displayed to demonstrate how Burberry has upheld its heritage whilst designing contemporary pieces (see *fig. 120*). This particular item was not inadvertently selected. It served to reinstate the use of fur by Burberry who has faced global and repeated criticism from anti-fur activists[633]. Ingrid Newkirk, president of PETA, one of the leading anti-fur association suggested that the displaying of this coat doubled as an advertising and public relations tool: '*displaying fur garments, especially fur items that serve to advertise goods that visitors can purchase just a few blocks from the museum, sends the message that it's somehow acceptable to torture and kill animals for mere fashion*'[634]. Andrew Bolton, a curator at the museum denied this suggestion and explained that '*the coat was partly designed to reveal the moral discourse surrounding blood sports and fur fashions*'[635]. However, the fact that the item was part of Burberry's current collection and was available in its flagship store (located within close proximity to the museum) made Newkirk's argument more credible. The success of the exhibition generated much enthusiasm, instigated by the widely covered private view, which was attended by numerous celebrities, including style icons of British fashion and culture such as musician Johnny Rotten, designers John Galliano and Alexander McQueen, putting Burberry in a positive light. This example showed how influential sponsors are and suggested that curators are dependent, having to follow sponsors' agendas whilst planning exhibitions. Sponsored exhibitions in public institutions are therefore put under multiple (sometimes conflicting) pressures, from governments, having to fulfil social responsibilities, to be educational and accessible to the largest audiences whilst having to communicate positive messages about their sponsors to the public.

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631 'AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion', Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 3 May - 4 September 2006: <http://www.metmuseumm.org/special/se_event.asp?Ocurrenceld=%7B8CBD9694-C547-4DB3-A0AE-1CA0F88BED16%7D> (last accessed 20 March 2007)

632 Burberry claims to have invented the trench coat in 1914 following a commission from the War Office: <http://www.burberry.com/AboutBurberry/History.aspx> (last accessed 20 March 2007)

633 'People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' (PETA) has organised protests outside Burberry's headquarters and stores throughout the world. PETA disrupted a Burberry catwalk show in Milan on 25th September 2006, cited in: anon., 'PETA Anti-Fur Protestors Storm Burberry Fashion Show in Milan', *PETA News*, 25 September 2006: <http://www.peta.org.uk/newsnew/newsitem.asp?id=3177> (last accessed 11 April 2007); PETA has also created a copy of Burberry's official website, denouncing the company's use of fur: <http://www.bloodyburberry.com/wycd.asp> (last accessed 20 March 2007)

634 Howarth, Angus, 'Fur Flies as PETA Takes Exception to Fashion Exhibit', *The Scotsman*, 23 August 2006: <http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=6047id=1238072006> (last accessed 11 April 2007)

635 Howarth, Angus, 'Fur Flies as PETA takes exception to Fashion Exhibit', *The Scotsman*, 23 August 2006: <http://news.scotsman.com/topics.cfm?tid=6047id=1238072006> (last accessed 11 April 2007)

fig. 118: Black silk taffeta dress by John Galliano for Christian Dior haute couture Spring/Summer 1998, in the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art during the 'AngloMania' exhibition

fig. 119: (Far right) Pink tulle dress by Hussein Chalayan Spring/Summer 2000

fig. 120: Fox trimmed gabardine trench coat by Christopher Bailey for Burberry Autumn/Winter 2006.

In 2002, prior to the 'AngloMania' exhibition, Burberry had sponsored 'Mario Testino: Portraits'[636], an exhibition of portraits at the National Portrait Gallery in London by the Peruvian fashion photographer. Testino is renowned for his high-profile commission work (notably his photographs of the late Princess Diana[637] in 1997), which has linked him to high-society. While Burberry clothing was not displayed, the treatment of the exhibition was closely linked to the British brand as Testino has produced iconic advertising campaigns for Burberry since 1998, (see *fig. 121* and *122*, contrasting older and more recent advertisements, showing a consistency in style). Although Testino had worked for rival companies including Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci and Versace, Burberry was put forward as the exhibition poster and catalogue featured a portrait of Kate Moss, then the 'face' of the British label (see *fig. 123*). Burberry clearly benefited from its association with the 'blockbuster' exhibition through the scale and exposure and the unprecedented high visitor numbers to the London gallery. The exhibition made Testino's work more popular: promoting an acceptance of fashion photography as art and simultaneously, elevating the status of Burberry's visual campaigns. Indeed, photographs by commercial photographers tend to be displayed institutions dedicated to commercial art such as Le Musée de la Publicité in Paris which is dedicated to displaying advertising. In 2006, the museum hosted a retrospective of the work of Jean Larivière, a French photographer who has collaborated with Louis Vuitton for over 20 years[638]. It could be argued that such an institution is more adapted to display the work of artists who have a commercial nature. The exhibition of Testino's work in a national cultural institution therefore demonstrates the shifting status of fashion photography, becoming accepted as art. This is also the case of other sectors such as graphic design and illustration.

High-end fashion brands have also sponsored events and exhibitions with no connection with fashion, yet such associations are still relevant and benefit their images. In 2006, Agnès b gave '*additional generous support*' to the 'China Power Station: Part 1' exhibition organised by the Serpentine gallery and staged at the disused Battersea Power station in London[639]. There may not appear to be any direct relevance between the French brand and the theme of the exhibition, but in fact, this association, strongly reinforces the creative image of Agnès b. Chinese contemporary art has received tremendous global attention and is held as one of the most vibrant and creative art scene. By associating itself to this exhibition subject, Agnès b was able to transfer the innovative character of the Chinese art scene to its brand. LVMH, the world's largest luxury group which holds some of the biggest names in high-end fashion,

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636 'Mario Testino: Portraits', National Portrait Gallery, London, 1 February - 4 June 2002: <http://www.npg.org.uk/live/testino.asp> (last accessed 20 March 2007)

637 Testino is not only involved in photographing high-end fashion, he has a particular interest in capturing high society, in particular, the 'golden youth', the young heirs of the most affluent and renowned families throughout the world. Testino has repeatedly photographed the Royal family and was commissioned to photograph Princes William and Harry on their respective 21st birthdays (2003 and 2005): <http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/newsandgallery/news/mario_testino_photographs_prince_william_for_his_21st_birthd_11321142.html>and<http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/newsandgallery/gallery/prince_harry_s_21st_birthday_1035648075_1463399950.html> (last accessed 6 April 2007)

Testino's association with the Royal Family and the most exclusive social circles also benefited Burberry. In fact, the label's latest campaign (directed by Testino) at time of writing, portrayed this 'golden youth' by featuring the sons and daughters of famous rock and film stars, another metaphor for Burberry's image as a traditional but also modern brand.

638 'Jean Larivière', Musée de la Publicité, Paris, 17 November 2005 - 26 March 2006

639 '*China Power Station: Part 1*', Battersea Power station, London, 8 October – 5 November 2006

fig. 121: Burberry Spring / Summer 2002 Campaign shot by Mario Testino

fig. 122: Burberry Spring / Summer 2007 Campaign, shot by Mario Testino

fig. 123: Poster from the '*Mario Testino: Portraits*' exhibition, National Portrait Gallery, London

including Louis Vuitton, has supported numerous art exhibitions to restore, promote and enrich '*our heritage*'[640]. In this context, the sponsorship of exhibitions takes the role of fulfilling what the group perceives as its corporate social responsibility (CRS).

For the last decade, high-end fashion brands have also become the subjects of exhibitions organised by public institutions (listed in table 5). Such exhibitions have generally been well received by the public but have not been unanimously popular amongst critics and social commentators. Some have viewed such exhibitions as a positive initiative, acknowledging popular culture, making public institutions less elitist and therefore more likely to reach the widest audiences. However, other more widespread opinions regard such exhibitions as curated advertisements. Had public institutions been concerned with portraying popular culture, they would have selected brands that are more 'popular' such as Nike or Marks & Spencers, thus discrediting the first argument. Exhibitions of high-end fashion brands in museums and galleries are staged to demonstrate the quality, innovative character and cultural impact of high-end fashion. High-end fashion is not portrayed as popular culture but as part of high culture, initiating the debate of fashion as art. The elitist character of high culture is preserved by the status of the brands selected, and at the same time, the endorsement of fashion brands by high culture serves to upkeep the high-class status of brands. The reciprocal benefits received by both parties support the view regarding these exhibitions as advertisements.

Such exhibitions implicate fashion houses at a deeper level, giving them more active roles, closer to curators than sponsors. Regardless of whether fashion is accepted as art, brands are undeniably commercial which can affect the integrity and ultimately, devalue their quality of the exhibitions. The 'Giorgio Armani: Retrospective'[641] at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York and the 'House of Chanel' exhibition[642] at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, in particular, stirred great controversy. Critics claimed that such exhibitions were 'tailored' to satisfy brands' egos and only generate publicity. Lee Rosenbaum of the *New York Times* described the Chanel exhibition as '*tainted by the same sort of self-interested sponsorship that brought notoriety to "Armani" at the Guggenheim Museum in 2000*'[643]. Indeed, these two exhibitions had been criticised because of the fashion houses' financial involvement with the cultural institutions, which created conflicts of interests.

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640 anon., 'LVMH, Patron of the Arts and Social Solidarity: Culture, Arts and Heritage', *LVMH Magazine* (Online): <http://www.lvmh.com>, (last accessed 22 April 2007)

641 'Giorgio Armani: Retrospective' was first presented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 20 October 2000 – 17 January 2001; and then the exhibition toured to Neue Nationale Galerie, Berlin, May - July 2003; the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 18 October 2003 - January 2004, and the National Museum of Roman Antiquities, Rome, 6 May – 1 August 2006: <http://www.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/past_exhibitions/armani/> (last accessed 20 March 2007)

642 'House of Chanel', Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 5 May - 7August 2005

643 Rosenbaum, Lee, 'Meanwhile: A Slave to Fashion in New York', *The New York Times*, 7 May 2005: <http://www.iht.com/artcicles/2005/05/06/opinion/edrosen.php> (last accessed 19 March 2007)

Givenchy Ball, Houston, Texas, 1965
Givenchy: Thirty Years of Design, Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, 1982
Yves Saint Laurent, The Museum of Metropolitan Art, New York, 1983
'Salvatore Ferragamo 1898-1960', Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, 1985
Givenchy, Galliera Museum of Fashion and Costume, Paris, 1991
'Azzedine Alaia', Groninger museum, Netherlands, 1998
'Issey Miyake Making Things', Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris, 13 October 1998 - 28 February 1999
'Giorgio Armani', (touring exhibitions**):** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 20 October 2000 – 17 January 2001; Neue Nationale Galerie, Berlin, May - July 2003; the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 18 October 2003 - January 2004, and the National Museum of Roman Antiquities, Rome, 6 May – 1 August 2006
'A-POC Making: Issey Miyake & Dai Fujiwara', Vitra Design Museum, Berlin, 1 June – 1 July 2001
Yves Saint Laurent, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2002
Versace at the V&A, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, - 12 January 2003
Vivienne Westwood: 36 Years In Fashion, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1 April - 11 July 2004 (and toured to Canberra, Shanghai, Taipei, Tokyo, Düsseldorf, Bangkok)
Zandra Rhodes, Fashion and Textile Museum, London, 25 June 2005
Yves Saint Laurent Broadbent Gallery, Kent State University Museum, 3 March - 16 October 2005
'House of Chanel', Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 5 May 2005 – 7 August 2005 (sponsored by Chanel)
Popaganda: The fashion & Style of JC de Castelbajac, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1 February - 1 May 2006
'Yohji Yamamoto – Dream shop', Musée de la Mode (MoMu), Antwerp, 13 August 2006
'Cristobal Balenciaga', Musée des Arts de la Mode, Paris, 6 July 2006 - 28 Jan 2007
'Dior: The King of Couture', Chicago History Museum, Chicago, 30 Sep 2006 - 20 May 2007
'Balenciaga and his Legacy: Haute Couture from the Texas Fashion Collection', Meadows Museum, Texas (in association with the Texas Fashion Collection at the University of North Texas), 4 February -17 June 2007
Jean Paul Gaultier / Regine Chopinot, le defile, Musée de la Mode et du Textile, Paris, 22 March - 23 September 2007 (sponsored by Jean Paul Gaultier)
Paul Smith, Design Museum, London, 29 March - 22 June 2007
'Dior: The New Look', Indianapolis Museum of Art, 10 June - 2 December 2007
'The House of Viktor & Rolf', Barbican Art Gallery, London, 18 June - 21 September 2008

Table 5: List of popular exhibitions on high-end fashion brands in major cultural institutions

The Armani retrospective in particular appeared to have been developed to profit all involved. The exhibition was not sponsored by the Italian fashion house but by Mercedes-Benz, the car manufacturer. On first account, the association of Mercedes-Benz with this retrospective acclaiming another brand, is rather unexpected. Joachim Schmidt, Mercedes-Benz's vice-president explained that the company was proud to give its '*support to an exhibition of such a legendary designer as Giorgio Armani who shares our passion for design and style*'[644]. However, the association went beyond improving Mercedes-Benz's public relations and image. The exhibition set the backdrop for the launch in 2005 of a limited edition Mercedes-Benz CLK range designed by Armani[645]. Kristin Forkert, *Fuse Magazine* Journalist summed up the effect of the influence of sponsors on the function of exhibitions: *'the result of these developments (whereby contemporary art becomes politically and economically useful) is that exhibitions begin to increasingly function as a form of institutional positioning: they operate less as curatorial investigations in the traditional sense, and more as processes of marketing, legitimization and public relations'*[646].

This example illustrates how exhibitions have been used by companies as tools to fulfil managerial issues. The cultural institutions benefit as such exhibitions are usually very popular with the public and generate a great deal of attention from the press and are financial rewarding. For instance, it was revealed that Giorgio Armani had promised the Guggenheim a donation of $15 millions[647]. Yet, the financial relations of fashion houses with cultural institutions can affect the quality of their work. Exhibitions with high-end fashion brands as subjects have shown that there is fine line between educational and worthwhile exhibitions and advertisements masqueraded into exhibitions. Suzy Menkes, fashion editor of the *International Herald Tribune* pointed out that in the Armani exhibition: '*of the 400 pieces on display, only a handful are the men's clothes on which Armani built his reputation, and less than 25 percent is in the greige tailoring with which the designer created his cult of restraint and carved out a workplace image for an entire generation in the androgynous 1980s*'[648]. The Armani exhibition failed to fulfil what is expected from a retrospective. The greater proportion of current designs and eveningwear did not give a true retrospective of the brand. It also failed to show the evolution, influences of Armani and how it has inspired other brands. In other words, the exhibition did not provide sufficient background and context to give an accurate account of Armani's designs. With classic and Celtic folk tunes music playing, pebbles placed around some of the displays, the description of the exhibition made by Emma Biggs[649] in *Modern Painters* resembled the description of a theme park or other entertainment site. Biggs argued that too much attention had been given to Armani's relation with celebrities, illustrated in the testimonials of celebrities in the introduction of the exhibition catalogue. The impact of Armani's design had also been somewhat embellished, Armani described as promoting *'social*

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[644] <http://www.guggenheim.org/press_releases/release_7.html> (last accessed 19 March 2007)
[645] <http://www.mercedes-benz.co.jp/e/news/news/2005/20050331.pdf> (last accessed 26 March 2007)
[646] Forkert, Kristen, 'Transgression, Branding and National Identity', *Fuse Magazine*, July 2006, p. 19
[647] Menkes, Suzy, 'Armani Eulogy Reworks Fashion History', *International Herald Tribune*, October 2000: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2000/10/24/farmani.t.php> (last accessed 22 March 2007)
[648] Menkes, Suzy, 'Armani Eulogy Reworks Fashion History', *International Herald Tribune*, October 2000: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2000/10/24/farmani.t.php> (last accessed 22 March 2007)
[649] Biggs, Emma, 'What Does It Mean? Armani at the Guggenheim', *Modern Painters*, Spring 2001, pp. 88 – 89

liberation and egalitarism' through his collections! In *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art,* Stallabrass argue that undue pressure had been put on the Guggenheim, and that *'Armani had, in effect, hired the museum to display an advert'*[650]. The exhibition could have been more educational through a better selection of pieces from Armani's archives, but as in the 'AngloMania' exhibition sponsored by Burberry, the curators may not have had much say and were almost certainly dependent on Armani's objectives. Rosenbaum also noted this when he remarked that *'such exhibitions must be designed with rigor, so that professional standards are not compromised by commercial interests'*[651].

What are the advantages for brands to work with museums? According to a survey reported by Anna Winestein[652], it appears that museums are seen as trustworthy authorities, the survey found that 87 percent of American museum-goers find museums trustworthy, far ahead of the level of confidence placed in books (61 percent). It could therefore be assumed that information found in such context would be accepted as veracious. However, exhibitions such as the Armani retrospective may have shattered the public image of museums, and according to Winestein, public trust will be restored with difficulty and time. Another advantage museums offer corporations is that they are becoming increasingly popular, with an almost 19-fold increase in the last thirty years, museums in the U.S.A are said to now generate $6.3 billion annually, attracting over 865 million visitors annually[653]. And as forecasts predict domestic output by museums to increase by 80 percent in the next 10 years[654] (faster than TV and radio broadcasting), the close relation between luxury brands and museums shows to be a sound investment.

Consequently, in November 2001, the American Association of Museums (AAM) published a guide of good practice for *'developing and managing business support'*[655]. However, the financial disengagement of governments with culture has compelled cultural institutions to be self-sufficient. In this context of the privatisation of art, public institutions compete to receive financial support from the same sources, making them less likely to put conditions on corporative sponsorship. In fact, ultimately, negative criticism has put more pressure on public institutions to find alternative sources of financial support and has lead corporations, particularly fashion houses, to open their own cultural institutions.

This shows that sponsorship is taking new forms: companies' financial support is no longer only acknowledged, it can shape institutions' programmes. To some extent, criticism made

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650 Stallabrass, Julian, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 144
651 Rosenbaum, Lee, 'Meanwhile: A Slave to Fashion in New York', *The New York Times,* 7 May 2005: <http://www.iht.com/artcicles/2005/05/06/opinion/edrosen.php> (last accessed 19 March 2007)
652 Winestein, Anna, 'In Museums We Trust', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 2002, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 378
653 ibid., p. 379
654 ibid., p. 379
655 anon., 'Guidelines for Museums on Developing and Managing Business Support', *AAM,* November 2001: <http://www.aam-us.org/museumressources/ethics/bus_support.cfm> (last accessed 26 March 2007)

about these exhibitions are unmerited as the brands involved represent the most adequate and relevant sponsors. James Marriott[656], author and co-director of Platform[657] argued that relevancy is important and its lack would imply an exploitation of culture. In particular, Marriott condemned the association of petrol companies with cultural institutions, such as Shell and BP, which are important benefactors of the National Gallery and Royal Opera House. Marriott argued that these associations serve to alleviate demands from the public on environmental issues. The support of cultural events by high-end fashion brands is less unlikely to operate as a front to hide improper or unethical production methods. However, it is undeniable that the association of high-end fashion houses with cultural events are orchestrated to benefit them by reinforcing the luxurious and elitist character of their brands. The financial support given by fashion houses is justified as company profit from the publicity generated by exhibitions they support or with their brands as subjects. In fact, it would be unfair for cultural institutions not to receive a form of financial compensation for the positive exposure they give. The more relevance the sponsors have with the subjects of exhibitions, the more participative they can be. Companies such as BP or Shell that have no direct relevance with the subject of exhibitions they sponsor are more passive and cannot have their brand directly involved or have their products displayed.

By opening cultural centres, fashion houses can engage with culture whilst facing less criticism, as they are not bound by the same level of social responsibilities incumbent upon public institutions. Cultural centres founded by high-end fashion houses are still a recent development and have not yet received the same attention and consideration as public institutions. The quality of exhibitions or events generally lacks the care and expertise taken by public institutions and fails to show detachment from brands. For instance, it would have been unlikely for public institutions to have staged the inaugurating exhibition of 'l'Espace Louis Vuitton', the in-store art gallery of the fashion house's Paris store[658]. The exhibition presented *Alphabet Concept* by the Italian artist Vanessa Beecroft, consisted of thirteen photographs of nude female models from different races, placed to form the shapes of the Louis Vuitton monogram and lettering (see *fig. 124*). Withstanding the quality of the artist's work, *Alphabet Concept* made too much of an eulogy of Louis Vuitton to be acceptably displayed in a public institution. Beecroft claimed that she had not been '*used to sell bags, but to clean up the conscience of a sophisticated brand that allows intellectual and revolutionary content to emerge*'[659]. However, her *Alphabet Concept* does not have an 'intellectual' or 'revolutionary' character, nor does it bear an educational quality pursued by public institutions. For these reasons, Beecroft's piece could be better regarded as an advertisement for Louis Vuitton. Still, Beecroft denied the commissioning of *Alphabet Concept* by Louis Vuitton, which has been confirmed by an official Louis Vuitton statement, describing the relationship between the

[656] James Marriott took part in 'There is an Alternative: Art, Economics and Non-Conformity', a debate organised and staged at the Tate Modern gallery, London, 3 March 2007; other speakers on the panel included author Munira Mirza, artist Paula Roush and was chaired by artist Sonya Dyer.
[657] Platform was founded in 1984 to create interdisciplinary projects bringing artists, scientists and human rights campaigners to promote '*social and environmental justice*', <http://www.platformlondon.org/aboutplatform.asp> (last accessed 26 March 2007)
[658] 'VBLV', Espace Louis Vuitton, Paris, 12 January – 31 March 2006
[659] anon., 'Leather and Canvas: the Art of Marketing', *The Economist*, 4 February 2006, p. 59

artist and the brand as a collaboration; Beecroft working 'with' and not 'for' the fashion house[660].

Beecroft may not be the only artist who has incorporated corporate imagery into her work, but *Alphabet Concept* does not make critical observations of consumer society or the corporate world as developed explicitly or implicitly by other artists have, such as Tom Sachs and his Chanel guillotine or Wim Delvoye and his 'branded' pigs (see *fig. 125* and *126*).

Artists that collaborate with brands often find themselves in the position of having to justify their work, to defend, preserve their integrity and their art. Many artists choose altogether to consider such pieces separately from their work, such as Sam Taylor-Wood who views *XV Seconds,* commissioned by Selfridges, separately from the rest of her work[661]. What are artists' interests in collaborating with corporations and fashion houses in particular? Barbara Kruger explained that the use of her signature graphic messages in Selfridges' advertising campaigns has enabled her to reach a larger audience with a budget that she could not have afforded[662]. Selfridges' commercial character also represented the right platform for her work as it criticises consumer society. Selfridges' popularity makes it more public than corporate headquarters and even, public cultural institutions. Selfridges is the second largest department store in the UK and is said to attract over 18 million visitors a year. In comparison, the Tate Modern, described as the world's largest modern art museum received just over four million visitors in 2006, although this is far more than the 2.5 million visitors to the Pompidou centre, Paris or the 2.67 million visitors to Museum of Modern Art, New York (possibly because both of these museum charge an admission fee), demonstrating that commercial spaces can be more 'public' than public art institutions[663]. Artists can benefit from the display of their art in stores on two levels: financially, corporations' support enables them to develop their work with budgets that would unlikely be offered by public art institutions and governmental funds. On an artistic level, the public character of the stores enables them to reach larger audiences. Art displayed in shop windows or exteriors, viewed by all and at any time, as it was the case in Selfridges, could be considered as a form of public art. The intention is to bring art to the public rather than have the public go to art institutions. However, in-store art galleries such as l'Espace Louis Vuitton are not founded on such ideological missions. They are not concerned in presenting art to larger audiences. The works of art are not exhibited to be seen from the exterior, but from the interior of the store. Hence, the art is only viewed by a limited number of people; also, the brand's exclusive character may deter the 'general public'. On the contrary,

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660 anon., 'Louis Vuitton: Art on Show on the Champs-Elysées', *LVMH Magazine (*online*),* 13 January 2006: <http://www.lvmh.com/magzine/pg_mag_contenu.asp?int_id=346&archive=0&rubrique=ACTUALITE&srub=0&rub=&str_theme_id=> (last accessed 23 March 2007)

661 Bracewell, Michael., Millar, Jeremy and Carolin, Clare, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Steidl Publishers, London, 2002; accompanying the 'Sam Taylor-Wood' exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London, 25 April - 21 June 2002

662 Comment made to the author following an interview at the Tate Britain gallery, 13 May 2005.

663Figures cited in Roy, R.S, 'Learning from Experience', *Indian Retail School (Online),* March 2007: <http://www.imagesfashion.com/back/march/splreport.htm> (last accessed 22 April 2007) and Glancey, Jonathan, 'Tate Modern 2: the Epic Sequel', *The Guardian*, 26 July 2006: <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,,1830048,00.html> (last accessed 22 April 2007)

fig. 124: Vanessa Beecroft, '*Alphabet Concept*', 2006

fig. 125: Tom Sachs, *Chanel Guillotine* (Breakfast Nook), 1998

fig. 126: Wim Delvoye, *LOUISE*, 2004

rather than democratising art, high-end fashion brands seek to appropriate it by making it exclusive. The art exhibited acts as a signifier of the target market; the exhibitions are tailored for this audience but with the front of appealing to all.

Paco Underhill, a leading consumer-behaviour researcher believed that: '*part of the power that high-end fashion has is that it can be exclusionary: those to whom it has meaning have the right to walk in the door*[664]'. This exclusionary character is further achieved by associating high-end fashion with high culture. In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Tate*[665], Pierre Bourdieu argued that the cultural capital tends to increase with levels of economic means. In other words, it is more frequent for members of the higher spheres of the social strata to have an interest for high culture. Hence, consumers that would not understand or find any relevance with the art exhibited would also perhaps, not fit with the image the brands have developed. The art exhibited therefore serves to reinforce the exclusionary character of high-end fashion brands by creating an implicit selection of consumers. The need for consumer selection is particularly important for flagships stores that have become tourist attractions more than retail outlets. However, the use of art to create an implicit selection of consumers was denied by Yves Carcelle, Director of Louis Vuitton, who claimed that the objective of the gallery is to '*make contemporary art more accessible for many people*'[666]. To make the gallery more accessible, two separate entrances were created; one through the store, another via a separate entry from the back of the building allowing access to people with no intention to entering the store. Other in-store cultural centres, such as the Hermès museum and gallery and the Chanel Nexus centre both located within the companies' flagship stores in Tokyo can also be accessed separately. Different entrances give more credibility to these galleries and enable them to have a distinct functioning from the stores, with their own opening hours and atmosphere, ensuring the public character of these centres and giving them more autonomy.

With the creation of cultural centres, fashion houses can promote their stores as public spaces. Based on this principle, Louis Vuitton sought a special authorisation to open on Sundays, which is only exceptionally granted according to French Law[667]. The permission was denied creating a large debate on Sunday openings and stores' function. Carcelle described the Paris flagship store as having preserved the image of Paris' most famous avenue which he said had declined to the point it had become populated only with cinemas and fast-food restaurants[668]. Indeed, the state of the avenue had become a concern, leading officials to be

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664 Brown, Janelle, 'High-Concept Haute Couture', *Salon,* 25 June 2001: <http://archive.salon.com/mwt/style/2001/06/25/retail_redesign/index.html> (accessed 16 March 2006)

665 Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Routledge, London, 1989

666 anon., 'Leather and Canvas: the Art of Marketing', *The Economist*, 4 February 2006, p. 59

667 Collomp, Florentin and Visseyrias, Mathilde, 'Le Vuitton des Champs-Élysées Prié de Fermer le Dimanche', *Le Figaro*, 1 June 2006: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/eco-entreprises/20060601.FIG000000206_le_vuitton_des_champs_elysees_prie_de_fermer_le_dimanche.html> (last accessed 22 March 2007); and Ducourtieux, Cécile and Lauer, Stéphane, 'La Justice Ordonne la Fermeture le Dimanche de Soixante-Quatre Magasins d'Usine Center' *Le Monde*, 16 June 2006: <http://www.lemonde.fr/web/artcile/0,1-0@2-3234,36-783934,0.html> (last accessed 26 March 2007)

668 Collomp, Florentin and Visseyrias, Mathilde, 'Le Vuitton des Champs-Élysées Prié de Fermer le Dimanche', *Le Figaro*, 1 June 2006: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/eco-

highly selective, only authorising high-status brands such as Cartier, Hugo Boss and Fouquet's, whilst denying companies such as H&M's plans for new flagships. This selection demonstrates that stores have a public function as they can shape the identity of the environment they are situated in. Still, Louis Vuitton's defence that the store had become a cultural centre as a whole was not convincing. The administrative court of Paris[669] justified its verdict by arguing that the store's cultural dimension was only secondary and that Louis Vuitton's main activity was to sell handbags and accessories[670]. Joseph Thouvenel, Deputy Secretary of the syndicate of French Christian Workers (CFTC)[671] believed that, had Louis Vuitton been granted the authorisation it would have opened the floodgates for culture to be exploited and create unfair competition. Nevertheless, l'Espace Louis Vuitton is opened on Sundays but is only accessed through the back entrance.

Other fashion houses have managed to show their dedication to art by creating external cultural centres. The Galerie du Jour, an art gallery opened by Agnès b is independent, located a fair distance away from the nearest Agnès b store. Similarly, Prada opened its 'Prada Fondazione' on the outskirts of Milan, away from Prada stores. The physical distance between stores and galleries also puts a theoretical distance between the retail and cultural functions of these brands. Giving cultural centres an independent status, separating them from companies' commercial realities can averts suggestions of manipulation of art. Consequently, to give more credibility to Louis Vuitton's relationship with art, the French fashion house will open in 2009 a Louis Vuitton Centre for Contemporary Art, which will be opened near the Bois de Boulogne, in Paris.

Other brands have demonstrated that a right balance can be achieved. High-end fashion brands can work with artists on two levels: from a commercial interest, to promote their brands, and with a social aim, to introduce art to wider audiences. Hermès for instance has opened a museum and an art gallery in its Paris headquarters and Tokyo flagship store. The establishment of two separate spaces has the advantage of fulfilling these two vocations. The museum serves to display items tracing back the history of the brand, giving the right setting for the display of brand-related art. Such a space would have been more suitable to display Beecroft's *Alphabet Concept* as brand museums are accepted and promoted as being brand centred.

Shiseido, the Japanese cosmetics company has also created two independent sites: the House of Shiseido and the Shiseido Art Gallery, which constitutes an example of good practice of

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entreprises/20060601.FIG000000206_le_vuitton_des_champs_elysees_prie_de_fermer_le_dimanche.html> (last accessed 22 March 2007)

[669] Tribunal Administratif de Paris

[670] Ducourtieux, Cécile and Lauer, Stéphane, 'La Justice Ordonne la Fermeture le Dimanche de Soixante-Quatre Magasins d'Usine Center' *Le Monde*, 16 June 2006: <http://www.lemonde.fr/web/artcile/0,1-0@2-3234,36-783934,0.html> (last accessed 26 March 2007)

[671] Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens (CFTC)

corporative involvement with culture. The House of Shiseido holds the company's archives as well as information related to Ginza, the local area in which the brand was established, closely linked with the history of the brand. The centre has amassed information relevant to the history of cosmetics, design, advertising, packaging and fashion[672]. The centre also presents temporary exhibitions of art taken from Shiseido's large corporate art collection of 1,700 paintings, sculptures and craft objects. On the other hand, the Shiseido art gallery, built in 1919 and now considered as the oldest existing gallery in Japan[673], since the 1990s hosts contemporary art exhibitions. With these two centres, Shiseido has been able to present its company's collection, show its archives and the brand's legacy.

To conclude the first part of this chapter, it appears that high-end fashion brands' involvement with culture is strategic, serving the purpose of reinforcing the luxurious and exclusive character of brands, as did the various sponsorship of exhibitions by Burberry. I demonstrated that high-end fashion brands strategically sponsor exhibition that with a relevance to their brand, to celebrate the brands as having cultural significance. However, through the study of the Giorgio Armani retrospective which toured several major cultural institutions, I show that there may be risks for public institutions to celebrate commercial brands. Because of this, I argue that brands have sought to create their own cultural centres in which they can shape, to their advantage, their brands' relationship with culture. This has been the case of Louis Vuitton who has built a 'public' art gallery in its Paris flagship to celebrate its brands and give a public function to its store. However, I show that due to the proximity to the store and its commercial commodities, such galleries are not given much credibility. I argue that other brands such as Agnès b, Prada and Shiseido have been able to be accepted by the art establishment by creating independent art centres located in separate sites from the brands' outlets. In the second part of this chapter, I go on to question how the establishment of art foundations and galleries has given high-end fashion brands acceptance from the art establishment, and what effect it may have on the brand image.

[672]House of Shiseido website: <http://www.shiseido.co.jp/e/house-of-shiseido/html/introduction.html> (last accessed 26 March 2007); and information on Shiseido cultural policy <http://www.nyu.edu/public.affairs/releases/detail/424> (last accessed 22 April 2007)
[673] The Shiseido gallery website: <http://www.shiseido.co.jp/e/gallery/html/foreword.html> (last accessed 26 March 2007)

b. Corporate Art Galleries, Foundations and Centres: Fashion Houses as Curators

The sponsoring of cultural events and the exhibition of art in retail outlets give more credibility to the numerous collaborations between artists and fashion houses, and demonstrate that fashion houses do not limit their relation with art to the creation of products, which would be perceived as an exploitation of art.

Longchamp, the French up-scale bag maker, for instance, had misconstrued its involvement with art, when in 2004, to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of 'Le Pliage' range of bags, it invited renowned British artists Tracey Emin and Thomas Heatherwick to design limited editions[674] (see *fig. 127* and *128*). Unlike other brands that have produced items in collaborations with artists, Longchamp did not support its initiative with a genuine art programme.

Brands tend to go through similar stages to give credibility to their involved with art, which I illustrate in table 6 with the steps taken by Louis Vuitton. The first step for brands to have their names associated with culture is to sponsor exhibitions. This enables brands to establish initial links with cultural institutions. It is also an opportunity for brands to 'shape' their involvement with art. The choice of the exhibition subjects to support, and the disciplines (photography, illustrations...) can communicate messages about the brands. For example, Louis Vuitton has sponsored the 'Yves Klein' exhibition at the Pompidou centre in Paris to show its involvement with the French cultural heritage. Louis Vuitton also supported Takashi Murakami's retrospective in Los Angeles as the Japanese artist is already associated with the brand, having created a promotional film and a range of bags with his characteristic illustrations (see table 6).

As a second step, to bring culture within the realm of the brand, some brands have exhibited works of art in their stores (Agnès b and Comme des Garçons), and commissioned artists to create site-specific works of art as has done Selfridges. Some brands also set up or support existing art awards to establish their brands as bodies capable of recognising cultural achievements and talents[675] (Hugo Boss, Selfridges and Louis Vuitton).

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674 anon., 'Tracey Emin 4 Longchamp', White Gallery press statement: <http://www.whitecube.com/editions/longchamp/> (last accessed 19 March 2007)

675 The most high-profile art awards established by high-end fashion include the Louis Vuitton Young Artists' Award, launched in 1994; the Hugo Boss Art Award established in 1996; the Max Mara Women's Art Prize launched in 2005; the Carolina Herrera: 212 Innovation Award, launched in 2006 and the Gucci Group Artists in Film Award presented annually at the Venice Biennale since 2006.

STEP 5

Products as art

Louis Vuitton's involvement with art has given credibility to the value of the brand's creation of limited editions items in collaborations with artists as genuine 'branded works of art', such as the 'Keepall' or 'Speedy' bags designed by pioneer graffiti artist, Stephen Sprouse and the 'Monogram Multicolore' and 'Cherry Blossom' range of bags and accessories by Japanese artist Takashi Murakami

STEP 4

Independent Art centres

In 2009, Louis Vuitton is to open the 'Louis Vuitton Centre for Contemporain Art' in Paris. Located independently from a Louis Vuitton store, the centre will present permanent and temporary exhibitions of international contemporary art. With this centre, which has been given governmental support, Louis Vuitton's involvement with art should be further legitimised and receive more credibility.

STEP 3

In-store art galleries

Louis Vuitton launched '*l'Espace Louis Vuitton'* in January 2006. Located within the Louis Vuitton flagship in the Champs-Élysées, the gallery functions as ordinary art gallery with exhibitions of international emerging and established artists with themes related to Louis Vuitton and its brand image

STEP 2

Art Awards

Louis Vuitton established the 'Louis Vuitton Young Artists' Awards' in 1994 to support contemporary art. This allowed Louis Vuitton to be further involved with culture and take the role of a patron, capable of 'determining' new talents in contemporary art

Art exhibited in Stores

Artists, such as Olafur Eliasson, Tim White-Sobieski and James Turrell were invited to create site-specific pieces for the Louis Vuitton Paris flagship store.

STEP 1

Sponsorship

Louis Vuitton has sponsored major international art exhibitions with the objective of restoring, promoting and enriching '*our heritage*', such as the Yves Klein retrospective at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (5 October 2006 - 5 February 2007) and Takashi Murakami exhibition, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (29 October 2007 - 11 February 2008).

Table 6: Louis Vuitton's strategy for working their way into art establishments

However, there can be inconveniences in supporting exhibitions in public institutions as brands have to respect the directives governing public institutions which may not follow brands' own agendas. This is why as a third step, some brands have established their own cultural centres, art galleries and foundations (Prada, Agnès b and Chanel). Most often brands establish these cultural spaces within their own stores. This is an opportunity for them to ensure that consumers can experience the brands' involvement with art. It is also a way of giving stores a public character and making the store visit cultural. Some brands have commissioned high architectural designs and have incorporated art within their retail outlets, giving their stores new, cultural and social functions. Some brands do not establish separate exhibition spaces, but they may nevertheless

As a fourth step, to receive more credibility from the art world and take their involvement with culture further, some brands have established independent cultural centres, located away from their retail outlets (Louis Vuitton, Prada and Agnès b). By going through these various steps, brands can give more credibility to goods produced from collaborations between their designers and artists. Louis Vuitton's now long-lasting involvement with art has given more credibility to the goods it has produced in collaborations with artists. Stephen Sprouse, the pioneer graffiti artist, designed for Louis Vuitton in 2001, the best-selling bags 'Keepall' or 'Speedy' with his signature graffiti style. In 2003, the Japanese artist Takashi Murakami revisited the iconic Louis Vuitton Monogram and created for the brand a range of bags and accessories with multicoloured monogram patterns (Monogram Multicolore). Murakami also created pieces with characters inspired by Japanese anime drawings (the 'Cherry Blossom' range). For such companies, art is not part of a one-off event but a long-term strategy.

Longchamp's relationship with art did not have a 'raison d'être', failing to make the lines credible. Tracey Emin later said she felt she had been used by Longchamp to uplift its image, stating that at the time she '*was gullible enough to believe it would be an opportunity for people to own something by me who normally wouldn't be able to afford to buy my work. in actual fact it was a massive PR drive by Longchamp*'[676]. As now assumed by Emin, Longchamp's intention was not to democratise art but to give its brand a new image. It can be suggested that Longchamp sought to exploit Emin's reputation, an artist that has created controversial pieces, to gain exposure. Other labels such as Vivienne Westwood and Bombay Sapphire Gin have represented the artist, also taking advantage of the increasing celebrity status enjoyed by artists as Emin, to endorse their products (see *fig. 129*). Luxury retailers have employed artists that have shocked the public as Emin, as their personalities connote freedom or lawlessness, and through the nature of their work, creativity and originality. The lack of mission from Longchamp is clear. Had they wanted to bring '*art to the masses*', they would not have released the bags in limited editions and only made them available from exclusive stores. The prices of these products

[676] Comment made during an online interview conducted by Young Tate members: anon., 'Artist Interview: Tracey Emin', *Tate Online*, October 2006: <http://www.tate.org.uk/youngtate/artistint/traceyemin_questions.htm> (last accessed 19 March 2007)

fig. 127: Tracey Emin, Le Pliage suitcase, for Longchamp

fig. 128: Thomas Heatherwick, Zip bags for Longchamp

fig. 129: Vivienne Westwood Eyewear 2005 Advertising campaign modelled by Tracey Emin

were also considerably high, targeting a high-spending elite of consumers[677]. Still, these collaborations benefit artists just as much. JJ Charlesworth admitted that: '*if the world of fashion wants a piece of the art world's marque of seriousness and cultural authenticity, contemporary artists want to see themselves as pop stars beyond the often tight-arsed, claustrophobic world of collectors, curators, critics and academics*[678]. Through their collaborations with high-end fashion brands, artists can obtain mass-awareness.

Agnès Troublé, the French designer better know as Agnès b, has developed a true art programme, making her collaborations with artists a custom, accepted as part of her brand. Troublé was among the first designers to offer her products and stores as platforms for artists to exhibit their work. She has been truly concerned in making art accessible by creating '*t-shirt d'artistes*', a line of reasonably priced t-shirts presented as blank canvas to artists. These items are not promoted as on-off lines. They are fully integrated as part of the Agnès b style. Troublé herself has a strong personal involvement with art which gives further credibility to these collaborations. She has a considerable personal art collection which was subject of exhibitions[679]. She opened an independent art gallery[680] in 1984, 'La Galerie du Jour' to display the works of established and emerging artists. In 1997, she developed with Hans-Ulrich Obrist, the renowned curator and art critic and with Christian Boltanski, the installation artist and painter, a free bi-monthly publication: *Point d'Ironie*, which gives *carte blanche* to artists and is distributed in her stores, museums, art galleries, cafés and various other 'trendy' places throughout the world. This publication also functions as a didactic tool, with a short biography of the artists reviewed. In 1997, she also founded 'Love Streams'[681] a film production company which has co-produced avant-garde films by artists and directors, including the highly controversial *I Stand Alone* (1998), the first feature film by the radical French director Gaspar Noé[682]. It shows that unlike most other brands, Troublé's projects are not strategically planned to benefit Agnès b. Troublé is not afraid to take risks and have her name associated with work that may not well be received by the public. It demonstrates a genuine respect for art.

Troublé has developed a genuine mission to support creativity and bring it to wider audiences; she is a true patron, regularly supporting exhibitions, publications or events, leading the

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677 The 'International Woman suitcase', with only 200 pieces made was priced at €3,000, the 'Always Me' bag at €350 for the large size and €290 for the small size and the 'Dragon clutch' at €75: <http://www.colette.fr> (last accessed 3 April 2006)

678 Müller, Florence, *Art & Fashion*, Thames & Hudson Ltd., London, 2000, p. 49

679 Troublé's collection was presented in 2000, Centre National de la Photographie, Paris; and 'Je m'installe aux Abattoirs! Agnès b: her Private Collection', Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, France, 9 April – 13 June 2004 (reviewed in Amardeil, Coco, 'Be Yourself' *ArtReview*, March 2004, pp. 80 - 85)

680 'La Galerie du Jour' is located in the rue Quincampoix near the Pompidou centre in Paris: <http://www.galeriedujour.com> (last accessed 7 April 2007)

681 The name is a direct reference to John Cassavetes' film, *Love Streams*, 1984 (USA)

682 *Seul Contre Tous* (dir. Gaspar Noé, 1998, FR) was highly controversial because of the themes raised: racism, incest and rape. Its highly graphic and realistic filmic approach pushed the limits of what can be acceptably portrayed. Due to its violent character, this film could not be entered in the Cannes film festival's official competition in 1998. It was nevertheless projected and awarded the Critics Week Award (Prix de la Semaine de la Critique): anon., 'Seul Contre Tous', Cannes Festival website: <http://www.cannes-fest.com/1998/film/seul.htm> (last accessed 22 April 2007)

French government to award her some of its most prestigious decorations[683]. She has become a definite figure of the 'art world' as demonstrated in 1998, when she was invited to present Chris Ofili with the Turner prize[684], and in 2002, when she gave away the Citigroup bank photography prize. Agnès Troublé's commitment to art and artists has authenticated her brand's collaborations with artists, demonstrating that designers themselves play a role in maintaining the links between art and their brands.

Miuccia Prada, designer and director of Prada, is like Agnès Troublé, a keen collector of art, and claims to own with her husband Patrizio Bertelli, Chief Executive of Prada, '*more than a thousand pieces*'[685]. She opened in 1993, the Prada Fondazione which has held exhibitions by established and emerging artists. These two designers' private collections and long term commitment to art through the establishment of art centres demonstrate that corporate art sponsorship can occur not as an investment or a public relations tool, but essentially, to fulfil a passion. The portrayal of designers or brand owners as collectors also connotes a sense of taste to the label and their creations. For this reason, fashion houses are attempting to give more credibility to their current associations with art by publicising their original founders as patrons, showing that their label has a long-lasting involvement with art.

Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel (1883 - 1971), who founded Chanel in the late 1910s, is portrayed as a philanthropist by the brand. Peter Marino, the architect of the brand's latest flagships praised her generosity: '*Coco Chanel has helped artists a great deal, mostly discretely, she has also worked with some, notably to create costumes*'[686]. A Chanel press release explained Chanel sought to *'uphold Mademoiselle Chanel's tradition'*, which *'began with its founder Mademoiselle Chanel almost a century ago'* as *'she supported and collaborated with artists of her time in the art, theatre, ballet and cinema worlds - including Jean Cocteau, Sergei Diaghilev, Igor Stravinsky, Pablo Picasso and Jean Renoir'*[687]. The statement described the tradition being continued by Karl Lagerfeld who has been designing film costumes. This seemingly lasting link with the arts gave credibility and legitimacy to the more recent projects directed by the fashion house, notably the series of short (advertising) films commissioned from filmmakers such as Joe Wright, Luc Besson, Ridley Scott, Roman Polanski and Baz Luhrmann.

Fashion houses also benefit from their designers or directors' identities as important art collectors, it enables them to take on the role of tastemakers. Collectors have a social function. Their collections, built from their personal tastes can influence and shape the taste

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683 Agnès b was awarded 'l'Ordre national du Mérite' in 1998 and was made 'Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur' in 2000.
684 Fellow fashion designer, Paul Smith, was also invited to give Wolfgang Tillmans the Turner prize in 2000.
685 Irving, Mark, 'Anytime I Think I Might be Becoming too Arty… an Interview with Miuccia Prada', *Art Review*, September 2006, p. 61
686 Translated from the French: '*on le sait peu, mais Coco Chanel a beaucoup aidé les artistes, souvent discrètement, elle a également travaillé avec certains, notamment pour créer des costumes'*, Bousteau, Fabrice, 'La Mode, une Vitrine pour l'Art Contemporain?' *Beaux Arts*, 2005, p. 44
687 anon., '2007 Artist Award Release', *Tribeca Film Festival* (sponsored by Chanel):<http://www.tribecafilmfestival.org/news-features/news/13530937.html> (last accessed 2 January 2008)

of others, whilst assembling tomorrow's heritage[688]. Louisa Buck and Philip Dodd suggested that collectors contribute to the recognition and success of artists. In fact, the price collectors are prepared to pay for pieces, appears to endorse the 'quality' and status of an artwork. The artists collected by Charles Saatchi have for instance enjoyed successful careers: '*when he bulk purchased neo-expressionist artists in the late 70's and early 80's not only did he drive up the prices of Julian Schnabel, the New York artist David Sale and Sandro Chia, but he also helped their general standing in the art world*'[689].

The inclusion of artists' work in private collections can contribute to establish artists and make their work accepted by the art world and the public. The recognition of fashion designers and directors as having 'taste' also enables them to take on the role of editors. Fashion designers have been invited to endorse other products, but still, reflecting their brands, as Karl Lagerfeld and his music compilations[690]. Designers and brands therefore become able to confer a 'seal' of taste. Fashion houses in their role of tastemakers, extend their influence outside fashion, approving varied products or services from cosmetics and toiletries, home furnishing to hotel and restaurant designs. A good example is the travel 'city guides' created by Louis Vuitton[691]. The brand becomes personified, able to make recommendations. Even sponsorship could be interpreted as a sign of endorsement by brands, validating the quality of exhibitions or events. This is an original way of looking at sponsorship. Rather than brands attempting to receive the approval of cultural events, brands could be seen as giving cultural events popular recognition and awareness through the mass-appeal of their brands. Topshop, the high-street fashion label sponsored the 'Anna Piaggi Fashion-ology' exhibition at the Victoria and Albert museum[692]. Although the exhibition only presented high-end fashion, taken from the personal collection of the Italian journalist, Topshop benefited by being presented as 'educating' its clientele. Topshop's consumers, more typically young women, would have been aware of the exhibition through the flyers distributed in the stores and the specially designed bags made for the run of the exhibition. And through this collaboration with a high-street label, the Victoria & Albert museum was able to expand its visitor profile.

Such missionary functions taken on by high-end fashion houses favour their image. When establishing their own galleries or cultural centres, fashion houses claim to raise awareness of art. For this reason, brand cultural centres could be associated with avant-garde art galleries rather than museums as they tend to only display contemporary works of art, with a focus on emerging artists. Why? There would be less relevance for fashion houses to display antique works of art. For commercial reasons, these pieces would not fit with the innovative and

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[688] Rheims, Maurice, *Art on the Market: Thirty-Five Centuries of Art Collecting and Collectors from Midas to Paul Getty*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Aylesbury and Slough, 1961
[689] Buck, Louisa and Dodd, Philip, *Relative Values or What's Art Worth?* BBC books, London, 1991, p. 95
[690] *Vogue Presents Karl Lagerfeld: Les Musiques Que J'aime*, Desirable Discs, November 2006
[691] Established as a luggage company, Louis Vuitton has nurtured the image of discovery and travel. To sustain this image, the company has been publishing since 2003 city guides reviewing the best hotels, restaurants, shops and cultural attractions of a number of locations.
[692] 'Anna Piaggi Fashion-ology', the Victoria and Albert museum, 2 February – 23 April 2006

contemporary image most high-fashion houses seek to project, demonstrating that fashion houses are not just interested in presenting art to the masses; they want to project the right image for their brand. Furthermore, it could be controversial for high-end fashion houses to display antique works in their stores, raising polemics. There can be moral issues, older works of art are seen as belonging to a national heritage and therefore to be displayed only in public institutions. For practical reasons, historic pieces are also more difficulty exhibited as they necessitate the right environmental conditions. In museums, the art directs the immediate environment; the light and temperature are regulated for best preservation. Within high-end fashion stores, art is 'secondary'. It accompanies store environments rather than controlling them. Contemporary art break boundaries and is more easily accepted within commercial settings. It is also more easily understood as it most often refers to contemporary issues embedded in popular culture. For instance, 'A Woman's Obsession' Chantal Stoman's exhibition at the Chanel Nexus gallery in Tokyo[693], evoked consumer culture through the portrayal of Japanese women's obsession with high-end fashion (see *fig. 130* and *131*). In these images, the Chanel logo is shown in such subtle but obvious ways, that it could be argued that the Chanel products work as product placement.

Contemporary art also fits with companies' image as trendsetters. By introducing emerging artists, brands show awareness of trends in all fields. In turn, the art exhibited fits with the trends set by brands. Brands therefore act as pioneers. The displaying of emerging artists is essential, particularly for concept stores who take on the function of introducing new trends, acting as discoverers. As already described in chapter 2, in such stores, buyers also often act as the in-store exhibitions curators, demonstrating that new art trends are uncovered in the same way as new fashion trends. This thirst for novelty is important for brands that are concerned in keeping an innovative image. To achieve this, there is a trend for established high-end fashion houses to employ younger designers[694] to conceive their collections, fitting with the youth-centric culture currently prevailing.

Fashion houses take on the role of curators as they actively shape the art world. In fact, high-end fashion houses' mass-appeal can do more to contribute to artists' fame. For instance, Sam Taylor Wood or Spencer Tunick[695] have surely benefited from the exhibition of their work in Selfridges, making them known to a wider public. Stores' popularity can do a lot to promote

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[693] 'A Woman's Obsession', Chanel Nexus Hall, Ginza, Tokyo, 7 - 26 February 2006

[694] Some of the most established fashion houses have appointed young designers to invigorate their labels: in 1997, Nicolas Ghesquière was appointed head designer for Balenciaga (founded in 1914) at the age of 26. In 2001, Christopher Bailey, aged 30, became the artistic designer of Burberry (founded in 1856), and José Enrique Ona Selfa produced his first collection for Loewe also aged 30. In 2002, Vanessa Seward became head designer for Azzaro, aged 31. In 2003, Olivier Theyskens presented his first collection for the Maison Rochas (established in 1925) aged 26, as well as Oswald Boateng for Givenchy Homme aged 35. In 2005, Ivana Omazic was appointed head designer for Céline (established 1945) aged 32; Thomas Engelhart for Thierry Mugler aged 31; Phoebe Philo for Chloé aged 31 and Frida Giannini for Gucci womenswear (founded in 1921), aged 33. In 2006, Matthew Williamson took over as creative designer of Pucci (established in 1967) aged 34. In 2006, Raf Simons aged 27 became chief designer of Jil sander, Ricardo Tisci aged 30 for Givenchy: Jones, Terry and Mair, Avril (eds.), *Fashion Now*, Taschen, London, 2003; Maggiori, Claude (ed.), 'Génération Mode', *Extra Palace* (France), (Special edition), February 2006; and Singer, Sally, 'Couture Club', Vogue (UK), Avril 2006, pp. 788 - 792

[695] Spencer Tunick staged a performance piece in the department store, Sunday 27 April 2003

artists, Colette has become a sought after place for artists to sell their art books[696]. Independently of art institutions, brands therefore decide that they have the capacity to confer awards to artists. This shows that brands believe they can take on the role of deciding and recognising 'good' art. But whose taste is it, is it not a taste that ultimately would reflect their brands? Most often, the artists awarded have created an art that is not controversial, with qualities sought by brands, reflecting their images. With its Louis Vuitton Young Artists' Awards, LVMH did not seek to reward emerging artists but artists that produce safe and already recognised work. Part of the entry conditions is to be in the second year onward of an art school. Three of the five laureates of the 13th edition of the Louis Vuitton Young Artists' Awards were therefore students at the France's most prestigious art college l'Ecole Normale Superieure des Beaux art de Paris. Hence, the work awarded was not offensive, simple and 'safe', as was Jessica Moritz's 'Valse' (see *fig. 132*). Nevertheless, LVMH insists that '*since its launch in 1994 the Louis Vuitton Young Artists' Award has enabled over 80 French and foreign students to complete their training abroad. Today a great number of those award winners are making a promising artistic career*'. Hugh Aldersey-Williams warned of the lack of credibility of some of these corporate art awards[697]. He cited the Perrier-Jouët Selfridges Design Prize, inaugurated in 2001, which already no longer existed in May 2006, giving little credibility of the 'dedication' of these brands for the arts.

High-end fashion brands appear to be creating a 'non-official' art, an art that is not recognised and formed by established institutions. Under this private control, we are likely to see an art that is directed into one common style, an art that does not raise controversial themes, with the censorship of political and religious issues. So far, in-store galleries or cultural centres exhibitions have been focused with themes connected with fashion: celebrities (Alison Jackson's performance in Selfridges) or consumer culture (Chantal Stoman at the Chanel Nexus centre). Still, by establishing cultural centres and awards, fashion houses transform their roles. They become part of the art world, art institutions themselves. In fact, fashion houses believe they can supplant the functions of art institutions. In 2000, the French department store, Les Galeries Lafayette housed the art collection made by over fifty artists that had been evicted from Parisian buildings they squatted[698]. One of the exhibited artists explained: *'we were on the verge of becoming homeless'* (...) *We turned to the Ministry of Culture, galleries, art fairs for help, in vain... The Galeries Lafayette immediately offered us 250 square metres*[699]*'*. This example shows that stores have a philanthropic status.

The belief that brands can take over the public function of cultural institutions seems to be shared by Miuccia Prada who considers that the Prada foundation is able to give artists more

[696] Comments made by Japanese artists Kaori Nasu and Midori Araki, to the author in separate interviews in October 2006.
[697] Aldersey-Williams, Hugh, 'The Fame Game', *Blueprint*, May 2006, p. 122
[698] 'Move Expo', Galerie Lafayette, Paris, 17 August - 26 October 2000
[699] Article originally published in French: "On était au bord de la clochardisation, (…), on a sollicité le ministère de la Culture, les galeries, les salons, sans succès… Les Galeries Lafayettes nous ont immédiatement offert 250 mètres carrés… François, Virgine, 'On Trouve de Tout aux Galeries Lafayette, même des Squats', *Marianne*, 2 October 2000: <http://www.Marianne2.fr/On-trouve-de-toux-aux-Galeries-Lafayette,-meme-des-squats_a24470.html> (last accessed 13 December 2005)

opportunities than they would have found from public institutions: '*at the foundation, we decided for a few years to follow the big dreams of artists, such as Mariko Mori or Marc Quinn. We wanted to help them do something that they couldn't do*'[700]. Louis Vuitton also saw itself as enabling the cultural regeneration process of the Champs Élysées. The fashion house has also received the government and public support for its project to create the Centre Louis Vuitton pour l'Art Contemporain.

High-fashion brands have also supported cultural events by collaborating with galleries or governments, taking on the exhibition to the wider public. Selfridges has staged events coinciding with major exhibitions such as 'Africa Remix' at the Hayward gallery. Pursuing the theme of the exhibition, Selfridges commissioned pieces by El Anatsui the Ghanaian sculptor which were displayed in the windows[701]. In 2006, tying in with the events organised by the City of London to celebrate the Chinese culture (China in London season), Selfridges commissioned the Chinese artist Wang Qingsong to create an installation in the shop windows[702] (see *fig. 133*).

Colette, the concept store, also demonstrated the credibility of its in-store exhibitions through a twelve-page supplement in the French national newspaper, *Liberation*, on the English culture, the theme of its 'UK Jack, OK' exhibition[703]. This exhibition initially presented in Colette, Paris, received further recognition due to its collaborating with major galleries, brands and other official bodies (L'Alliance Française, Eurostar...) which gave credibility to the quality of the store's cultural programme. Furthermore, it toured to the UK, were it was exhibited in Dover Street Market[704], the Comme des Garçons concept store and in the Japan department store, Isetan[705], in Tokyo. This demonstrates the new role taken on by in-store galleries. While showing a shared dedication to art, the tour also served to link the stores, make them known amongst the diverse consumers and building a crossover appeal. It also shows that stores' galleries can create their own independent networks and organise touring exhibitions like public institutions. In-store galleries could therefore grow to be respected from the art world and even collaborate with them in the future. Touring exhibitions can also create a form of co-branding, signalling that the brands are linked, on a seemingly non-commercial level. Such touring exhibitions can also demonstrate the global presence of brands. For example, Prada organised an exhibition of Prada skirts installations, 'Waist Down', which began in Japan, and then toured to other Prada stores, such as the Shanghai flagship, the New York Epicenter and other European cities. Touring exhibitions

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[700] Irving, Mark, 'Anytime I Think I Might be Becoming too Arty… an Interview with Miuccia Prada', *Art Review*, September 2006, p. 61
[701] Spence, Rachel, 'Vibrant Africans Dazzle Across Europe', *The Financial Times*, 28 May 2005: <http://www.ft.com/cm/s/98ae14f2-ce85-11d9-8cb5-00000e2511c8.html> (last accessed 16 March 2007); and anon., 'El Anatsui, New York', October Gallery press release: <http://www.octobergallery.co.uk/newsletters/el_anatsui_ny/> (last accessed 16 March 2007)
[702] Selfridges commissioned two windows by Chinese contemporary artists, *Follow Me* by Wang Qingsong, 23 January - 26 February 2006, and *Eating the City* by Song Dong, 15 - 22 February 2006, anon., 'Art at Selfridges', *Time Out* (London), 18 - 25 January 2006, p. 5
[703] anon., 'Guide Tentations - La Part de Londres', *Liberation* (Special 12 page supplement), 24 February 2006
[704] 'UK Jack, OK!', Dover Street Market, London, 10 April – 13 May 2006
[705] 'UK Jack, OK!', Isetan, Tokyo, 13 august - 15 September 2006

fig. 130 and 131: Photographs by Chantal Stoman part of the series *A Woman's Obsession*, 2005, in which brand logos appear like commercial placements as it is commonly done in films

fig. 132: Jessica Moritz, *Valse n°2,* 2006

fig. 133: Wang Qingsong's performance in the shop windows of Selfridges, February 2006

such as this one create an homogenisation of the cultural program presented by the brand, and are most probably easier to install and promote.

The concept of touring exhibitions has become more popular, with brands developing conceptual 'touring galleries'. In late 2007, Hermès created the 'H Box': a mobile gallery designed by Portuguese artist and architect Didier Fiuza and Benjamin Well, Director of Artists Space, a New York gallery and agency dedicated to supporting artistic experimentation[706]. This container-like gallery described as a *'nomadic screening room'*[707] displays contemporary video art by emerging artists and tours throughout the world to be presented within major public cultural institutions[708] (see *fig. 134*). The first exhibition took place in November 2008, where the 'H Box' was exhibited within the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The mobile screening space is due to tour to other prestigious cultural venues such as the Tate Modern, London and be part of the Yokohama Trienniale in Japan. In the same period, Chanel unveiled an astonishing mobile gallery: 'Chanel Mobile Art', designed by Zaha Hadid[709]. Functioning as a travelling museum, this mobile space tours the world, with its first exhibition in Hong Kong in February 2008[710] (see *fig. 135*). Such spaces take the concept of touring-exhibitions further. Brands get the benefit of having set cultural agendas without having to tour to (or built in their stores) already existing gallery spaces. With their sophisticated and high-architecture designs, these mobile galleries are celebrated as work of art. In fact, these spaces resemble existing mobile art installations and experimental exhibition spaces. For instance, the 'Chanel Mobile Art' structure is very similar to Japanese artist Mariko Mori's *Wave UFO*, 2003. This installation also toured the world, being presented in both public and private spaces such as in the IBM offices in New York (see *fig. 136*). With these spaces, brands do mimic galleries and their exhibition formats, but rather, works of art which are exhibited for temporary duration in cultural spaces.

In this section, I considered how retailers have attempted to give more credibility to the relation with art. I argue that this is established through several steps: the creation of art galleries and centres, the establishments of corporate awards and associations with other cultural institutions. I found that establishing art centres and foundations can be a way for brands to show the highbrow taste of their directors and designers, as it has been the case for the galerie du Jour established by Agnès Troublé (better known as Agnès b) and the Prada Fondazione established by Miuccia Prada. Even if the relationship such brands have with art comes from a genuine and generous desire to support art, it also serves to put brands in the best of lights. In the same way, art awards established by high-end fashion brands fulfil a commercial function. Such corporate awards serve to demonstrate that brands have the

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[706] Artists Space: <http://www.artitsspace.org/about/mission/mission.html> (last accessed 13 March 2008)
[707] anon., 'H Box', PriceWaterhouseCoopers - PwC in culture: <http://www.pwcinculture.lu/204.0.html> (last accessed 13 March 2008)
[708] Pigeat, Anaël, 'H Box by Hermès', *Crash*, Winter 2007/2008, pp. 54 – 55
[709] Chanel Mobile Art: <http://www.chanel-mobileart.com/?lang=en_eu> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
[710] Pigeat, Anaël, 'Mobile Art: Chanel Contemporary Art Container by Zaha Hadid', *Crash*, Winter 2007/2008, pp. 56 – 57. The first exhibition of the Chanel Mobile art took place in Hong Kong, and is to travel to Tokyo, New York, London, Moscow and Paris.

fig. 134: 'H Box': Hermès' mobile art space is to be presented in major public art galleries and museums, giving credibility to the quality of the pieces exhibited. The advantage of a mobile gallery for the brand is also to publicise its relationship with culture and to strengthen brand recognition in the country visited by the 'H Box'.

fig. 135: The 'Chanel Mobile Art' space, designed by Zaha Hadid, a mobile art gallery also functions as a work of art, and particularly resembles Mariko Mori's *Wave UFO,* 2003 (below, *fig. 136)*

capacity of 'judging' art, therefore being establishing itself as a part of it. The consequence for brands to establish art awards also is that brands can denote 'worthy art', and this art becomes part of the brand image. In fact, I argued that there is a pattern for brands to support similar style of artworks, politically correct, and that usually relates to fashion and consumer culture. In the last part of this section, I investigated how corporate galleries receive more legitimacy by working in collaboration with other cultural institutions, which endorses the quality and authenticity of corporate galleries as true cultural institutions.

c. Fashion Presented as Art: Fashion Designers and Retailers as Creative Practitioners

Fashion retailers have strategically undertaken for art and fashion to converge, to create seemingly intrinsic links between the two disciplines. These associations have supported the views considering high-end fashion as art and fashion designers as artists. There are parallels between art and fashion, which have been particularly acknowledged in the last decade with the publication of books discussing fashion as art[711], and through exhibitions presenting fashion as art as described earlier. Numerous publications have been released discussing the links between fashion and art, presenting conceptual clothing. In the art's sector, this question has been raised in the form of exhibitions, presented in galleries and museums, reassembling works of art that can be assimilated with fashion and clothing by fashion designers than is so conceptual it can be viewed as art[712]. These considerations, even if they do not reach conclusive views, contribute to making the presence of art in retail outlets more acceptable.

Yuniya Kawamura defined fashion as a *'system of institutions that produces the concept as well as the phenomenon/practice of fashion'*[713]. This definition can be applied to art; art is also a concept that necessitates institutional recognition to be accepted and exercised. There has been more 'artistic fashion' than there has been 'fashionable art', suggesting that the fashion world has been more active in creating associations between the two disciplines. High-end fashion retailers have attempted to introduce art throughout the life cycle of fashion, recognised by Kawamura as the processes[714] transforming clothing, the raw material, into the conceptual notion of fashion.

At the production stage, art can be a source of inspiration. Art can influence fashion designs. Fashion designers regularly claim to have been inspired by works of art or entire artistic movement as Alexander McQueen with his Autumn/Winter 2006 prêt-à-porter collection influenced by the pre-Raphaelite movement, John Galliano made an 'interpretation' of the turn-of-the-twentieth century paintings, such as *La Buveuse d'Absinthe* by Spilliaert (1907) and *La Femme au Chapeau Vert* by Kees van Dongen (1907) in his Autumn/Winter 2007/2008 collection (see *fig. 137* and *138*). Direct references have been also made like Jean-Charles de

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[711] Müller, Florence, *Art & Fashion,* Thames & Hudson Ltd., London, 2000; and Mackrell, A, *Art & Fashion: The Impact of Art on Fashion, and Fashion on Art,* B.T. Batsford, London, 2005

[712] 'Exhibitions include: 'Rapture: Art's Seduction by Fashion since 1970', Barbican Gallery, London, 10 October - 23 December 2002; the 'Fashion of Architecture: Constructing the Architecture of Fashion', Deluxe Gallery, London, 12 - 21 February 2004 and The Center for Architecture, New York, 11 January - 11 March 2006; and 'Skins & Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture', Embankment Galleries, Somerset House, London, 24 April - 10 August 2008

[713] These processes include the stages of: the production, distribution, diffusion, reception, adoption and consumption, Kawamura, Yuniya, *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, Berg, Oxford, 2005

[714] Kawamura, Yuniya, *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies*, Berg, Oxford, 2005

Castelbajac who incorporated Warhol's iconic portraits in the design of some of his pieces (see *fig.* 139). Still, the influence of art does not suffice to accredit such clothing as works of art. There is a need accreditation from the art's world, be recognised by art critics, art followers and artists themselves.

The recent controversy surrounding 'size zero' models, accused of provoking eating disorders amongst fashion followers, has compelled designers to select models with a minimum Body Mass Index (BMI)[715], challenging conceptions of the role of fashion designers. Jane Boardman, Director of Talk PR, the public relations agency representing the London Fashion Week, claimed that with these restrictions, some designers have felt censored and their creativity curtailed[716]. Should designers be considered as artists, able to benefit from a large scale of creative freedom or as artistic directors of large companies implying that they have moral and social responsibilities? The consideration of designers as artists falls within the unremitting debate questioning fashion as art. However, fashion designers, in particular those who have pushed the boundaries of fashion by creating 'radical'[717] or conceptual clothing insist not to be viewed as artists[718] but creators, and ask their work to be regarded as having artistic qualities rather than be defined as art[719]. Without the intention of lowering their status or the creative character of their profession, it appears more advantageous to be considered creators rather than artists. The art world is a conservative sector and works of art produced for commercial purposes are difficulty accepted. This explains why there has been more involvement from artists in fashion, than fashion designers in the art world as the commercial nature of fashion conflicts with established art.

Although artists benefit from greater creative freedom, they are constricted by the conventions of the artworld and do not have the mass-market appeal enjoyed by fashion designers. Fashion illustrates the dichotomy between high and popular culture and the artists that want to be involved with fashion often claim to be drawn by the popular character of fashion. However, unlike works of art, fashion is purposeful and clothing is functional, designed to be 'wearable' and produced along the time cycles of seasonable trends, with the objective to be sold. It is therefore difficult for fashion designers to produced non-commercial designs, or clothing that may be considered as 'unwearable', defeating the core purpose of fashion. This why showpieces, created as experimentations to represent collections' themes, have been considered as works of art, and have been included in exhibitions held in art institutions to demonstrate the crossovers between the two disciplines.

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[715] In September 2006, the Madrid Fashion Week imposed a ban of models with a BMI of less than 18: anon., 'Madrid Bans Waifs from Catwalks', *BBC News* (online), 3 September 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5341202.stm> (last accessed 17 January 2006)
[716] Jane Boardman made this comment during 'the Changing Face of Art and Audience', a talk organised by the British Creative Exchange at the Tate Modern gallery, London, 15 March 2007.
[717] Wilcox, Claire (ed.), *Radical Fashion*, V&A Publications, London, 2003; accompanying the 'Radical Fashion' exhibition, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 18 October 2001 - 6 January 2002
[718] Persson, Thomas (ed.), 'Ten Years Reconsidered', *Self-Service*, Autumn/Winter 2005, p. 168
[719] Kei Kagami, fashion designer, multiple discussions, February 2005 - May 2007, London

Model wearing a John Galliano outfit from the Autumn/Winter 2007-8 collection *(fig. 137)*, inspired by the *Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden* (1926) by the German painter Otto Dix *(fig. 138)*

fig. 139: Warhol-inspired dress by Jean Charles de Castelbajac

Nevertheless, some fashion designers have worked on both platforms. Hussein Chalayan has exhibited his work in galleries, and represented Turkey, his native country, at the 51st Venice Art Biennale in 2005 with a video installation *The Absence Presence*. Designer Karl Lagerfeld has published and exhibited his photographs on multiple occasions[720]. Hedi Slimane, who designed the Dior Homme line until March 2007 has also been very much involved in the art world and has published numerous books of his photography. His last exhibition to date 'Portrait of a Performer', took place at the Galerie Gmurzynska, Switzerland in 2006. Alber Elbaz, head designer for Lanvin, exhibited his illustrations in the Lanvin store, in Paris. He also produced limited editions of the 'capsule 22 Faubourg' suitcase with his illustrations.

To elevate the status of fashion, fashion retailers and institutions have promoted the representation of fashion designers as artists. Fashion designers who have not received traditional fashion education, in particular those with an art or architecture background have been publicised, turned into 'accidental fashion designers', who would be unconventional working as outsiders. Miuccia Prada's past as a communist militant and mime artist is publicised as much as Paco Rabanne's architectural background. The presentation of fashion designers as artists is part of the phenomena conferring high-end fashion designers a celebrity status. High-end fashion designers are not anonymous artisans, unlike designers in many other fields. Like artists, fashion designers sign their names on their creations. Fashion designers create brands and, in turn, brands' images are bestowed upon them. However, because their names are synonymous with commercial work, high-end fashion designers, even those who can assume the status of artists, do not have their creations necessarily regarded as art. Fashion houses have therefore sought the direct involvement of artists at the design stage of the commodities with the desire to make their products seen as works of art. Tim Edwards argued that '*fashion today is less about material clothes and is more about the image the designers project*'[721], a situation, which he perceived as an extension of the celebrity culture. Louis Vuitton has presented in series of printed advertisements, famous personalities including sportsmen (Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf), politician (Mikhaïl Gorbachev), actors (Catherine Deneuve) and now plans to portray Marc Jacobs, principal designer for Louis Vuitton since 1998 (see *fig. 140*). This example shows that designers can represent an integral part of the marketing and publicity of high-end fashion brands. It demonstrates that the identity and personality of the designer plays a key role, designers having to 'personify' the brand.

Art plays a role in the crucial stage of the 'distribution' of fashion. Early in the history of haute couture and prêt-à-porter, fashion shows, also known as catwalks, have been staged in cultural sites such as museums, galleries, exhibition halls and art colleges; in Paris for instance, fashion shows are conventionally held in major national cultural centres such as 'le Grand Palais' or 'l'Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux Arts de Paris' (ENSBA), (see *fig.* 141 and 142).

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[720] 'Karl Lagerfeld: Farewell to Daylight', Pace/Macgill Gallery, New York, 18 May - 17 June 2006
[721] Edwards, Tim, *Contradictions of Consumption: Concepts, Practices and Politics in Consumer Society*, Open University Press, London, 2002, p. 66

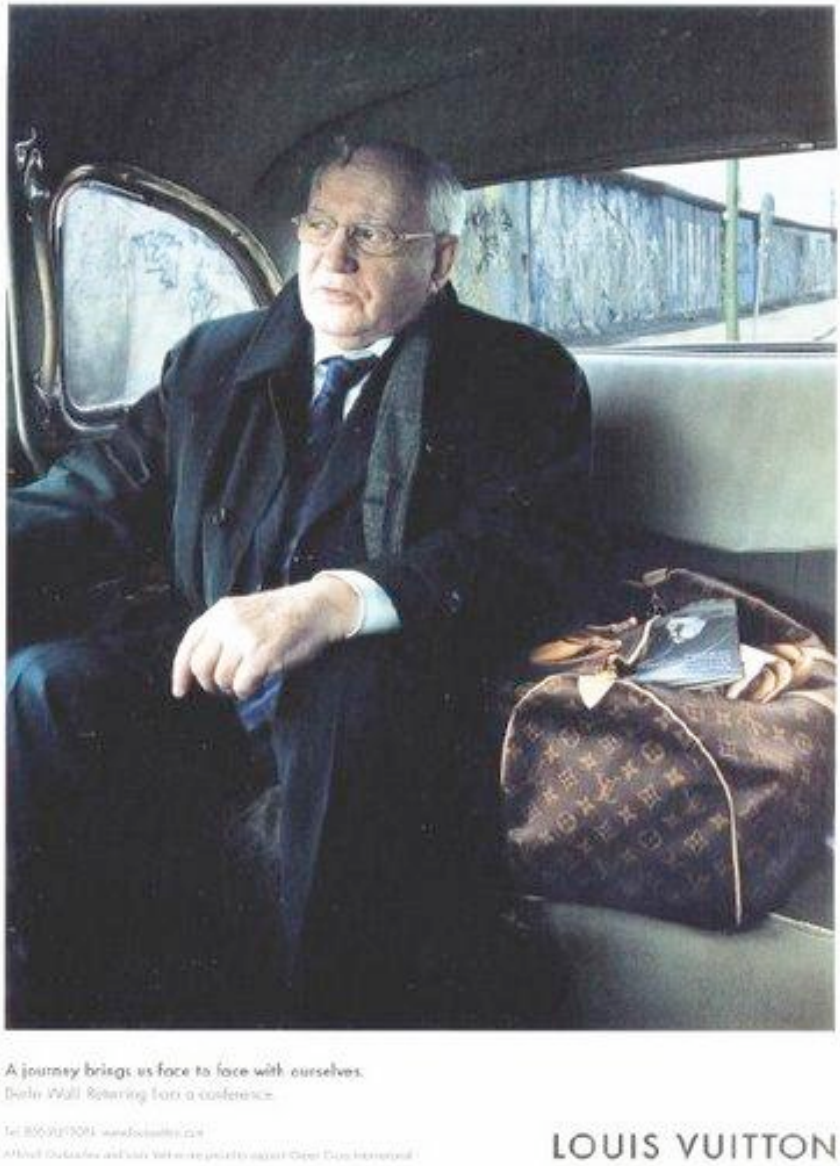

fig. 140: Former head of state of the U.S.S.R (1985 - 1991), Mikhail Gorbachev was invited by Louis Vuitton to feature in its 2007 'Core Values' advertising campaign

fig. 141: Frank Perrin, *Defilé 028_CHANEL*, January 2006, Grand Palais, Paris

fig. 142: Frank Perrin, *Défilé 024DRIES VAN NOTEN*, Juillet 2005, École Des Beaux-Arts De Paris

The choice of these locations is symbolic, indicating that the fashion world has endeavoured to turn its bi-annual commercial presentations into cultural events. It would seem irrelevant and perhaps, be impossible for other economic sectors to have their awards or conventions in such places, indicating that fashion has acquired a privileged relationship with culture. Fashion shows fulfil a far greater role than merely presenting new collections to fashion buyers, journalists and clients; they represent an opportunity for designers to express themselves, introduce the themes and explain the meaning of their latest collections.

In *Fashion at the Edge,* Caroline Evans[722] presented fashion shows as being expressive of Guy Debord's theory, which views capitalism as producing an accumulation of '*spectacles*' in society, creating a dichotomy between reality and image[723]. Pursuing Evans' comparison, I have found that fashion shows epitomise Debord's belief that '*all that once was directly lived has become mere representation*'[724]. Fashion shows are based on the abstraction of reality, as it is not clothing that is sold, but fashion, revealing the dichotomy on which fashion is based. Fashion shows fulfil the same function as the spectacle which Debord identified as causing: '*a world that is no longer directly perceptible to be seen via different specialized mediations, it is inevitable that it should elevate the human sense of sight to the special place once occupied by touch; the most abstract of the senses, and the most easily deceived, sight is naturally the most readily adaptable to present-day society's generalized abstraction*'.[725] Whereas the purchase of clothing calls for opportunities for consumers to touch commodities, the purchase of fashion occurs from visual contact, which justifies why fashion houses' most crucial sales do not involve direct encounters with commodities. And, rather than regarding sight as sense of deceit, I would argue that sight is the most suitable sense to appreciate fashion, justifying the emphasis put on the visual character of fashion shows. Fashion is not just a concept but a language[726], which is why fashion shows involve the communication of messages to an audience. However, fashion shows do not create dialogues, the audience is passive, constrained in the position of observant. Comparison can therefore be drawn with the world of the performing and visual arts. For this reason, high-end fashion designers have taken inspiration from these disciplines such as: sculpture, video, dance, theatre and music. In the last decade, some fashions shows have been so unconventional that they have been assimilated with Performance or Live art[727]. In October 1988, Martin Margiela presented his first collection in Paris at the Café de la Gare (a small Parisian theatre). This show was conceptual and could have functioned as a genuine art performance, as the models, wearing Japanese clogs arched on rounded high heels, walked in red paint, then on a white cotton rugs that were used for the subsequent collection[728]. Similarly, Hussein Chalayan staged a memorable show for his Autumn/Winter 2000 collection at Sadler's Wells, in London. The

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[722] Evans, Caroline, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness,* Yale University Press, London, 2003, p. 67
[723] Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, Zone Books, New York, 1995
[724] ibid., p. 12
[725] ibid., p. 17
[726] Lurie, Alison, *The Language of Clothes*, First Owl Books, New York, 1981; and Barnard, Malcolm, *Fashion as Communication*, Routledge, London, 1996
[727] These genres are hard to define as they challenge and question conventional views of art. Performance or Live art focus on the actions of the artists, associate genres from other disciplines such as experimental theatre, dance or music and are produced by artists from varied backgrounds.
[728] anon., 'Clothes and Nothing But', WAD, (The Northern Europe Issue), Winter 2006, p. 63

stage was used for a play, with an interior placed on the stage, like a set design. To the surprise of the audience, the models stepped into the wooden chairs and coffee tables, which morphed into dresses.

Like Performance art, fashion shows are staged live, in front of an audience inducing a two-way communication, as a reaction is expected from the spectators. In fact, audiences react in the same way they would do during a live performance. There have been occasions when fashion shows audiences have been shocked to the point of walking out or booing as in Comme des Garçons' Spring/Summer 1995 Menswear collection fashion show which featured clothing which people saw as highly offensive, as they resembled the uniforms worn by Nazi concentration camps prisoners[729]. Audiences more frequently show their appreciations; they customarily clap at the end of shows and in some cases, make standing ovations as for Dolce & Gabbana's Spring/Summer 2006 show, celebrating the 20th year anniversary of their label[730]. Fashion shows are directed through certain conventions, and as in art, conventions have been disrupted to further creativity. Instead of keeping the audience passive, spectator participation can be requested as in 'happenings'[731] or experimental theatre. The format of the show itself has been altered by Ann-Sophie Back who begins her shows by saluting her public and presenting the entire collection, which is customarily reserved to the end to create some sort of 'bouquet final'. The very fact that designers usually appear at the end of their shows contributes to their image as artists.

Designers could even be compared to orchestra directors, who in ballet or opera are seen during the performance but are celebrated at the end. Drawing the comparison further, live music has also been performed at shows, as many of Hussein Chalayan's show, notably[732] for his '*Medea*' show, for which '*Mishima*', a piece composed by Philip Glass was performed for the first time live. Not only has music been performed, music has in many cases been composed especially for a fashion show. Recognised musicians have performed live during catwalk shows as amongst many other Tori Amos for Viktor & Rolf's Autumn/Winter 2005-2006 and Rufus Wainwright for the Men's Spring/Summer 2007 fashion shows. Models also play an important part in bringing an artistic character to shows. Dancers and acrobats or other performing artists have been cast as models. Recognised artists have also taken part in fashion shows as models. Comme des Garçons invited actors John Lurie, John Malkovich and Julian Sands, and artist Enzo Cucchi to model[733]. Technology also played a role in giving artistic dimensions to the shows; Alexander McQueen ended 'Weird Science', the show for his Autumn/Winter

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[729] Menkes, Suzy, "Auschwitz" Fashions Draw Jewish Rebuke', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 February 1995: <http://www.iht.com/articles/1995/02/04/suzy.php> (last accessed 22 April 2007)
Evans, Caroline, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness*, Yale University Press, London, 2003, p. 19
[730] Rushton, Susie, 'D&G's 20-year Romance Comes to Life on Catwalk', *The Independent*, 30 September 2005: <http://news.independent.co.uk/europe/article316105.ece> (last accessed 23 April 2007)
[731] 'The terms 'Performance' and 'happenings' are used as defined by the Tate Galleries' glossary: Performance art: <http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=218> (last accessed 5 April 2007).and 'Happenings': <http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=131> (last accessed 5 April 2007)
[732] Evans, Caroline, *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity and Deathliness*, Yale University Press, London, 2003, p. 19
[733] Sudjic, Deyan, *Rei Kawakubo and Comme des Garçons*, Rizzoli, New York, 1990, p. 13

2006 ready-to-wear collection with a life size holographic projection of Kate Moss wearing one of his dresses and created by video maker Baillie Walsh (see video 6).

The presentation of 'showpieces' also supports the comparison of fashion shows with art performances. Kei Kagami, the London-based Japanese fashion designer whose shows are particularly renowned for their striking showpieces, believes that they make the specificity of catwalks[734] (see *fig. 143* and *144*). The unique character of showpieces has received the attention of the art world, many of Kagami's showpieces have been displayed during art exhibition to show the close relationship between fashion and art. For instance, Kagami's 'head holder dress', taken from the Autumn / Winter 2005-6 collection with the theme 'correction' was exhibited during the 'Fashion of Architecture' exhibition at the Center for Architecture in New York, 11 January - 11 March 2006.

The 'theatrical' character of fashion shows is what distinguishes fashion shows from trade shows and exhibitions. What would be the benefit of staging a fashion show if it is to replicate what would be otherwise seen in trade shows or catalogues? Fashion houses invest so much to create 'theatrical' commercial presentations that fashion shows become part of the commodity. The 'spectacle' of fashion shows adds value to the clothes, influencing sales almost as importantly as the designs of the products.

However, fashion shows have been disregarded as legitimate cultural events as their audience was limited and selected. In 2007, Giorgio Armani became the first high-end fashion designer to broadcast a fashion show live and unrestrictedly over the internet. It is expected that this will constitute a trend which will soon be followed by other designers. Yet, the intention may not be to make high-end fashion more inclusive but to improve sales. The internet and video-mobile phone technology have created new platforms for fashion purchasing. In Japan, a country, which has the most advanced mobile phone technology, online mobile phone sales represent an increasing proportion of total sales[735]. Again, parallels can be made with the art sector which has also been revolutionised by online sales. Buyers can now purchase works of art online, viewed from jpeg format pictures and participate at auctions through the internet[736].

Fashion shows' unique character, which merges disciplines has even inspired artists. In 2002, Franko B, the Italian performance artist staged a live performance at the Tate Modern gallery

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[734] Comment made during a conversation with the designer, in December 2006, London

[735] anon., 'Shopping by Phone Takes Off', *Japan Echo Inc.*, 25 July 2006: <http://web-japan.org/trends/lifestyle/lif060725.html> (last accessed 20 April 2007)

[736] Comments made by John Weich, Editor in chief of *Art Review* during 'the Changing Face of Art and Audience', a talk organised by the British Creative Exchange at the Tate Modern gallery, London, 15 March 2007. Weich was referring to Charles Saatchi in particular, who had personally told him he had purchased a work of art he had only viewed from an online representation.

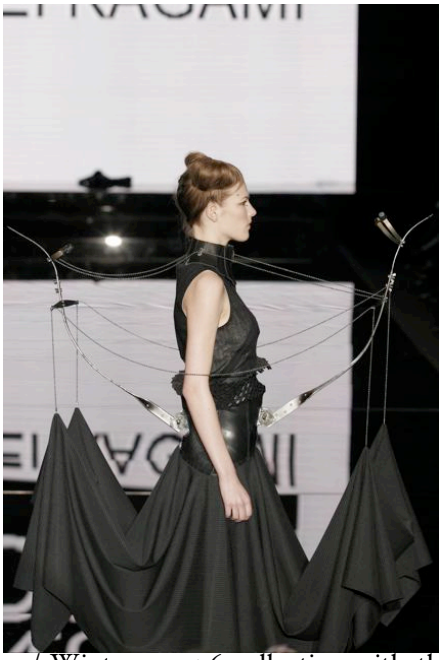

fig. 143: Taken from the Autumn / Winter 2005-6 collection with the theme 'correction', this 'head holder dress' is connected to a system of metal ball chain and bars, which can be controlled by the wearer to suspend the dress; once lifted the metal bars touch the wearer's head, 'correcting' posture and balance. This striking showpiece was exhibited during the 'Fashion of Architecture' exhibition at the Center for Architecture in New York, 11 January - 11 March 2006

fig. 144: The 'Watercress skirt' from Kei Kagami's Spring / Summer 2006 collection with the theme 'ecology' is another example of a catwalk showpiece. This skirt had real watercress growing on the fabric, giving it an organic feel characteristic of spring and summer seasons. This skirt may not be 'wearable' in functional everyday sense, however, the purpose of this piece was to effectively transmit the theme of the collection and give a sense of 'the spectacle' specific to a catwalk show, making it distinct from trade show.

entitled *I Miss You!* emulating the format of fashion shows. No clothes were exhibited, rather Franko B walked naked, covered in blood along a conventional fashion runway to play '*with the worlds of fashion and art whilst confronting the human form at its most existential and essential*'[737] (see *fig. 145*).

The diffusion stage of fashion is decisive in the fashion/art polemic as it involves publicising fashion to consumers, with the ability of influencing consumers' perception of fashion as art. Unlike the production and distribution stages which are kept within the secluded world of fashion retailers, buyers and commentators, the diffusion stage aims to reach consumers. The diffusion of fashion is crucial, affecting the following stages of the reception, adoption and consumption of fashion. Fashion houses therefore seek to promote their products as art by attempting to elevate their advertising campaigns. Fashion houses have commissioned established fine artists such as Cindy Sherman (for Comme des Garçons and Dorothé Bis), Juergen Teller (for Marc Jacobs) to shoot their advertising campaigns. These campaigns are usually striking, standing out from other advertising, as they usually do not have a 'commercial finish', preserving the artists' individual photographic styles (see *fig. 146* and *147*).

Coincidentally, some fashion magazines have become more serious, producing more sophisticated fashion spreads, and covering a wider range of topics, such as art. For these reasons, fashion photographers have become more accepted by the art world and have seen their work forming the basis of publications, retrospectives, solo and group-exhibitions in public art institutions.

In conclusion, although the art/fashion polemic may never reach a conclusion, the fact that fashion as a discipline can be questioned as an art form demonstrates that the boundaries between the two disciplines are blurring. The ongoing debate, which I demonstrated is fuelled by fashion houses themselves, has helped legitimise collaborations between designers and artists, reducing the dichotomy between high and popular culture and promoting an acceptance of relationships between art and commerce. I also argued that no other major commercial sector can claim such closeness with art. In fact, fashion designers and brand owners have become acknowledged as important players of the art world. I came to the conclusion that by opening art galleries and cultural centres, high-end fashion brands can receive more than an endorsement by the art world, they manage to establish themselves as part of it. This I argued, enabled brands to reach their ultimate objective, that through their association with culture which their goods are perceived and valued as cultural artefacts. I go on to address in chapter 5, whether cultural institutions could have instigated this corporate involvement with art, and whether it benefits the cultural sector.

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[737] Franko B, *I Miss You!*, 2002: <http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/liveculture/frankob.htm> (last accessed 8 June 2006)

fig. 145: Franko b, *I Miss You!*, 2005, a performance at the Tate Modern gallery, borrowing from the visual elements of a catwalk show

fig. 146: Dorothé Bis Campaign1984 by Cindy Sherman

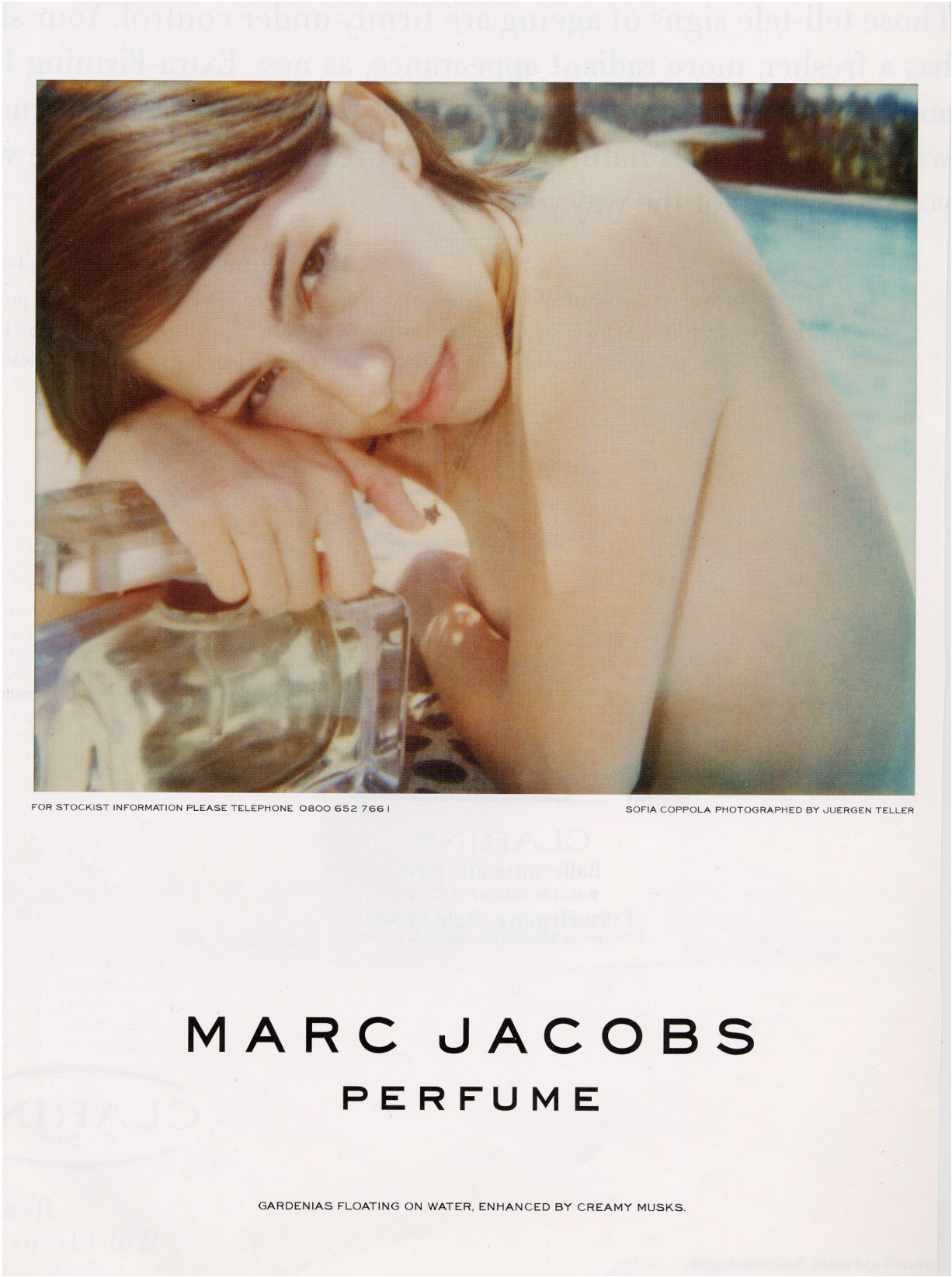

fig. 147: Marc Jacobs perfume advertising campaign 2007, photographed by Juergen Teller

5. Towards a Commodification of Art

The positioning of works of art in high-end fashion stores is a manifestation of the changes that have occurred in both cultural and retail sectors. It could be argued that displaying art in commercial environments is a consequence of two distinct phenomena: the privatisation of culture in capitalist states, which has driven cultural artefacts to be commodified; and attempts to make commerce 'cultural' by presenting commodities for sale as cultural artefacts. In this context, some 'cultural' institutions have come to resemble retail spaces, and at the same time, some stores have undertaken to entertain and educate their consumers to the extent that Andy Warhol's prediction that*: 'all department stores will become museums and all museums will become department stores'*[738] appears to have happened in many respects.

This chapter examines how and why there has been a rapprochement between culture and commerce. First, I consider the privatisation of culture, and how commerce has been reshaped as 'cultural'. I show that this change has caused a reconsideration of the standing of culture and commerce in society. I argue that this may been necessary to enable the acceptance of art in retail settings not only by the 'art world', but by the consuming public. I conclude that although previously perceived barriers between these sectors appear to have lowered, the culture/commerce divide is still present and strategically maintained by both sectors to preserve the elitist status of art.

a. The Use of Art as a Commercial Artefact in Galleries and Museums

The introduction of art in retail environments is a manifestation of the growing links between art and commerce, which many consider the result of the privatisation of culture. The privatisation of the arts has put more pressure on cultural institutions to be autonomous, leading them to operate as ordinary businesses, seeking profits. Indeed, the success of exhibitions and other art performances is measured in quantitative rather than qualitative terms. Yet, paradoxically, although governments have disengaged their economic support of the arts, they are at the same time often more reliant. Richard Florida showed that governments and governmental bodies have promoted art to boost the economy and

[738] Warhol, Andy cited in Jobey, Liz, 'Consuming Passions', *Tate Magazine*, January 2003: <http://www.tate.org.uk/magazine/issue3/consumingpassions.htm> (last accessed 27 September 2007)

'regenerate' cities and entire regions: '*if a city or region possesses or cultivates a vibrant and creative self-image then it is perceived as a good place for business, especially those businesses employing educated, technologically savvy and style-conscious young people*'[739]. This use of art to enhance the economy was central to the plan made during the early years of the '*New Labour*' government in the UK. '*Artists are viewed as magicians who can, with the touch of a chisel, make a mediocre building exciting, create meaningful public spaces, or catapult a run-down town to international renown*[740]'; and through a similar perspective, retailers now believe that artists can transform their stores, make them different and original, rejuvenate the brand identity and boost sales. Indeed, there has been a shift in the way in which the arts and culture are perceived in society in the twenty-first century in capitalist countries. They are no longer valued as 'relics', or activities that people can only passively appreciate; the arts are becoming more functional and participative. Governments are putting such pressures on the arts, that we are led to believe that art can tackle social ills. Art is expected to serve many objectives: to assist educators, soothe the sick in hospitals, enable good community relations, break stereotypes, eradicate racism, and more, while driving '*regeneration*'. This instrumentality of art by governments to solve social problems has been denounced by artists such as Mark Wallinger[741] who argued that it puts pressure on artists to produce works of art that fill 'tick boxes'.

To cope with demands made by governments for the arts to reach broad segments of the population and counter accusations of being elitist, public cultural institutions have endeavoured to attract wider audiences. In this perspective, they have attempted to develop closer links with the more popular art forms. For instance, the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) organised free concerts of successful music groups, (notably the Chemical Brothers[742], which was accompanied by projections produced by visual artists such as the United Visual Artists (UVA) to extend the links between art and music). The debate as to whether fashion is an art form (described in chapter 4), has not just been ignited by fashion brands, but by cultural institutions, who have increasingly given credibility and value to fashion as an art form. Catwalk shows have been presented in museums such as the Victoria & Albert museum, numerous exhibitions have been organised on fashion styles or particular brands. However, some critics, notably Katharine Washburn and John Thornton[743], have perceived such initiatives as '*dumbing down*' the distinctive and defining highbrow character of art. Author Joseph Epstein argued that the rise of '*middlebrow*' art puts at peril what was until then considered as art: '*middlebrow art is taken so much for highbrow in our day that the very category of highbrow is in doubt*'[744]. It is because of this '*dumbing down*' that the arts start to resemble the popular or '*lowbrow*' culture.

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[739] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, p. 18
[740] Appleton, Josie, 'Painting Over the Cracks', *Blueprint*, July 2005, p. 106
[741] Wallinger, Mark and Warnock, Mary (eds.), *Art for all? Their Policies and our Culture*, Peer, London, 2000
[742] The Chemical Brothers performed in Trafalgar square, London on 4th September 2007
[743] Washburn, Katharine and Thornton, John (eds.), *Dumbing Down: Essays on the Strip-mining of American Culture*, W. W. Norton & Company, London, 1996
[744] Epstein, Joseph, 'What To Do About the Arts' cited in Washburn, Katharine and Thornton, John (eds.), *Dumbing Down: Essays on the strip-mining of American Culture*, W. W. Norton & Company, London, 1996, p. 182

The pressure on cultural institutions by government to be self-sufficient has triggered a different type of professionalisation of public cultural institutions, leading museums and galleries to be run like ordinary commercial businesses. For example, the Tate has styled itself as a brand, applying its 'seal' to endorse commercial products such as a range of 'Tate' household paints (the same shades as used on the gallery walls) sold exclusively at the DIY chain, B&Q. Julian Stallabrass in *Art incorporated* wrote that '*as commodities have become more cultural, art has become further commodified, as its market has expanded and it has become increasingly integrated into the general run of capitalist activity*'[745]. However, I would argue that commodities only began to pose as cultural artefacts once culture had been commodified, which followed the privatisation of art. It was the cultural sector through the need of commercial survival which led the way for commerce to present its commodities as 'cultural'. The first step was the development of commercial activities run by cultural institutions, causing museums and galleries to 'borrow' methods from the retail and catering industries. Susan Nortis summarised this situation when she suggested that *'in this post-modern world, museums and galleries are becoming just another place to go shopping*'[746]: to what extent it is true? Gallery and museum stores have undeniably become a vital source of revenue. But they also reflect a demand from visitors. Consumerism pervades all activities, and although very few have the luxury of possessing works of art and antiques, it would be particularly frustrating for museum and gallery visitors not to be able to purchase something to remind them of their visit and experience. Nortis concluded that a majority of visitors '*believed shops made larger museums more-user friendly, despite the fact that some (mostly men) said they found all shops intimidating*'[747].

The privatisation of culture has had the effect of putting culture into the hands of bodies and corporations whose primary objective is not to conserve, but exploit art. Under corporate control and protection, art is predominantly used, not for the interest of the people, but to benefit the company involved. Yet it would be simplistic to believe that corporations only support art as investments or to facilitate tax exemptions as Stallabrass reported: '*over the long term, various studies have shown that investment in art performs about half as well as other types of investment*'[748].

It is likely that corporations have been inspired by the instrumental use of art by governments. Businesses quickly understood what the arts could offer them: *'art, as they understand it does not merely dictate or reflect values. History has taught them that the major artistic achievements of any civilisation hold penetrating insights for generations to come*'[749]. Gradually, for many in the corporate world, art was no longer viewed as '*an enemy to be undermined or a threat to consumer culture, but as symbolic ally*'[750]. However, art has been cast aside from commerce, artists who collaborated

[745] Stallabrass, Julian, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 81
[746] Nortis, Susan, 'Commerce and Culture', *Museums Journal*, December 1997, p. 99
[747] ibid., p. 100
[748] Stallabrass, Julian, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 105
[749] Jacobson, Marjory, *Art & Business: New Strategies for Corporate Collecting*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1993, p. 8
[750] Alberro, Alexander, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, MIT Press, London, 2003, p. 2

with retailers were despised and their work undermined, not only by the art world but by fellow artists. It is now hardly the case. Rapprochements between art and commerce have become accepted. This has been triggered not only from the disengagement of governments and corporate support for the arts, but by a radical change of artists' attitudes towards commerce. Several factors have contributed to this. First, there has been a professionalisation of artists through academia. Business modules have been included into the curriculum of many art courses, encouraging artists to be commercially minded, which is reflected in how artists currently manage their images and careers, as brand names. Indeed, artists, who were often, anonymous, poor, living marginal lives, now, for the most famous ones, enjoy the same lifestyles as the rich and famous. Fame and wealth has become what art students tend to aspire to, although it is in reality only achieved by a few. This revision of the image of artists has been promoted in the popular media, which treats the most successful artists as celebrities. In *the Tastemakers,* Rosie Millard observed how the art world itself had been glamorised with private views and openings attended as social events *'where the avant-garde mingles with high society'* and will be *'referred to in both the highbrow art magazines and the high-profile glossies'*[751]. For instance, the newly redesigned *Artreview*, a magazine dedicated to contemporary art, has devoted its last pages to the reporting of art-events. As in tabloids, artists mixed with celebrities and other socialites are portrayed in snapshots at exclusive events (see appendix, with a sample of a 'people' page from *ArtReview* and *Hello*).

A starting point for the rapprochement between art and commerce has therefore been the fact that artists themselves began producing works of art with features characteristic of commodities, transforming the traditional view of art as being lasting and unique. Artists started making ephemeral pieces, a feature previously assimilated with consumer goods, and in large quantities using mass-production techniques, such as photography and printing, testing the idea of art as 'original'. Another change has been the fact that artists no longer necessarily have to produce their pieces themselves. In this context, art became immaterial. Artists create the idea, and it does not matter whether they actually produce the piece or if a third party does. Such works of art could be compared to high-end fashion brands as they can rely more on the name and identity of the artist then on the quality or look of the piece. With these new techniques, works of art could be more easily reproduced and duplicated, as Walter Benjamin considered in the essay on *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical reproduction*[752], transforming the authorship of art. For similar reasons, American artists Andy Warhol established his *'factory'*, to make an analogy between the production methods of contemporary art and commercial commodities.

[751] Millard, Rosie, *The Tastemakers: U.K Art Now*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001, p. 8
[752] Benjamin, Walter, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', [originally published in 1936], reproduced in Bayley, Stephen (ed.), *Commerce and Culture: From Pre-Industrial Art to Post-Industrial Value*, Penhurst Press Limited, Tunbridge Wells, 1989, pp. 45 - 63

Works of art also began to resemble commercial commodities as artists reflected on consumerism, and at times directly incorporated consumer goods into their work. Once deemed vulgar, consumerism became accepted as a serious subject and prevailing social issue. More artists discussed it, notably with the Pop Art movement, described as constituting *'capitalist realism'*[753]. *'Shopping - A Century of Art and Consumer Culture'*[754], a major exhibition at the Tate gallery in Liverpool exposed how the exploration of consumerism has been central to the production of art in the twentieth century and highlighted the critical weight given this theme. This exhibition presented works of art by artists showing that what was at first a mere documentation of consumerism (like in the photography of Eugène Atget and Berenice Abbott) became a critique (Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer) and more recently, a celebration as in the works of Sylvie Fleury and Andreas Gursky.

Furthermore, rather than merely commenting on consumerist society in their work, artists have come to take an active role in it. It is now common for artists to create commercial commodities, usually at the invitation of major corporations. However, in this context, the role of the artist ought to be reconsidered. Because they must follow a brief, taking into account the realities and constraints of the manufacturing process of mass-production: with budget restrictions, compelled to use particular materials or shapes, etc, artists assume the role of designers. This fine line between art and design which became a them of work since the 1960s, has been the topic of numerous discussions. *Design ≠ Art*[755] edited by Barbara Bloemink and Joseph Cunningham, presented 'functional' pieces made by artists like Donald Judd and Rachel Whiteread and demonstrated how artists have contributed to the field of design. Alex Coles even suggested that this blurring of disciplines formed a hybrid genre of objects, functioning as both works of art and design pieces: *DesignArt*[756]. However, he exposed how it is in fact the 'art world' which is more reluctant to consider artists' commercial and functional pieces as works of art. The Tate Modern for instance chose not to include Judd's furniture in a retrospective of his work in 2004[757].

Another key difference between consumer goods and works of art is not only who produces them, but how they are presented. Although works of art may be identical to ordinary commodities, they are presented as having the added cachet of being cultural, which increases their value. To upkeep this superior status, retailers or art dealers rely on semantics: designers 'make products' and artists 'create pieces'. This gives the impression that the products presented as work of art are 'unique' and 'original' creations, rather than mass-produced. Furthermore, I would argue that corporations invite artists to produce pieces for their brands

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[753] Hopkins, David, *After Modern Art: 1945 - 2000*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 128
[754] 'Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture' exhibition, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, 20 December - 23 March 2003
[755] Bloemink, Barbara and Cunningham, Joseph, *Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread,* Merrell Publishers Limited, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, London, 2004; accompanying the 'Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread' exhibition, National Design Museum, Smithsonian institution, New York, 10 September 2004 – 27 February 2005
[756] Coles, Alex, *DesignArt*, Tate publishing, London, 2005
[757] Comment made by Alex Coles during a talk: 'What is DesignArt?', Tate Britain, London, 30 September 2005.

not so much because of their remarkable and individual creative talents, but primarily because of their reputations. In this context, artists are employed as "brand ambassadors", akin to celebrities. Indeed, comparisons may be drawn between the commissioning of products from artists and the celebrity endorsements of products. In both instances, the financial relations remain secretive, a private matter, arranged by lawyers and agents. The covert character of these relations is necessary to preserve the seemingly non-commercial nature of artists' works, and ensure the credibility of artists' creations as cultural commodities.

The role of the artist is therefore to endorse products and merely attach its 'brand-name' to them, as illustrated by Tracey Emin's line of bags for Longchamp. As noted in chapter 3, this range of bags had been criticised by art critics who saw it as a commercial misuse of art and accused the artist of selling out. Emin described this limited edition as an opportunity for the masses to have access to art. Yet, with its high cost, sold from exclusive high-class stores, it was far from achieving this purpose of broadening access. In this context, artists become signature names, like recognised designers they come to be associated with an image that encapsulates their work. Emin has come to stands for rebelliousness as much as Philippe Stark represents quirkiness. More recently, Emin supported the production of a teapot, co-organised by the Tate and Counter Editions, an agency which specialises in publishing limited edition prints and items by leading contemporary artists, set up in 2003 by Carl Freedman, a former curator and art critic. On this occasion, the credibility of this teapot as a cultural commodity was guaranteed by the fact that it was sold by an established art dealer and with the support of a major public cultural institution.

Some artists have taken on other commercial roles, notably designing advertising campaigns such as Matt Collishaw for the high-class lingerie company, Agent Provocateur. Other artists like Sam Taylor-Wood have worked for fashion magazines, producing elaborated and conceptual fashion spreads. In most of these situations, artists do not sign their work, and prefer to set these commercial commissions aside from the main body of their work. In this perspective, artists develop two distinctive identities: as commercial designers and as artists. Although this seems to instigate a new trend, it has long been the case for Japanese artists who do not hide their commercial activities and even, described them as necessary to their artistic production as did photographers Nobuyoshi Araki and Rinko Kawauchi. Araki has not been shy to admit being a regular photographer for erotic magazines such as *Playboy* and *Erotic Housewives*[758]. Kawauchi has done more conservative work, working as a fashion photographer and still photographer for Japanese films *Nobody Knows* (*Dare Amo Shiranai*, dir. Hirokazu Koreeda, 2004, JP) and *Dolphin Blue: Fuji Mou Ichido Sora E* (dir. Tetsu Maeda, 2007, JP)[759].

[758] Nobuyoshi Araki discussed in the documentary on his work, *Arakimentari* (dir. Travis Klose, 2005, USA) the importance of his commercial photography (used in erotic magazines) as necessary to his artistic production.
[759] Rinko Kawauchi discussed the importance of her commercial work in regards to her artistic career during in interview held at on 27th May 2006 at the Photographers' gallery, London.

Commissioning artists to produce promotional material can also be an opportunity to extend the links between artists and brands. Louis Vuitton, for instance, commissioned Takashi Murakami[760] to produce an advertising spot, *Superflat Monogram* (2003), which is, as Stallabrass described is '*an entertaining update of Alice in wonderland, in which a girl, searching for her lost mobile phone, floats in a dizzying world of the company's logos*' (see video 3). In fact, it is consistent for Murakami to have produced this video as it accompanies the line of handbags he has designed for Louis Vuitton. In the same way that Alex Coles contended that the functional pieces made by artists established the hybrid genre of '*DesignArt',* this video belongs to another genre of art, which doubles as advertising. Yet its status as art was actively pursued by the retailer and the artist as it was presented not only as an promotional video, but as a legitimate work of art '*shown in the first room of Francesco Bonami's painting exhibition for the Venice biennale in 2003*'[761].

Such developments in the production of art have lead to a revaluation of the positioning of works of art as high-end and luxury objects. American artist Nan Goldin explained during a public interview[762] that works of art are treated as commercial commodities by the art world. Goldin maintained that works of art are judged arbitrarily, priced according to factors that are somewhat immaterial to their quality such as the number of pieces produced, the visibility of the signature, whether the artist is currently exhibiting or the reputation of the dealer or gallery representing the artist. She condemned the fact the value of her work has been devalued on the account that she is 'too prolific'. In this context, works of art are regarded as luxury commodities and scarcity places a key role: the less there are, the more valuable they become. Supply is therefore regulated through contracts of exclusivity arranged between dealers and artists. This also allows for a control, and even a manipulation of the demand.

A comparison could therefore be made between the art and high-end fashion worlds. There are similarities between the dealers and galleries who represent artists and the high-class shops that offer high-end fashion brands. Art dealers and galleries treat artists like brands, and their work like high-priced luxurious commodities. Galleries and stores both seek exclusivity, the fewer places their respective products can be purchased from, the more important their roles become, and the more valuable their products are. The identity of the artist is as significant as the identity of the high-end fashion designer for the pricing of their work. Information such as which schools the artists or designers have attended, where they have exhibited, whether in galleries or in showrooms and where their work has been reviewed, have considerable impact. Furthermore, there are many similarities between important consumers of high-end fashion brands and art collectors. Like art collectors, fashionistas are connoisseurs, not only appreciating fashion but actively researching it, and following in the same manner that art collectors monitor the art world. Fashionistas purchase items of clothing that can be added to

[760] '*Superflat Monogram*' (2003), an advertising campaign - short film - work of art for Louis Vuitton was created by artists Takashi Murakami in partnership with Mamoru Hosoda, based on characters created by Takashi Murakami for the French brand.
[761] Stallabrass, Julian, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, p. 132
[762] Nan Goldin made this comment during a talk at the Tate Modern, London, on 18th January 2007

their collections, which they have built, like art collectors as investments, but also to reflect their owner's personal interests. In this perspective, in recent years, trends appear to be shared by both the art and the fashion world. Cultural hotspots are also the location of new fashion cities[763], Russia, China and India are important markets for both the fashion and art industries. Even the subject of contemporary art pieces can be seen in the light of current fashion trends. Created in 2007 to become the most expensive work of art, *For the Love of God*, a diamond-encrusted skull by Damien Hirst (see *fig. 148*) has more relevance if considered in the context in which it was made. The popularity of 'skulls' as motifs as used by fashion designers and fashion houses, such as Alexander McQueen, Vivienne Westwood, Chloé and Thomas Wylde at that time gave the work of art more value as a fashionable commodity (*fig. 149 - 151*).

In conclusion, in the first part of this chapter, I have attempted to understand how the display of works of art in retail environments came to be accepted by the public and received legitimisation of the art world. I explain that the display of art in retail environments is linked to broader strategic and commercial uses of art. Governments have shown the power of art in economic terms, by using it to regenerate entire cities and regions. I demonstrated that this strategic use of art has influenced fashion retailers to employ art for their own. This strategic use of art has in turn stimulated a professionalisation of art institutions. I argue that this professionalisation of art triggered the privatisation of culture, giving corporate bodies a role in the development of culture and bridging the gap between art and commerce. This situation contributed to a radical reshape of culture, giving greater acceptance to commercial projects by artists and the depiction of consumer culture in art. It is in this context that I believe the display of art has become accepted and even, encouraged.

[763] Kinsella, Eileen, 'Global Warming, *ARTnews*, May 2006, pp. 136 – 145; and anon. (ed.), 'On the Ground', *ARTFORUM*, December 2005, pp. 218 – 240

fig. 148: Damien Hirst, *For the Love of God*, 2007

fig. 149 and 150: items designed by Thomas Wylde, with the brand's trademark skulls

fig. 151: Shoes by Alexander McQueen with skull designs

b. Towards a Merger between Cultural and Retail Environments

Corporations have strived to make their commercial activities 'cultural'. In this perspective, companies have actively used art as a tool to change their image. Rather than working alongside art institutions or governmental cultural bodies, some companies have directly commissioned artists and incorporated art into their business activities. It has given corporations the possibility to bypass the 'gatekeepers' and address the public directly.

The trend set in 2004 by Comme des Garçons for stores to be opened for ephemeral periods and reopened in new sites, mimics the format of temporary touring art exhibitions; but also bears a close resemblance to the concept of the '*Nvisible museum*'. Inspired by André Malraux's idea of '*a museum without walls*', this museum was conceived by the artist Mark Pimlott in 1987 and has the distinctiveness of having no permanent site and collection, explaining its name. Like the Guerrilla stores that target the avant-garde community of fashion and cultural hotspots, the museum evolves within a selected community, its collection *'continually on loan to friends and artists: its natural state is to be geographically disparate*[764]*'*. The museum presents works of art by artists Marc Quinn, Rachel Whiteread, Matthew Barney, Nobuyoshi Araki or Yves Klein amongst many others, only taken from private collections. The '*Nvisible museum*' may have inspired the concept of the Guerrilla stores and subsequently, other 'pop-up stores', tours the world, from Kiev, to Paris, Memphis, Cairo or Kyoto, and within diverse and unconventional locations, weaving from public to private spaces: from a shop window in Paris, to a converted monastery in Kiev, and various rented or occupied residential houses.

Other more conventional retail spaces have shown signs of having been inspired by the cultural sector. Retailers increasingly imitate gallery and museums displays to present their own commercial goods. The presentation of products has been given the same treatment as works of art, presented with the same care: placed on plinths, within glass cases, with diffused and directed lighting. This close resemblance has been the subject of a series of photographs by Andreas Gursky (see chapter 2). It has also long been claimed that shop windows and display are artistic. Indeed, many artists, including established and well-known artists have created displays, including Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol.

Products have also been presented as works of art on a conceptual level. Some are launched with 'titles' rather than mere code numbers. Launch parties are celebrated like private views and designers are often presented as artists. Furthermore, retailers have tried to transform

[764] Barrett, David, 'Peter Fleissig's Nvisible Museum', *Contemporary*, February 2006, p. 57

their commodities and give them the same qualities as works of art. In this context, commodities have been developed to commemorate or mark particular events. This gives added-value to products, and pushes consumers to 'collect' these goods. This form of consumption also ensures that consumers preserve these commodities, going against the disposable culture. For instance, Louis Vuitton has developed a solid post-sale care, affecting the relation consumers have with their products. They keep items for longer periods, conferring the idea that the Louis Vuitton products can be cherished and are for long-term use, 'classics' rather than part of a fad. This echoes the idea that people do not treat works of art as disposable commodities, demonstrating that there is a hierarchy of goods, and that works of art being at the top. High-end fashion retailers also produce some items in limited editions, going against the idea of mass production, intensifying the value of their pieces based on the appeal of rarity.

To make the shopping experience more cultural and improve the consumer experience, retailers have been guided by professionals with backgrounds in the cultural sector. For instance, Nadège Winter, the public relations of the concept store Colette was a former press officer of the trendiest public art gallery in Paris, the Palais de Tokyo. Equally, Selfridges has been receiving advice from Bettina von Hase, an independent consultant who worked as Head of Development at the National Gallery, curated exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery, a trustee of the photographers' gallery, and a European editor of *Art+Auction* magazine[765]. She described her role for the department store as acting as encroaching on the economic and cultural sectors: *'part creative scout, part commissioner, part producer, and part curator'*[766].

By contrast, the way in which works of art are displayed in stores is rather conservative, going against the populism encouraged by the state. To illustrate this argument, the presentation of commercial goods in art galleries can be compared with the display of works of art in retail spaces. For 'Shopping - A Century of Art and Consumer Culture'[767], Guillaume Bijl, the Flemish installation artist invited the British supermarket chain, Tesco, to open a branch within the gallery and for the duration of the exhibition. However, the outlet was inoperative; although the Tesco personnel bustled about, routinely reshelving and restocking products, no sales could be made. Stripped of its functional character, the store, together with the act of shopping could be observed and examined critically by the exhibition visitors. Furthermore, Bill Dunn described that on closer inspection one could notice that the products were not arranged by types but by colours, changing the familiar presentation of stores. This artistic intervention could be compared with *Votre Perte de Sens*[768], a piece conceived for Louis Vuitton by the Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, with the same concern to present consumerism under a

[765] Nine AM Limited: <http:www.nineam.co.uk/about.html> (last accessed 13 February 2006)
[766] McDermott, Catherine and Loveday, Donna (ed.), 'Discussion Between Lauren Parker, V&A and Bettina von Hase, Selfridges: Shopping vs. Art', *Blueprint*, (Curating Contemporary Design' conference - Special Issue), June 2006, p. 86
[767] 'A Century of Art and Consumer Culture', Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, 20 December – 23 March 2003
[768] anon., 'Louis Vuitton Opens the World's Largest Luxury Store in Paris', *LVMH Magazine* (Online), 14 November 2005: <http://www.lvmh.com/magazine/pg_mag_contenu.asp?int_id=338&archive=0&rubrique=ACTUALITE&srub=0&rub=&str_theme_id=> (last accessed 1 July 2007)

critical eye. To achieve this, Eliasson transformed the lift leading from the ground floor shop area to the seventh floor art gallery of the Louis Vuitton flagship store in Paris into a permanent art performance. Covered in an opaque and soundproofing material, the lift could be perceived in opposition to conventional retail spaces: with no music, no lighting, and above all, no goods; offering a temporary "haven" from the consumer-driven Champs-Élysées, where the store is located. By hindering the senses, the lift took on a symbolic commercial-free character which prepared consumers for the change in tone, from the commercial setting of the shop to the artistic environment of the gallery. Consumers' active participation in the performance facilitated their transition from consumers to visitors.

However, unlike Bijl's installation which was more readily recognised as art, Eliasson's piece required a preceding explanation by Louis Vuitton staff to be understood, demonstrating that art is less straightforward (and accepted as such) outside of the traditional preserve of the gallery. In the example cited earlier, the Tesco products were removed from their commercial character by their presence within an art gallery. In this context, familiar goods were almost unquestionably understood or 'read' from an art perspective. It would be wrong however to assume that commercial goods need to be revoked from their commercial character to be accepted as works of art. On many occasions, artists have opened operational stores selling mass-produced ordinary consumer goods. In October 1964, in New York Warhol, Lichtenstein, Wesselmann and other pop artists staged a temporary *American Supermarket*[769] (recreated at the shopping exhibition at the Tate Liverpool); and since 1973 Martha Rosler organised 'garage sales', the more recent one held at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in London in 2005. During these exhibitions, the act of shopping became a performance, given an artistic significance; according to Grunenberg, an exhibition as the *American Supermarket*, '*elevated shopping to an art form, the dealer turned grocer, and serious art collectors became ordinary supermarket shoppers*'[770]. However, I would challenge the idea that the opposite is necessary. The staging of an art exhibition in commercial settings does not suffice in transforming shoppers into gallery visitors, shop assistants into gallery invigilators or shop managers into curators. In reality, it appears that only a few consumers notice the art and it is often the case that the members of staff have little knowledge of the art displayed in their stores.

There are two key distinctions between the display of commercial goods in art institutions and the presentation of art in retail spaces that significantly affect the understanding and recognition of art within commercial spaces. First, artists or art institutions have the unique power of being able to confer the status of art to the elements they present. In fact, artists have produced pieces to challenge the definition of art, to the extent that it has become

[769] Ryan, John, 'Museum Shop(ing)', *Retail Interiors*, February 2003, pp. 23 – 24; and Grunenberg, Christoph, 'The American Supermarket', in Grunenberg, Christoph and Hollein, Max (eds.), *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Berlin, 2002, p. 171; accompanying 'A Century of Art and Consumer Culture' exhibition, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, 20 December – 23 March 2003

[770] Grunenberg, Christoph, 'The American Supermarket', in Grunenberg, Christoph and Hollein, Max (eds.), *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Berlin, 2002, p. 171; accompanying 'A Century of Art and Consumer Culture' exhibition, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, 20 December – 23 March 2003

conventional for anything displayed within gallery surroundings to be accepted as art, as the controversial porcelain urinal, *Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp (1917) or paper ball, untitled *Work No 88* by Martin Creed (1994). This shows that established galleries have acquired an authority and reputation, which acts as a defining factor of art. If Eliasson's *Votre Perte de Sens* had been staged within an art gallery, it would have been more promptly distinguished as a work of art and would not have relied on a prior explanation.

Furthermore, it is easier to display elements of the consumer world in art institutions as we are all consumers. Yet, the presentation of such commodities within these settings relies on our familiarities with these items, commenting through it, on the ubiquitous and pervasive character of consumerism. However, not all consumers visit art galleries and are familiar with works of art. By presenting works of art within consumer-driven settings, retailers introduce works of art into something of an alien territory. Stores do not transcend the same cultural dialectic, and consumers are not given the tools to compensate this change of setting. In other words, whereas anything could be accepted as art within a gallery, outside the gallery context, art must be signalled to be recognised and read as such. It would even be relevant for retailers who choose to introduce art in their stores to present them in traditional or more 'obvious' ways. Members of staff should be given training. Pieces need to be supported with more detailed labels, accompanied with leaflets or pamphlets, to offer visitors a greater guidance, otherwise, works of art in stores function only as decorative elements.

A key difference in the presentation of works of art in retail environments and in cultural institutions is the aim they fulfil. As explained earlier, public institutions are under pressure from governments to preserve the heritage of the nation and educate the greatest numbers of visitors, whereas in retail spaces, the art does not fulfil such functions. I would even suggest that rather than attempting to bring art to masses, retailers want to receive the attention from the elite. For this reason, works of art in retail environments tend to be displayed with little or no explanation. The role of the brand is not to educate consumers, but entertain them. Works of art in shops are to be understood by informed and knowledgeable consumers. The lack of information, labels or leaflets goes against the populist efforts made by cultural institutions for works of art to be understood by the largest numbers of people. It also implies a re-appropriation of the elitist and highbrow character of art. Brands claim to display art in their stores to bring art to the masses, displaying art in what they argue constitutes true public spaces. However, even if on the face of it, the display of art in stores can be seen by a larger number of people, brands rarely provide the masses the means of understanding such pieces. The truth is that the art displayed in such stores is not staged to educate the philistine. By not giving consumers the tools to understand the pieces presented that brands have been able to confer a highbrow character to the presentation of art in their stores, heightening the status of their brands. For instance, Selfridges used Barbara Kruger's signature 'graphic art' to advertise its sales, but without providing its customers information on the artist. For this

reason, consumers that are unaware of the artist can 'read' the posters displayed throughout the store as true and positive sale messages such as *'Buy me. I'll change your life'*, leaving only those aware of the artist to understand and appreciate the courage of Selfridges to display messages that critique consumerism (see *fig. 152*). By not giving consumers 'clues' to understand the works of art displayed in stores, retailers can expect that consumers will see them as advertisements.

The more 'conceptual artistic interventions in stores have been staged outside retail hours as, outside the preserve of the art institutions, some of these interventions could receive incomprehension. For instance, Spencer Tunick's performance[771] in Selfridges which involved the gathering of hundreds of naked volunteers posing throughout the store took place whilst the store was closed (*fig. 153*). Similarly, the performance staged by Vanessa Beecroft during the opening reception of the Louis Vuitton store in Paris was only seen by a selected few, the celebrities and other guests invited to this event. The presentation of these performances outside conventional sales hours also gives more room for 'resonance' and 'wonder', concepts discussed by Greenblatt, as described earlier, giving them more credibility as genuine works of art. In both occasions the performance were reported and publicised in the art and fashion press. John Weich, editor of *ArtReview* summed up the situation succinctly: '*it is about two creative industries that cater to a similar social elite and who are looking to benefit from each other's cash, street credibility and, as far as possible, crossover appeal*[772]'. Is it really the case that high-end fashion and art have a cross-appeal? Especially as contradictorily, the presentation of art in retail spaces does target its producers (artists) and consumers (collectors), but predominantly those who only have an interest in it. It would be too limited for brands to attempt to appeal to collectors, or people with 'professional' links to art. According to a 2006 survey by the Arts Council reported in *Vogue* magazine[773], there are only 100 serious individual collectors in the world. Despite efforts made by public institutions, museums and galleries still tend to be visited by the upper echelons of society and the biggest determinants of gallery going remain education and wealth. Although it has been said that art may be presented in stores to attract the coveted 18-35 demographic, I would suggest that retailers may in fact be targeting an older clientele. It appears that older people are taking part in cultural activities, and with more income and time for leisure, it is the older generation that may be leading the 'countercultural', returning to activities they may have engaged in their youth, such as skateboarding or rock concerts. Even the producers of these 'countercultural' activities are themselves aging, the *'yBas'* are for most in their early forties, married with children. Nevertheless, the presentation of contemporary art in retail environments can still symbolise avant-gardism and youth, but attract an older crowd who may be more responsive to art and its symbolic value. In his investigation of the cultural participation habits of Europeans

[771] 'Be Confused', an installation by Spencer Tunick took place on Sunday, 27th April 2003
[772] Comments made by John Weich, Editor in chief of *Art Review* during 'the Changing Face of Art and Audience', a talk organised by the British Creative Exchange at the Tate Modern gallery, London, 15 March 2007.
[773] Golfar, Fiona (ed.), 'The Art World Comes to Town', *Vogue (UK)*, January 2006, p. 117

fig. 152: Barbara Kruger's trademark graphic messages used for sales posters in Selfridges

fig. 153: Spencer Tunick, *London 5*, art performance staged in Selfridges, 2003

reported in the *Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*[774], Bourdieu showed that older crowd tend to be interested in culture. It could envisaged that similar habits apply to visitors of galleries within high-end fashion stores.

In conclusion, after more than two decades of an active privatisation of culture and an increasing pervasiveness of consumerism in the cultural sector, some works of art have become commodified, and some consumer goods have been developed as cultural artefacts. Yet, what appear as new characteristics could have, to a degree, been existing facets of the nature of artistic and commercial products. Taking American cultural critic Mark Taylor's view that *'art and commerce are not only closely related but are actually extensions of each other'*[775], the divide between art and commerce is artificial, seemingly enforced by both the cultural and commercial sectors to upkeep the highbrow character of art. And only until it was pressured to be self-sufficient, did the arts have to adapt to the capitalist economy and recognise the commercial character of art, by turning it into a commodity. Still, I demonstrated that works of art are understood differently within public cultural institutions and corporate in-store art galleries; which is due to the fact that works of art are often exhibited differently in stores, displayed more like commodities. In chapter 6, I attempt to determine how high-end fashion brands will further their relationship with art, and whether the display of art in stores, which appears to become a common sight, will continue to connote the luxury lifestyle and highbrow culture.

[774] Bourdieu, Pierre., Darbel, Alain and Schnapper, Dominique, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and their Public*, Polity Press, London, 1997

[775] Taylor, Mark. C, 'Duty-free shopping', in Grunenberg, Christoph and Hollein, Max (eds.), *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*, Hatje Cantz Verlag, Berlin, 2002, p. 42; accompanying the 'Shopping: *A Century of Art and Consumer Culture*' exhibition, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, 20 December – 23 March 2003

6. Future Trends in High-end Fashion Retail

Will retailers continue to present art in their stores as a way of elevating the status of their brands? Will fashion still be developed as an indication of creativity, and will creativity still be a driving force of society as predicted by Richard Florida? In an attempt to answer these questions, I forecast retail trends and the place of art in them. I predict further changes in the production and presentation of fashion, which I foresee will affect the diffusion of fashion trends. As a response, I expect that the role of the shop will be altered to provide better post-sale care. I also consider how these changes fit with trends occurring in other sectors.

a. Limited Editions and Build-Your-Own Items: The Influence of Art on New Luxury Commodities

Teri Agins' book-title, *The End of Fashion* is intriguing. The book does not discuss the end of fashion but deals with the mass-production and consumption of high-end fashion. Nevertheless, this suggestion came as a starting point for arguments that follow. Fashion, as we know it is changing so much that one could perceive the concept of fashion as coming to an end. Seasonal renewals, once an intrinsic characteristic of fashion, are becoming obsolete. Bi-annual renewals of fashion are not sufficient. Consumers are eager for more frequent changes, motivating the recent retail trends discussed by Avril Groom, writer for the Financial Times, of the '*cruise*' (collection launched at the beginning of the year) and 'pre-collections' (at the start of the Autumn), which she claimed now account for up to 70 percent of many designers' stock in store[776]. This implies that fashion is no longer renewed on a recurring basis but almost constantly, with new products offered at all times, and is consistent with the suggestion made by Burberry's designer, Christopher Bailey, that there should be a fresh stock continuously. Fashion is showing all the signs to be evolving in this direction, although these changes are bound to radically transform it. The repeated design and distribution of new goods would create an overlap of collections and lines available on the market, potentially causing them to lose their meanings and values. To cope with such high demand, high-end fashion houses would have to adopt a similar attitude to high-street brands, who are able to renew their stock very frequently by not relying on one designer, who could not create so extensively, but on teams of designers. This is already taking place; as fashion houses have expanded, some have chosen to appoint a different designer for each of their different ranges,

[776] Groom, Avril, 'The Collection Conundrum', *How To Spend It* (Magazine), *The Financial Times* (Weekend supplement), 17 - 18 June 2006, pp. 68 - 69

giving them a distinctive identity. This high production drive would also suggest that designers would have to be more commercial as they would have less time to research and experiment. More worryingly, it would increase the gap between the bigger fashion houses and the independent designers who would not have the facilities to produce so repetitively. The increasing popularity for interim collections will induce a change in the reporting and monitoring of fashion. Rather than focusing on the conventional bi-annual presentations of new collections, the fashion press will provide a continuous update of fashion houses' latest collections; and consumers will have to become more active in finding out about new collections, having to continuously scrutinise the press and visit stores. However, the greater and more innovative availability of fashion could risk swamping the market and create a 'novelty fatigue' amongst consumers. To maintain the quality of the collections and avoid loosing a sense of creative direction, I envisage that the fashion industry will continue to adhere to the conventional bi-annual renewals of their production. Catwalk shows are too important for the industry to renounce them, especially as Mark Tungate[777] explained, catwalk shows are effective public relations events more than they are about presenting new collections. To keep up with consumers' demand, I expect that fashion houses will continue to launch, perhaps more systematically, new items but in limited editions only. In this perspective, the retail format of high-street brands and high-end fashion houses will grow to be analogous. It is therefore unsurprising that high-end fashion brands have been producing, in parallel with their 'official' collections more democratic lines with major high-street retailers, as Viktor & Rolf or Karl Lagerfeld have done for H&M or Vanessa Bruno for La Redoute. I expect that more importance will be given to store environments to distinguish high-street and high-end fashion brands but also to give a theme to the new and temporary collections.

This thirst for change and diversity could be detrimental to haute couture and as Yuniya Kawamura predicted[778], it could incite the rise of 'demi-couture', between prêt-à-porter and haute couture. There are various reasons to foresee the decline of haute couture; notably the high production costs and the necessity for highly trained members of staff. It is common knowledge that haute couture is not profit-making but run at a loss. The last haute couture fashion houses are competing for an estimated 1,000 consumers[779]. It is therefore evident that haute couture brands are sustained not to please these few consumers but to elevate the image of the brands and help sell the ready-to-wear and diffusion lines, or as fashion designer Alexander McQueen put it, with characteristic candour, *'let's not bullshit around, the haute couture's not about selling clothes. Everyone knows it's purely about selling perfume and all that other stuff*[780]. Demi-couture represents a good alternative, as it is more accessible, produced in larger quantities and lesser costs, but still has an elitist and exclusive stance.

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[777] Tungate, Mark, *Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page, London, 2004
[778] Kawamura, Yuniya, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion*, Berg, Oxford, 2004
[779] Rushton, Susie, 'The Last of the Couturists Still Knows How to Put on a Show', *The Independent*, 23 January 2007, p. 5
[780] Todd, Stephen, 'The Importance of Being English', *Blueprint*, March 1997, p. 43

The pursuit for novelty shows that demand has changed. The market has expanded. It is now truly global, affecting all classes and age brackets. Fashion once seen as a predominantly feminine interest now also emerges as an undisputed and crucial facet of masculine consumption. One should therefore hold a pluralistic view of fashion, as there are more diverse people to cater for, one cannot talk of fashion, but fashions. However, fashion is still at an infant stage of acknowledging the diversity of the market. Fashion is still very western-centric. Seasonal trends reflect the climatic conditions of the northern hemisphere but the internationalisation of markets has made these seasonal changes redundant, particularly for consumers in tropical or sub-tropical regions. It seems that in the years to come, the production and distribution of fashion will become more geographically centred; with limited editions reserved and made only for one specific geographic area. New markets can be highly influential in changing the production, as demonstrated by Yuniya Kawamura's study of Japanese designers and their impact on French fashion[781].

Seasonal changes of fashion were part of what Veblen described as '*the wasteful expenditure*'. He considered '*this principle of novelty*' as '*corollary under the law of conspicuous waste*'[782]. Consumers that would change most often would be (seen as) the most affluent, whereas those who kept items for long period, showed their inability to waste, which Veblen argued as an evidence of their lower social status. However, the rising interest for vintage wear, discussed in *Second-Hand Cultures* edited by Nicky Gregson and Louise Crewe[783], can be perceived as *'a reaction against the novelty mania driven by the fashion industry, pushing consumers to adopt a use and throw attitude*'[784]. The difference is that while these consumers purposely seek vintage wear and unlike the less-affluent consumers, they wear vintage clothing to mark a style preference and nostalgia culture. The popularity of vintage or retro wear breaks the idea that consumers are eager for novelty. Something considered fashionable could be, contradictorily, out of fashion. What consumers appear to seek is not novelty, but difference. However, it would be wrong to assume that consumers want to have individual looks. People need to belong and feel part of a community or subculture through the clothes they wear. In other words, fashion is caught between two incongruous tendencies: the search for distinction and the need for integration. Consumers want to look similar to the people they admire but, they do not want to wear the exact same commodities, substantiating the increasing appeal for customisation and tailor-made commodities.

It could even be predicted that, ultimately, fashion will be renewed on demand by customers as they will increasingly request tailor-made and custom-made products. Nike, has been a forerunner of this trend, offering its consumers since 1997 the possibility to customise trainers

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[781] Kawamura, Yuniya, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion*, Berg, Oxford, 2004
[782] Veblen, Thorstein, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957 [first published in 1899], p. 173
[783] Gregson, Nicky and Crewe, Louise (ed.), *Second-Hand Cultures*, Berg, Oxford, 2003
[784] Muir, Lucie, 'London's Trendsetting Vintage Shops', *International Herald Tribune*, 17 February 2004: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/02/17/rvintage.php> (last accessed 17 June 2005)

from its 'nikeid.com' website[785]. However, the website did not receive the popularity Nike had expected, partly due to the six-week wait between the order and reception of the goods (through the post). It was also believed that the purchase and reception of these customised products did not create a special 'consumer experience'. To change this, Nike opened exclusive stores where customers could order these products, and like on the website, consumers were given a choice of materials, style and colours to create their own *'tailored footwear'*. The brand is tapping into three consumer trends at once: exclusivity, customisation, and premium customer experience[786].

Consumers increasingly have the opportunity to play an active role in the production of the goods and not only in their consumption. To satisfy consumers to the greatest level, brands could start offering consumers platforms for them to create the items they desire. Consumers could be invited to purchase custom-made products, where they can choose amongst materials, colours and shapes. Like Nike tailored-made trainers, technology could be used to facilitate and simplify the design process. I also expect that to fulfil consumers' growing wish to express their creativity as a characteristic of luxury, as previously discussed in chapter 1, there will be a revival of crafts. The popularity of knitting circles in London pubs, and other capitals, notably Paris, is not anodyne. It showed that consumers were eager to have a hands-on approach. These were not elderly women, but young and trendy people, including men. Even children, described as having lost interest in traditional toys, over computers games, have taken up making scoubidous or its more recent name, Skoobies. In both cases, adults and children saw these trends as a way of bonding with their peers, a relaxing process, but also above all, unleashing their creativity. It could therefore be foreseeable that retailers will exploit such trends and offer consumers their own 'high-class do-it yourself kits'. Issey Miyake, the Japanese designer along with his Miyake Design Studio has, since 1997, offered an innovative service for consumers to take part in the design of their clothes. 'A-POC' (*'a piece of cloth')* consists in clothes woven into continuous tubes of fabric, from which consumers can simply cut out the garments.

In this perspective, home-made clothing could become a luxury statement, corresponding with developments in other sectors, particularly food retail, where consumers have revealed being interested in making healthier meals by cooking their own bread and pasta. This trend for consumers to make things themselves also fits with consumers' growing ethical and ecological concerns. By taking part in the production of the items, consumers are under the impression that the commodities are better for the environment and have not caused unethical working conditions.

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[785] anon., 'Personal Trainers', *Blueprint*, November 2005, pp. 42 – 43
[786] ibid., p. 43

Another facet is the fact that making items can be fun. The entertaining side of the customisation process has been the core concept of Build-a-Bear Factory, a company which enables their consumers, mainly children, to create their own stuffed animals. Adidas has also released an updated and limited edition version of its 'adicolor' series. Launched in 1983, during the Ipso fair in Munich, the iconic three stripes of this model can be coloured with specially made pens. This growing interest for customised goods fits with Florida's prediction that creativity has become a driving force of society today. It also implies that consumers will continue being responsive to art. By giving consumers the possibility to create their own commodities or participate in the production stage, retailers will be giving consumers the illusion of being creative too. Commodities could therefore be developed as participative materials, as other current platforms, which are used for the expression and participation of their users, such as social networking websites as MySpace, Facebook and YouTube.

As discussed in chapter 1, high-end fashion has become more accessible and brands have been concerned to sustain its exclusive character. However, to satisfy the demand and drive consumers to consume more, I argue that high-end fashion brands will come to abandon seasons and function like high-street brands will constantly renew their collections and stock. I argue that more pressure will be put on brands to give collections a sense of time and brands would use art to set goods within a context. The frequent renewal of fashion collections could also put the luxurious character of goods at risk by increasing their sense of disposability. To make items more worthy of being preserved, I envisaged that retailers would attempt to establish a bond between consumers and their commodities. I argued that importance would be given to developing the creative character of commodities which would give them more value as Richard Florida explained in *The Rise of the Creative Class*[787]. I predicted that high-fashion brands would offer opportunities for consumers to create handmade commodities as works of art which would also enhance consumers' experiences, which as Bernd Schmitt demonstrated in *Experiential Marketing: How to get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate to your Company and Brands*[788], and their emotional relationship to the commodities.

[787] Florida, Richard, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Basic Books, New York, 2004
[788] Schmitt, Bernd. H, *Experiential Marketing: How to get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act and Relate to your Company and Brands*, the Free Press, New York, 1999

b. The End of the Shop and the Rise of the 'Owner's Club'

The status of the shop is changing along with new trends in the production of high-end fashion. With the numerous lines that now inundate the market, a greater emphasis has been put on the store selection. In this context, a greater importance is given to buyers whose role is to understand the local clientele and reflect their tastes and lifestyles in the original selection of goods sold offered. Stores therefore hold a more diverse stock. It is now common that in flagship stores, all a brand's lines are offered: women and men's wear, items from new and past-collections, the brand's 'classics' line, authentic vintage or re-editions of past pieces, one-off limited editions, and diffusion lines dedicated for specific markets: maternity, lingerie or sportswear collections, including accessories and eyewear. With such diverse range of goods and large size shops, works of art have also been used to give a sense of unity and direct the brand's theme. To maintain the originality of the display of art in stores, brands have found new ways for consumers to interact with art and culture within their branded retail environments. Through these new steps stores take on educational function that brings them closer to cultural institutions. It is through this, that I argued, brands have attempted to guide the 'future of high-end fashion retail'. I show in this second part of this chapter that works of art and an 'art strategy' increase consumers' experiential perception of shopping, turning stores into 'owners' clubs'.

The importance of a store's unique selection is manifested in the growing popularity of concept stores. Concept stores like 10 Corso Como or Colette have become popular because of the wealth and diversity of items they offer, and it is this variety that differentiate them from flagships and department stores. Concept stores are not bound to the sale of particular collections. They follow trends rather than sales directives, which enable them to adapt to any situation and event, reflecting the current times. Brands have come to acknowledge the importance of concept stores as retail outlets by launching limited editions for sole release in such stores, as the Surface to Air Adicolor shoes or the Comme des Garçons t-shirts exclusively for Dover Street Market. The advantage for brands to associate themselves with these stores is to create links with what are often perceived as trendy retail spaces. Another advantage is that brands can distribute these items outside their flagship stores, leaving more space to ensure no overlapping of collections and confusion of themes. Concept stores have therefore continued to grow, many now offer products online (Colette and Dover Street Market) and others have opened new branches: Dover Street Market has opened another outlet in Tokyo and the international design collective/concept store Surface to Air (with bases in New York and Paris) has opened other branches in Stockholm, Barcelona and Sao Paulo. However, what makes these stores so popular is not their original in-store selection but an infallible public relations strategy. The oldest concept stores, which are celebrating their

ten or fifteen year anniversaries (as 10 Corso Como established in 1993 or Colette established in 1995) have remained so popular because they have been founded by people with key contacts with the industry, and particularly with the media. For instance, Colette is evoked monthly, if not weekly in fashion magazines. In fact, it can be argued that the Comme des Garçons Guerrilla stores have been set up only as public relations stunts, demonstrating the importance of the media to develop awareness of the brand in each of its new localities.

It is unlikely that all retail outlets will adopt the model set by concept stores. Already within the timeframe of this research, numerous concept stores have closed down or have had to reconsider their formats. Although having a promising start and having featured in magazines articles retail design books[789], Oki-ni, a concept store previously situated off New Bond Street (near Dover Street Market) opened in 2001[790] has shut and now exists only as an online project. The closure of these stores indicates the limitations of public relations, awareness of the brands was not sufficient to keep them afloat. This is has been the case of other renowned stores, as the illustrious Biba and another London boutique, Hyper-Hyper. These stores were very popular, stood apart and were regularly featured in the press, but became tourist attractions rather than shopping outlets.

The closure of prominent department stores in the early 2000s, such as La Samaritaine in Paris or Dickins and Jones in London suggested to some that it could be the end of an era. However, rather than indicating the death of the department store, this trend may suggest that consumers may be more sensitive to other retail formats. In fact, it could be argued that department stores are still flourishing. For example, in 1999, Selfridges opened two new stores in Birmingham and Manchester. Other department stores have been refurbished, modernised and developed as major fashionable shopping locations, such as Fortnum and Mason's and Liberty's or Le Bon Marché and Les Galeries Lafayette in Paris. These stores have been given a new direction, and target niche markets by developing a more diverse stock selection. Art has been used by most of these department stores to give a direction to the stock selection, and give coherence to the choice of goods and brands.

As demonstrated in chapter 2, retailers have endeavoured to transform the image of the store in an attempt to differentiate their retail outlets from their competitors. The language employed by retailers to define their stores and shopping has changed to suggest a change of experience. Shops are described as 'spaces' (NIKEiD shops), 'atelier' (Atelier Jean-Paul Gaultier) 'labs' (Diesel), 'concept' stores (Colette, Surface to Air, 10 Corso Como), or 'markets' (Dover Street Market, Montaigne Market). I foresee that with the opportunities for

[789] Oki-ni is used as a case study in retail design books including: Vernet, David, Boutiques and Other Retail Spaces, Routledge, London, 2007, Curtis, Eleanor, *Fashion Retail*, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., Chichester, 2004 and Dean, Corinna, The Inspired Retail Space: Attract Customers, Build Branding, Increase Volume, Rockport Publisher Inc., Gloucester, 2003
[790] Designed by 6a Architects in partnership with Tom Emerson (2001)

customisation, retailers will develop stores as 'atelier', pursuing the resemblances with art spaces. By mimicking ateliers, stores could give consumers the impression of discovering the 'backstage' life of fashion. Signs of this trend has already surfaced in the Dior flagship in Tokyo, where the perfume and cosmetics department has adopted the distinctive theme of the backstage preparation of a fashion show, by displaying pre-show images. It could be envisaged that stores could therefore resemble the atelier of artists and designers, and even factories. In this context, it could be expected that brands will invite artists to exhibit works of art to follow these new retail themes: photography exhibitions of fashion shows, designer ateliers and workshops.

It is also possible that there could be a return of the 'Maison', the original form of the first high-end fashion stores. This would provide an intimate, behind-the-scene shopping experience, where consumers could feel as entering designers' universe and workshops. This trend has already been espoused by a few forerunners who have used architecture to give a 'Maison' feel to their stores: as Dior in Tokyo and Chanel in Hong Kong which have designed their stores as succession of rooms, or Paul Smith in Notting Hill which has been established within a converted house. Hermès has named its latest flagship stores in Korea and Japan: 'Maison Hermès'. I expect that exclusivity can be more easily achieved with smaller spaces as they feel more intimate than flagships are not for the masses. I also envisage that as in the NIKEiD 'spaces', brands will open stores that will be open only to a selected few by invitation only. This would allow brands an absolute control over their clients, and enabling to limit production. The 'Maison' or in-house atmosphere has been given to concept stores such as Surface to Air or the Apartment, which are in fact not only stores but workplace of the design collectives that run these stores. The Apartment in particular comes across a performance art piece as it functions more as lived-in apartment and workplace before being a shop, '*with dirty dishes in the sink and used socks on the bed; customers are invited to "live" in the apartment for a few hours*'[791].

Another change in the 'retail language' is also found in how the personnel are described. Sale assistants are referred to as 'consultants', inferring that their role is not to 'sale' but to assist consumers. It denotes the idea that they have an expertise and knowledge to help consumers make decisions. Shop assistants appear to be chosen because of their 'cultural capital', people with their own fashion styles, often working in fashion and other creative industries[792]. For Siobhan Adams, '*the challenge of the 21st century is that the way businesses will prosper is not about the quality of the generals but the sergeants on the shop floor*'[793]. I agree with this prediction and expect that sales assistants will come to take more active and important roles. Yuniya Kawamura in her analysis of Japanese teenage girl trends, noted that sales assistants have become style icons

[791] Brown, Janelle, 'High-concept Haute Couture', *Salon*, 25 June 2001: <http://archive.salon.com/mwt/style/2001/06/25/retail_redesign/index.html> (last accessed 16 March 2006)
[792] anon., 'Shop Girls', *Vogue*, May 2006, pp. 76 - 78
[793] Adams, Siobhan, 'The Science of Shopping', *Retail Interiors*, August 2002, p. 34

and have been given greater roles in the production and design of collections by low to middle-end brands. It appears that the increasing importance given to sales assistant is also occurring for high-end brands. Abercrombie & Fitch have even made its sale assistants part of its image, in which job interviews become like castings. Sale clerks could become windows of the companies and becoming a medium for the brand to influence consumers to take up certain trends. Indeed, brands tend to discard uniforms and push sales assistants to develop their own individual styles, as in Dover Street Market. In May 2006, *Vogue* even published an article on *'shop girls',* sales assistants of upscale London stores, demonstrating the growing importance of sale assistants[794]. Yet, the significance of the personnel is not restricted to sales assistants; senior members of staff, such as public relations officers or store managers have also become figures in their own rights, known beyond the fashion milieu. As discussed in chapter 2, concept stores proprietors can be particularly important for the success of their stores. Other companies have benefited from 'PR friendly' managers such as Liberty and its design director, Tamara Salman and Selfridges and its creative director Alannah Weston[795]. Colette works with people who used to work in the arts sector. *WAD*, the bi-lingual 'streetwear and urban cultures' magazine (written in French and English) dedicated an entire issue to the 'Wintertainment': Nadège and 'Pedro' Winter, who worked as guest-editors[796]. This young couple, described as '*already legendary',* is part of the 'trendy' cultural scene in Paris. Nadège is the '*head of PR at Colette, the French capital's trendiest concept store',* renowned for establishing *'Colette dance class'*. Her husband, Pedro is *'the boss at ultra-cool record Ed Banger'* and former manager of the band Daft Punk. The issue covers their lives, friends (such as Sara and Linlee Allen of Colette), paying a tribute to their lifestyle and also, promoting the companies they work for, with a section on products available in Colette, le 'Panier de Colette'.

It could be assumed that as Comme des Garçons has done for its Guerrilla stores and its Comme des Garçons / Jan de cock store, employing local artists, designers, students, or even skateboarders to manage its Guerrilla stores, other high-end fashion brands will come to invite other popular figures to manage stores for permanent or temporary durations, in the same way that galleries have guest curators. By inviting artists to run their stores, retailers could also give credibility to the works of art they display and ensure media coverage. It could also be envisaged that brands could also invite celebrities that are known for their styles. I envisage that as part of this trend, brands could invite artists themselves to 'run' their stores, or at least create collection.

Undeniably, the internet now represents an important avenue for the sale of fashion. As described in chapter 1, online auction has already partially changed the identity and image of the ownership of luxury goods, making them more accessible (especially to younger people). The internet has also been considered by many as constituting the future of retail. As the

[794] anon., 'Shop Girls', *Vogue,* May 2006, pp. 76 - 78
[795] Frank, Angelika, 'Profile: Alannah Weston', *Style Guide*, June 2005, pp. 12 – 15
[796] anon., 'The Wintertainment Issue', *WAD*, (The Wintertainment Issue), Summer 2007

internet will develop on a global scale, its influence on high-end fashion retail will continue to grow in significance. Michiko Toyama described in her article 'Boutique in Hand: How We Shop Now'[797], how mobile phones were becoming an important platform for the purchase of products online in Japan, where it is already reported to be a $83 billion industry. Toyama explained how mobile phones had intensified the speed at which consumers could purchase commodities. She illustrated this with the 'Tokyo girls collection' (in August 2005), a fashion show, attended by 12,600 people but watched on a live cell-phone broadcast by 15 million people and who could purchase items on their phones as they appeared on the catwalk. Mobile phone technology could therefore give consumers the potential to buy items instantly – as they read magazines, watched television programmes or after spotting someone in the street wearing something; the possibilities appear limitless. As the mobile phone industry expands, consumers will grow to be more tech-savvy, mobile-phone sales will continue to flourish. Yet the internet has been existing for the general public for over a decade, the virtual shop does not appear to overtake real shopping. I would argue that the internet has made the positioning of stores stronger. Changes in the production of fashion leads to transformation in the structure and presentation of stores. Stores become marketing platforms in their own rights.

There is potential for the internet to constitute what could be described as the '*Fourth Space*' - a virtual expansion of the '*Third Space*', which according to Christian Mikunda is when '*semi-public spaces*' as shops, hotels or museums are developed to make consumers feel at home, or in the very least, comfortable enough to choose to spend their leisure time there[798]. As we spend increasing time online, the internet is also starting to be perceived as a '*personal habitat*'[799]. Virtual versions of the '*First*' (the home), '*Second*' (the workplace) and '*Third*' (semi-public spaces) places exist online, where consumers can recreate what they would do in such places. This could be a consequence of the changes in the '*First*' and '*Second*' spaces. Richard Florida explained that as houses prices have gone up, people relocate more often and become less attached to their homes and local communities. Similarly as people work from home or share offices, the workplace is not as important as it once was, and it could be why people feel the need to spend so much time in the '*Third*' and now '*Fourth*' spaces. The '*Fourth Space*' gives consumers the opportunity to escape and not feel at home, nor at work, or in other familiar 'semi-public' spaces.

The internet is often projected to have a very negative effect on high-end fashion brands as it has been an important platform for the resale of counterfeits. Many consumers are duped into buying fakes that are advertised as 'discounted' brands. I would expect that brands will develop official routes for consumers to resale their items. Apple has used this form of brand-

[797] Toyama, Michiko, 'Boutique in Hand: How We Shop Now', *Time* (Magazine), Style & Design supplement, 12 March 2006, p. 24
[798] Mikunda, Christian, *Brand Lands, Hot Spots & Cool Spaces: Welcome to the Third Place and the Total Marketing Experience*, Kogan Page, London, 2004, pp. 2 - 3
[799] ibid. pp. 2 - 3

managed 'resale' method in selling used computers on a 'refurbished' programme. Nissanoff observed that '*at least one large department-store chain is considering reselling customers' clothes on Ebay in exchange for store credit*'[800]. This gives brands more control over the movement of their products, like car manufacturers have been doing for second-hand cars through controlled 'dealerships', given consumers their seal quality and guaranty. However, with the large amounts of capital necessary to build new stores, developing a real rather than a virtual presence shows that high-end fashion brands value the social dimension of shopping. Greater emphasis has therefore been placed on the shopping experience. Luxe is not only bought but experienced to the disadvantage of the internet. Dana Thomas[801] believed that in the past the shopping experience in luxury brands was as luxurious as the products offered. She described the quality of the service, the knowledge and care given by sales assistants, and the quality of the packaging. A Japanese worker explained to the photographer Stoman that she worked very hard, feeling like the slave to her bosses, but revelled in the fact that shop assistants submissively kneeled to show off the products, and that when she purchased goods from high-end fashion brands: '*you feel as if you are god*'[802]. This suggests that, in the future, a greater emphasis will be placed on service, and in this context, I am certain that the future of retail is in the post-sale. Brands are so omnipresent and pervasive that retailers no longer need to 'educate' consumers. Consumers are aware of brands and their histories. The objective of advertising today is to make people have an emotional reaction and present brands as cultures or ideologies to adhere to.

A way of making consumers 'involved' with brands is to make them 'cherish' their goods, luxury goods should be purchased as investments. To justify their high costs, brands are increasingly offering after-care service. Durability and reliability have become true signs of quality, going against the throwaway culture. By ensuring that consumers preserve their products, retailers can ensure that consumer will change less quickly and develop a personal and long-term relation with the brand. For instance, Louis Vuitton offers a repair service for all its commodities. One of the brand's most exclusive product, the Louis Vuitton trunks, are individual, with the possibility of having initials engraved and with a unique key, with a duplicate kept in a 'book', and copies can be made on proof of ownership, ensuring a long lasting relation with the customers. Hata Kyojiro, Director of Louis Vuitton Japan explained that '*although Louis Vuitton is fashionable, it will never be a fashion brand. Louis Vuitton is repairable (long life), robust promise*'[803]. For Kyojiro, such services contribute to the 'mythologisation' of the brand: '*we decided to create a new myth in the field of service, and we chose 'mythologizing our service' as an internal key phrase for our employees in early 1997*'[804]. I believe that the display of art in retail environments is used as part of this 'mythologisation' of the brand, giving it a cultural and historical role, part of traditions and current cultural movements. The display of art can help brands and their image be 'set' within the highbrow cultural scene.

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[800] Mustafa, Nadia, '10 Questions: Daniel Nissanoff', *TIME* (Magazine), Style & Design supplement, Spring 2006, p. 24
[801] Thomas, Dana, *Deluxe: How Luxury Lost Its Luster*, The Penguin Press, London, 2007
[802] Samson, Anna, 'A Woman's Obsession', *WAD,* Black & White Issue, Winter 2005, p. 28
[803] Hata, Kyojiro, *Louis Vuitton Japan: the Building of Luxury*, Assouline, Paris, 2004, p. 72
[804] ibid., p. 82

Apple have also been concerned with post-sale activities. Apple stores are not only present to gain new consumers but to make the companies' existing consumers get the most from their purchases and, more importantly, developing a culture for consumers to be proud owners. Indeed, despite promotional efforts, brands are more easily promoted from word to mouth and retailers have been attempting to 'get consumers talking about them'. Kevin Roberts, Director of the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi's, explained in *Lovemarks*, before promoting the brand to friends, consumers have to feel some sort of emotional attachment to brands. For this reason, Apple stores have been shaped as 'owners' clubs', offering free classes and demonstrations, unlike other computer stores consumers are left on their own to 'play' and try new computers. Even members of staff give the impression of being proud of working for Apple as if consumers and owners of Apple products are to feel part of a community. The after-care service is visible, taking place within the shops rather than being hidden, where goods have to be sent away. For from being anodyne, this service enables fellow consumers to mingle and discuss their problems whilst waiting for a consultation with a 'genius'. Another sign of the stores being developed as 'owners' club' is the non-Apple products offered which can be used with the computers, such as headphones, speakers and bags fit for the Macbooks. Hence, the principal function of Apple stores is to assist existing consumers rather than tempt new ones. The emphasis is therefore on selling products to existing customers, and maintaining levels of satisfaction. Other retailers will undoubtedly follow this new positioning of stores as owners' clubs. In this perspective, I envisage that the super-flagships in particular will be transformed to follow this new philosophy. I expect that art will be used to create a 'branded community'. As the Apple stores, I predict that high-end fashion stores will use their dedicated cultural spaces to offer consumers classes and talks, on a wide array of topics, from after-care advice to 'educational sessions on the brand history, etc. Brands could create much interest by inviting designers and artists to talk to consumers.

Loyalty cards (not credit cards), which tend to associated with drugstores or grocery stores, have been used by high-end fashion brands to ensure repeat visit and customer satisfaction. An early attempt was made by Prada in its New York stores, with the objective of facilitating consumer interaction, by providing sales assistants information such as the consumer's size and sale history. However, the project was abandoned as the Prada cards were to function with RFID devices which were discarded as they were not sufficiently reliable and functional. Another trend which could be envisaged is the multiplication of personal services, Louis Vuitton for instance offers a concierge service for its best clients, it could be also be expected that other store could start offering on a larger scale services such as dry cleaning, refitting, simple alterations services... These would ensure a greater consumer satisfaction and facilitate repeat visits. Louis Vuitton has, for instance, began to offer since 2002 with the opening of the Omotesando store in Tokyo, a new concierge service. According to Kyojiro, *'Louis Vuitton's concierges have extensive experience and knowledge (...). They strive to cater to a wide variety of customers requests by being up to date on the latest information. Apart from shopping related services,*

Louis Vuitton concierges can also handle hotel and restaurants reservation, arrange for taxis and chauffeur... provide information on theatres and nearby shopping[805].

In the light of the attention given to service quality, it seems inevitable that marketing strategies will continue to offer 'personal shopping services'; and for the best consumers 'at-home shopping', looking after 'V.I.P.' clients from the comfort of their homes. This would be particularly relevant for consumers that have little time, demanding careers, or even people for whom leaving the home could be somewhat of a ideological or religious issue. Home shopping would in this perspective offer such consumers the advantage of the store, and the comfort of the internet.

Are we seeing a standardisation of art and architecture? It has become expected for trendy high-end fashion stores to be set in high-architecture buildings, incorporate works of art and have art galleries. However, not all stores can be monuments, and in their attempts to surpass themselves, stores become drowned in competition. There is also a risk that high-architecture stimulates high-expectations that may not be fulfilled, as it has been the case of Selfridges in the Bullring centre, Birmingham. The architecture of the store was highly commended, but consumers were said to be disappointed by the comparatively 'conservative' aspect of the interior of Selfridges. Overexposure can be highly negative for brands. The Prada Epicenters for example were so widely publicised that they became 'tourist attractions', causing high shop traffic, contributing to a premature and unexpected deterioration of the New York store in particular. In this perspective, the same remarks made about the Guggenheim museums seem to be applied to the architecture of flagship stores. Critics have claimed that the Guggenheim museums had put too much emphasis on the architecture rather than in the quality of the collections. It can be envisaged that high-architecture could have a detrimental effect on brands. People will expect collections that match the degree of avant-gardism and sophistication of the architecture. The focus on high-architecture has been such that retailers may have put aside functionality, forgetting the original purpose of the stores. Stores have to be functional – there are so many considerations involved: security, functionality, ease of maintenance, which may not have be taken into account in the concept of these super-flagships. Hence, in the years to come, we may find that these stores will age prematurely as it has been the case of the Prada store in New York. There appears to be a contradiction between what attracts consumers and what consumers want from a store. Consumers may have been responsive to high-architecture, but they have been equally critical. In the Birmingham store, people were highly impressed by the building, but some found the Selfridges store furniture banal.

[805] Hata, Kyojiro, *Louis Vuitton Japan: the Building of Luxury*, Assouline, Paris, 2004, p. 88

The only way to counter this is to rely on temporary structures or interior architecture. I therefore predict that there will be an emphasis on the interior architecture of stores. Even if consumers are receptive to retail architecture, there are advantages for retailers to pursue interior design. Interior architecture can be more frequently redesigned and just as striking as in the Prada Epicenter in New York, the Viktor & Rolf shop in Milan and Dover Street Market in London. These stores have rather banal exterior but have generated wide media coverage because of their original interiors. I foresee that we will continue to see more projects of this kind. The more successful stores are not necessarily the ones with the highest budgets, but the ones with the more inventive designs. The Freitag store in Germany for example had a good response. Designed by architects Annette Spillmann and Harald Echsle, the store was made as an experimental architectural project. Made out of nine freight containers piled up, the 26 m high store towered over Zurich's Kreis 5 district, a former industrial area that is slowly being regenerated[806].

The use of material and designs in the architecture of stores specifically chosen to evoke a brand's best-known products, as in the Tokyo Apple store (see *fig. 32*), could start a general trend. For instance, it could be envisaged that a jeans company would open a store covered in iconic jean fabric. The incorporation of the company logo, as in the Louis Vuitton stores in Japan designed by Jun Aoki could also influence other brands to, physically, 'brand' their stores. It could be imagined that stores will pursue this idea of 'branded architecture', covering stores in actual products, in the spirit of the chairs created by Brazilian designers Fernando and Humberto Campana or the 'toy' coats by Jean Charles de Castelbajac. Such stores could also function as works of art, reminiscent of the resin sculptures by Arman. Stores could therefore be presented as works of art altogether; such as the Comme des Garçons Hong Kong 'white box', a windowless store built in 2007, designed by Japanese artist Yuichi Higashionna, which through its original architecture is more reminiscent of a lacquer box than a shop (see *fig. 154*). Max Azria's shop located on Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles took a step further by functioning as a work of art. In 2007, the shop was turned into a sculpture as it was covered by an installation created by American artist Patrick Dougherty[807] (see *fig. 155)*. Extending its genuine nature as a work of art, the piece was exhibited for a temporary duration (during the entire year). This installation was also similar to the 'wrapping' work of Jeanne-Claude and Christo, but also of Sam Taylor-Wood's temporary installation for Selfridges (discussed in chapter 3).

Others brands, such as Comme des Garçons and its Guerrilla stores, and the Maison Martin Margiela, have been involved in the recuperation of diverse sites. Maison Martin Margiela store in Taipei is set within a former hamburger restaurant made an interesting use of the

[806] Clivaz, Sébastien, 'Shop Shape: Freitag, Zurich', *Wallpaper*, September 2006, p. 81
[807] Patrick Dougherty's website: <http://www.stickwork.net> (last accessed 4 May 2008)

fig. 154: The 'white box': Comme des Garçons' Hong Kong flagship store. Built in 2007, this windowless store was designed by Japanese artist Yuichi Higashionna as both a work of art and a store

fig. 155: Max Azria's shop located on Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles also 'functioned' as a work of art as it was turned into a sculpture by American artist Patrick Dougherty for the duration of a year

space by preserving original furniture and architectural elements[808]. It could be expected that other spaces could be used, such as disused swimming pools, circuses, schools... In this perspective, stores could be like catwalk shows that take place in very diverse places, from car parks, to theatres, museums or schools. Like the Prada store in New York, located within former offices of the Guggenheim museum, the identity of the former occupants of the space could have meaning for the brand.

A return to traditional retail formats could also be foreseen. Labour and Wait, opened in May 2001, has become a popular London shop, with a concession opened in Dover Street Market, and in 2006, it topped Time Out Magazine's *'definitive list of London's 100 hottest shops'*[809]. The distinctiveness of this store is its traditional character, it offers simple household goods such as cookware and brooms, made in traditional materials such as enamel.

It can be expected that brands will increasingly open temporary stores, selling items for a limited period, increasing their value. Like the Guerrilla stores, temporary structures would enable retailers to create more original and conceptual themes for their stores. It is likely that temporary stores will be developed to follow specific events, like the temporary Prada 'improbable classics' store opened during the Basel art fair. Such stores would allow retailers to follow the flows of its consumers, opening outlets at art and design fairs, fashion weeks, and other events, could we foresee the opening of stores at music festivals?

To maintain the credibility of their association with culture, brands could diversify the nature of their corporate sponsorship by sponsoring a wider ranger of cultural activities. In 2007, Louis Vuitton sponsored the party celebrating the premiere of *My Blueberry Nights* (2007)[810] during the 2007 Cannes festival. Louis Vuitton's involvement with cinema, as for art, appears to be part of a broader strategy. The reason why Louis Vuitton may wanted to support this film could be seen as the first step for the brand to be associated with cinema. In February 2008, Louis Vuitton presented its first film campaign, *Core Values - Where Will Life Take You* (2008), which was screened in selected cinemas and satellite television channels, rather than mainstream channels (see video 7)[811]. *'We will not be on TF1*[812]' (France's main commercial television channel) Pietro Becarri, Louis Vuitton's Head of marketing explained. The fact that Louis Vuitton has only just created its advertisements and that it does not want to broadcast it on mainstream channels shows that the French fashion house is eager to retain its air of exclusivity. The film itself was given an intellectual arthouse appeal as it was directed by award

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808 Clivaz, Sébastien, 'Surprise in Stores', *Wallpaper*, May 2006, p. 66
809 Riordan, Kate, 'Labour and Wait', *Time Out* (London), 19 - 26 April 2006, p. 38
810 *My Blueberry Nights* (dir. Wong Kar Wai, 2007, USA) was the first English language film by the Hong Kong director Wong Kar Wai and the first film of the popular Jazz singer Norah Jones.
811 anon., '"Where Will Life Take You?" A Major Screen Premiere for Louis Vuitton, *LVMH Magazine* (online), 6 March 2008: <http://www.lvmh.com> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
812 Pfanner, Eric, 'Vuitton ads Venture onto Television', *International Herald Tribune*, 29 January 2008: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/01/29/business/Vuitton.php> (last accessed 4 May 2008)

winning French advertising director Bruno Aveillan and the music was composed by multiple Oscar winner Argentine musician Gustavo Santaolalla[813]. To further its new founded link with cinema, Louis Vuitton is to sponsor in October 2008 the 'Hawaii international Film Festival[814]. It can be predicted that Louis Vuitton will continue to support cinematographic projects to maintain associations between the brand and cinema. High-end fashion brands could become more engaged with the sponsorship of other art forms such as music and cinema. Brands might diversify the extent of their sponsorship, supporting art fairs, music and film festivals.

To fight off competition and gain new clients, brands have had to either specialise in niche markets, or 'diversify', by developing products outside the core of the brand. The market has expanded, but instead of evolving vertically, it has grown horizontally. The internationalisation of the markets has provoked a diversification of the consumer profile, and it would be more accurate to consider the market, not in terms of mass but of multiple niche markets. The challenge therefore faced by high-end fashion retailers will be to produce items that reflect or relate to as many niche markets as possible.

The leasing culture, described in chapter 1, has already been taken a step further. There now are now 'rental' stores for luxury commodities[815]. Consumers can hire high-end fashion and accessories for short periods. The advantage is that consumers can therefore keep up with trends more easily, whilst giving the impression of living a high-class lifestyle. With all these changes, making fashion more accessible, art plays a key role in demonstrating the authenticity of the items bought and enhances the high-class and positive character of shopping in high-end fashion stores.

In this chapter, I discussed how the relationship between art and high-end fashion brands could evolve. Considering current retail trends, I envisaged that artists could be invited to 'director' stores and reflect their personal taste and influences. Stores themselves could be transformed to be more conceptual and engage consumers to make them participative to the works of art displayed. I showed that stores could be developed as art spaces, transformed into working art studios or 'ateliers'. I also anticipated that art could be used to develop the attempts made by brands to provide a greater post-sale experience for consumers. As in public cultural institutions, artists could be invited to stores to give sessions, courses, talks etc. To go further against the standardisation of the use of art in retail environments, stores could even be turned into actual works of art, run and conceived by artists.

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[813] Santaolalla has won numerous international awards during his long career, including two Oscars for the soundtracks of *Brokeback Mountain* (dir. Ang Lee, 2005) and *Babel* (dir. Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006).
[814] The Hawaii Film Festival (HIFF): <http://www.hiff.org/entries.php/> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
[815] Hall, Tim, 'Baggin' the Bargains', *The London Paper*, 21 June 2007

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to contextualise the role of art in high-end fashion retail. Its outcome has been rather fruitful. The main questions raised have been answered as to how and why works of art have been introduced in retail environments. I explained that high-end fashion retailers have used art as part of a strategy to maintain or raise the highbrow image of their brands. However, as the research progressed, others factors emerged that indicated possibilities for further study.

I established early on that the mass-production and mass-consumption of high-end fashion labels had deteriorated the exclusive image of luxury. This was partially due to the increased accessibility of high-end fashion which, with the advent of the internet, motivated a 'leasing culture' in retail, and gave consumers through the social spectrum access to new high-end fashion trends. I demonstrated how high-end fashion brands themselves have contributed to the debasement of the high-status of their brands through a process of 'brand extension' and the creation of mass-produced collections such as perfumes, cosmetics and accessories. Luxury is also compromised by counterfeiting, which has pushed retailers to consider ways of proving authenticity of their commodities. Furthermore, fashion is renewed on a more frequent basis, provoking a thirst for constant novelty and putting greater pressure on renewal of in-store environment.

Globalisation has transformed the identity of consumers of high-end fashion, who put more emphasis on the visual codes of fashion and brand names to maintain social distinctions. In an effort to enhance luxury and the value of high-end goods, retailers have been producing limited editions. I argued that knowledge of brands and their relative status is given greater weight. A consequence of this is that consumers can demonstrate through consumption their sense of belonging to the upper strata of a perceived social order. A more significant consequence is that it has become the norm to demonstrate fashion awareness through consumption than in previous eras. This is partly because of easier access to information on current trends (the plethora of magazines and supplements and social network sites showing who is wearing what) and partly because it is easier to obtain high-brand apparel ('the eBay phenomena' I describe as 'leasing culture', and designer/high-street collaborations, see Chapter 1). Retailers have created different classes of consumers through the establishment of different levels of services, focusing on developing the experiential character of shopping into branded experiences. Richard Florida's argument that creativity is central to contemporary

society and economy was significant in this context. I argued that creativity has been cultivated as the utmost image of luxury and that retailers have present it as a means of endorsing the creativity within their consumers and the individuality of their brands. It is the rising importance of creativity that has led retailers to bring art into the realm of commerce. In the face of such problems, retailers have turned to artists with the intention of generating a sense of prestige.

The convergent creative disciplines examined in this thesis - art, design, architecture and fashion - are now more closely related and can actually be seen as extensions of each other. The disciplines are often bracketed together by art and design bodies for example, as Creative Industries. From a post-modern perspective, it should (perhaps) be recognised that many perceived barriers between disciplines have been erased – or at the very least blurred in distinction.

Similarly, during the course of this study it could be argued that I use terms such as 'creativity', 'cultural, and binary oppositions like 'global and local', 'commerce and culture' which, in other contexts, could be called into question. Read in a post-modern light, these terms could be regarded as problematic.

The use of these as key terms of reference in this thesis however provisional is significant: binary oppositions enable reflection on the 'place' of art and how placement in new spaces challenges 'given' assumptions of its value and function. It also allows the paradigms of architecture and design – commonly positioned in the popular press as 'cultural' spaces and practices – to be repositioned within commercial activity. This enables the thesis to evaluate how creative disciplines have been commercially employed to adjust perceived values of mass-produced goods.

It is also worth noting that during this study it was necessary to draw boundaries between disciplines such as art and fashion to distinguish their commonly held position for analysis and to demonstrate how, in a retail context, such demarcation has subsided and there has been an attempt to level distinctions. Yet the strategic reworking of art, architecture and design in retail spaces demonstrates that in the eyes of high-end fashion retailers, consumers and the popular press, binary oppositions still prevail.

Although the focus of this study was concerned with the use of art in retail, the link with high-architecture cannot be ignored. During my analysis of new international flagship stores, it became evident that the introduction of art into retail spaces coincided with a campaign for

high-architecture to heighten the retail experience and to reinforce the branding of it. Retailers have invited leading *'starchitects',* to transform stores into cultural and entertaining venues, to make shopping more engaging and meaningful. The Epicenter stores created by Prada were representative of the need for brands to break away from single and collective retail design approaches for their stores. I affirmed that this involvement with high-architecture has repositioned the image of high-end fashion stores and has been instrumental in turning the store visit into a branded experience. Through these new stores, retailers found a way to introduce works of art, with legitimacy, by establishing in-store exhibition areas and dedicated cultural spaces. I explained that in many cases, works of art were even created as part of the stores, true site-specific installations, rather than being an afterthought in the design process. The Chanel store in Hong Kong, with an atrium built around a Murano glass sculpture of a giant pearl necklace by French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel is a manifestation of this. I maintain that the retail projects created by Comme des Garçons including the Guerrilla stores, series of temporary 'pop-up' shops, not only mimicked the brief life of fashion and its trends, but also adopted the format - and visual language - used in art-installations and performances; a new form of retail outlet has emerged which was a hybrid between art gallery and shop. I emphasised that these stores are used as an effective method of publicising brands.

In these commercial settings, art is used as a visual language to be understood and read for its symbolic meaning. In this context, I demonstrated how art is used as a form of advertising and is more likely to be interpreted as such. Works of art are commissioned to be 'decoded' in light of the brand identity, as demonstrated by *XV Seconds* by Sam Taylor-Wood, which reflected the image of its commissioner, Selfridges. To achieve this I argue, the reputation of the artists is crucial. Artists are employed in the same frame as celebrities, endorsing commodities. In many respects this is like the marketing term 'third-party association': where two brands work together for their mutual benefit in their different fields.

These new, highly publicised stores have themselves become tourist destinations because they were designed to be iconic. In this respect, I have come to realise that art in retail has been motivated by globalisation, and the need to communicate more efficiently to consumers across cultures. As I noted in chapter 3, through the analysis of French brands in Japan, retailers have been able to express the heritage of their brands and set them within a cultural framework evoking the West, giving value and authenticity to their commodities. Retailers have drawn on the fact that art is perceived across cultures as elitist and exclusive. The use of art gives distinctiveness to the stores, going against the criticism of the internationalisation of brands and the appearance of 'non-places'.

Art and high-end fashion in fact can now operate commercially very closely, and it is a relationship that is maintained by retailers, whose purpose is to make consumers perceive

fashion as an art, and ultimately commodities as work of art. To achieve this, retailers follow a common strategy which is to adopt a philanthropic attitude: first, high-end fashion brands sponsor exhibitions and cultural events; open in-store galleries; launch art awards; and finally, establish their own cultural centres and art foundations as have done Louis Vuitton, Prada and Agnès b. Through these steps, they operate in legitimacy as 'tastemakers', obtaining the influence and support of cultural institutions and governments. An altruistic attitude directly improves the image of brands and fulfils what is perceived as corporate social responsibility, which in this climate of corporate accountability is crucial. The introduction of art it appears raises the function of shopping outlets, and gives retail environments a public role, functioning as pseudo-public art institutions. Stores have become places of entertainment, discovery and culture, offering an alternative to their primordial function as commodity showcases.

The introduction of art in retail environments shows the reality of capitalism, a 'global consumerist world' where shopping is a favoured leisure activity. I argued that in this context, it is not surprising that to reach the widest audiences, art has needed to be more engaged with commerce. Artists such as Barbara Kruger view the exhibition of art in retail as a platform to communicate with mass-audiences. I demonstrated that by displaying art in stores, artists contribute to a commodification of works of art. It is also fair to say that the privatisation of culture has played a significant role in allowing art to be presented in commercial environments and have become willing participants in this new arena.

I demonstrated that the introduction of art in retail is linked to other trends, such as the customisation of commodities and the interest for the homemade. I argued that the use of art in retail is likely to be a long-term relationship. I appraised future retail trends and demonstrated that creativity will continue to play a crucial role. In this context, I argued that creativity will remain an important issue of social life and signs of creativity will become sought-after characteristics, preserving the importance of art as a symbol of luxury. Because of this, I foresee that art in retail will be both expected and revered. It is also probable that the popularity of the use of art will influence other sectors to present art in their own environments.

I concluded that art in retail is a manifestation of the growing links between art and commerce, and an indication that the boundaries between disciplines are truly disappearing. The presence of art in retail reflects many contemporary processes, such as the privatisation of art and the commodification of culture. Attracting mass-media coverage, stores have become independent marketing tools, increasing sales by involving consumers' curiosity.

Although the processes of this study have had positive outcomes, it has not been flawless. There have been limitations: to begin with, its scope could have been broadened as it became apparent during the course of research that art has also been introduced in some low and middle-end fashion retail spaces. Comparisons in the use of art at the different ends of the spectrum could have been made to assess different positioning of art. Instead, the focus was on the high-end spectrum of fashion retail because as a 'discreet' study, it provided a range of examples and generated questions about the function of art in retail that could be manageably addressed. With their high budgets and international reputations, high-end fashion brands have made unsurpassed and highly original uses of art which represented a richer and more meaningful subject to explore. Their use of art is also more sophisticated than in '*high street*' shops, which tend to use art for decorative purposes rather than as a commercial strategy. Moreover, this study being the first of its kind should be considered as an initial exploration of the subject matter. The intention was to provide an overview of the presence of art and introduce the key players. The analysis of the presence of art in high-end fashion retail environments is essential before examining lesser uses of art.

To complement this thesis, a long-term research taking only one significant brand as case study, examining from the onset the brand's involvement with art would be the best way to pursue my investigation. Giving answers to questions such as, why and how artists were chosen? How significant were the roles of: artists, retailers, consultants, agents, galleries, etc; who most benefited from this venture and what were the financial settlements.

Because of the cross-disciplinary character of this subject, new research could be a conducted by scholars in a broad range of fields: fashion, art, architecture, economics, consumer psychology, management, business, marketing, politics and cultural studies. I am aware that one of the drawbacks of my thesis was the lack of information on the financial implications of the display of art in stores. However, this was not one of my main queries, primarily because this research was established from a design perspective; and because, this study is the first of its kind to examine the use of art in retail. Still, it is undeniable that this subject should be investigated from the economic point of view. The display of art in retail is likely to create profits by increasing sales, which only a throughout analysis of financial data would evaluate the extent. Other important questions could be considered: Does art help sell commodities? Is it worth the investments? Does it improve brand recognition? Does it encourage repeat visit? Does it broaden the consumer base?

The results of the introduction of art in high-end fashion stores can be measured from an array of sources. Blogs activity and footfall both provide evidence of the popularity of a brand. Laurent Valembert, an associate director of Tribeca, an advertising agency which specialises in running guerrilla marketing campaigns, explained that a mention of a brand on an online blogs

represents an important measure of success[816]. Nonetheless, this kind of enquiry would request the study of sensitive brand data and accounts, which are not easily available due to their highly confidential nature. During my research, I experienced how secretive and protective high-end fashion brands are, even regarding non-financial information. As much as I would welcome an economic study of the use of art in retail, I expect that the researchers involved, requiring an unprecedented and open access to data and information, would be faced with the uncooperativeness of retailers, hindering their work. Such research could therefore only be instigated by brands themselves, and it would be likely that they would keep their findings private, refusing to share them with the academic world or the general public to avoid criticism and incomprehension. Indeed, the polemic stirred by the $15 million donation made by Giorgio Armani to the Guggenheim museum comes to mind (discussed in chapter 4). This mishap tarnished the reputation of the museum as well as Armani's, ultimately, proving the sensitivity of financial information. On no occasions have artists or companies made public the sums involved in their collaborations. To avoid public interest, certain artists make a clear distinction between private commissions and their personal works of art, like Sam Taylor-Wood who does not list *XV Seconds* for Selfridges as part of her oeuvre. In most cases, the impression is that these associations are somewhat benevolent, and that the artists created the pieces to celebrate the brands they admire, like Vanessa Beecroft and her *Alphabet Concept* for Louis Vuitton.

Another way to extend this body of work would be to focus on consumers. Through a qualitative approach, with the aid of questionnaires and interviews, consumers' opinions on the introduction of art in stores could be ascertained. Their responses would indicate if they have even noticed the works of art, and whether it made their shopping experience more pleasurable, or even changed their opinion of the brands. Answers to these questions would also require the support of the brands, but would unlikely be granted as it is would involve direct contact with consumers which would be seen as a disruption, and what's more, consumer surveys are conventionally not conducted by high-end fashion brands.

[816] Herbin, Marie, 'Quand Le Marketing Fait Le Trottoir', *BtoB UNIQUE*, December - January 2006/2007, p. 37

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Kei Kagami, fashion designer, multiple conversations, February 2005 - May 2007, London

Alison Jackson, artist (who staged a live art performance in Selfridges), 21 October 2005, London

Barbara Kruger, artist (whose art work / graphic messages have been used by Selfridges for its sales announcements), 13 May 2005, London

Martin Parr, photographer (who has exhibited in Colette and Agnès b), 16 January 2006, telephone interview

Guillaume Salmon, Press officer at Colette, 22 February 2006, Paris

Caroline Lauzain, artist (who exhibited at the Paris department store Les Galeries Lafayette), 22 February 2006, Paris

Mark Tungate, author of *Fashion Brands*: *Branding Style from Armani to Zara* (2004), 23 February 2006, Paris

Linlee Allen, former Press officer and Editor of Colette's in-house magazine and website, 27 February 2006, Paris

Ingrid Pux, Director of Public Relations of L'Espace Louis Vuitton, Paris, 1 March 2006

Lorenzo Rocca, former Company Secretary, Marni Retail UK Ltd., 2 April 2006, London

Florence Freeman, Manager of Dover Street Market, 25 April 2006, London

Professor Christopher M. Moore, author and Professor in Retailing and Marketing, Caledonian Business School, Glasgow, 23 May 2006

Paco Underhill, Director of Envirosell, Inc. and author of *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping* (2003), 1 June 2006, New York

Kaori Nasu, illustrator (who has exhibited in department stores in Japan and whose illustration books are sold in Japanese concept stores), 3 October 2006, Tokyo

Midori Araki, artist (who has exhibited in department stores in Japan and in Colette), 6 October 2006, Tokyo

Atsushi Suwa, painter (who has exhibited in department stores in Japan), 7 October 2006, Tokyo

Nasao Kanagimoto, Director of the Onward Gallery (Corporate Art Gallery), 7 October 2006, Tokyo

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Kenichiro Ueno, Representative of the Fine Art Department, Mitsukoshi Ltd., 8 October 2006, Nihombashi, Tokyo

Conferences, Symposiums and Study-days

'Contemporary Art and Globalisation', Tate Modern, London, 12 March 2005. Speakers included: Paul Wood, Senior Lecturer, Department of Art History, the Open University, Suman Gupta, Senior Lecturer, Literature Department, the Open University, Sonia Boyce, artist, Steve Edwards, Research Lecturer, Department of Art History, the Open University, Mohini Chandra, artist and Marcus Verhagen, art historian and critic.

'Adverts, Airdrops, Badges and Beer Bottles: Artists Using Mass Communication', Tate Modern, London, Mondays 27 June - 18 July 2005. Course led by Maria Fusco, writer and lecturer and Craig Martin, artist and lecturer.

'Art & Money', Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 26 August 2005. Panel Discussion chaired by Louisa Buck, writer and broadcaster, speakers included: Gill Headley, Head of the Contemporary Art Society, Doug Fishbone, artist, Lois Keidan, Director of the Live Art Development Agency, and Dr Angus Cameron, lecturer in State Theory at Leicester University.

'New Public Architecture', Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 26 September 2005, chaired by Emma King, Senior Architect, Arts council England. Speakers included: architects Tony Fretton, (Tony Frettons Architects) and Richard MacCormac, MJP, architect.

'What is DesignArt?', Tate Britain, London, 30 September 2005, study-day led by Alex Coles, author of *DesignArt*.

'CuidadMULTIPLEcity: Urban art and the City', Tate Modern, London, 12 October 2005, Speakers included: curators, Gerardo Mosquera and Adrienne Samos, assistant curator Mónica Portillo and artist Humberto Vélez.

'Import/Export – How Global is Design?', Victoria & Albert Museum, 14 October 2005, chaired by Joe Kerr, Head of the department of Critical and Historical studies at the Royal College of Art and Emilie Campbell, British Council. Panellists included: Reiner de Graaf, Director of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, John Thackara, Director of Doors of Perception, Professor Leslie Sklair, sociologist, and Sukhdev Sandhu, writer

'Photography and Celebrity: On Being Most Photographed', National Portrait Gallery, London, 21 October 2005. Speakers included: artist Alison Jackson, Harry Borden, photographer, Anne Braybon, curator and former art director of *Management Today*, Richard Howells, Senior lecturer, University of Leeds, Roger Hargreaves, lecturer, London College of Communication, Stephen Bull, artist and Jill Kennington, ex-fashion model.

'Art in the City, the Great Artistic Metropolis', Oxford House, London, 10 November 2005. Speakers included: Charles Holland, FAT Ltd., Sir Terry Farrell, Principal Terry Farrelll & Partners, Jemima Montagu, Visual Arts Officer (Public Realm), Arts Council England; Jude Kelly, Artistic Director, South Bank Centre; Patricia Brown, Chief Executive, Central London Partnership, Jonathan Davis, Director of Learning and Development, CABE; Francesca Ferguson, Curator and Journalist, Sarah Carrington and Sophie Hope, B+B; Tom Macartney, Chief Executive, Sunderland Arc, Nick Ewbank, The Creative Foundation, Folkestone and artists Jochen Gerz and Michael Pinsky.

'Commerce and Fashion, 1500 – 2000', The Centre for the History of Retailing and Distribution, (CHORD) - University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton, 8 March 2006. Chaired by Laura Ugolini, University of Wolverhampton. Speakers included: Jessica Bush, Bucks New University, Kay Staniland, Sarah Johnson, University of Hertfordshire, Madeleine Ginsburg, Daks Simpson Archive, Clare Rose, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London.

'Curating the Contemporary: New Sites of Practice', Design Council, 23 March 2006, Organised by MA Curating the Contemporary Design, Kingston University, chaired by Deyan Sudjic, author and Dean of Art, Design and Architecture at Kingston University. Speakers included: Clare Cumberlidge, General Public Agency; Bettina von Hase: Founder/Director, Nine AM Ltd and art advisor to Selfridges, Eddie Otchere: Curator, National Portrait Gallery, Andree Cooke, Independent Curator; Francesca Ferguson, Artistic Director, Urban Drift, Berlin and the Swiss Architecture Museum, Basel. Paola Antonelli: Design Curator at the Museum of Modern Art New York, Lauren Parker, Curator Contemporary Team, V&A Museum.

'Spaces and Places: Exploring the "Flagship" Concept', London of Communication - University of the Arts, London, 11 May 2006. Speakers included: Bill Webb, London College of Fashion, Audrey Kirby, London College of Communication, Anthony Parsons, London College of Communication, Stephen Doyle and Prof. Christopher Moore, Glasgow Caledonian University, Jessica Bush, Bucks New University; Prof. Anne Marie Doherty, University of Aberystwyth, Dr. Charles Dennis, Brunel University, Dr. David Bennison, Manchester Metropolitan University Business School, Marc Mikulcik, Freelance Marketing Consultant, Dr. Bronwen Edwards, Royal Holloway, Nicky Ryan, London College of Communication, Dominic Stone, Central Saint Martins, and Tony Varey, London College of Communication.

'There is an Alternative: Art, Economics and Non-conformity', Tate Modern, London, 3 March 2007. Chaired by artist Sonya Dyer, speakers included: James Marriott, activist and co-founder of Platform, Munira Mirza, author and Paula Roush, artist.

'The Changing Face of Art and Audience', talk organised by the British Creative Exchange, Tate Modern, London, 15 March 2007. Chaired by Derick Johnson, Director of Revelation Arts & Media; speakers included: John Weich, Editor in Chief of Art Review, Jane Boardman, CEO TalkPR and Edward Morgan, BBC Executive Producer of the Culture Show.

Talks

Barbara Kruger, 13 May 2005,Tate Britain, London
Jacques Herzog, 21 June 2005, Tate Modern, London
Lucy Orta, 19 October 2005, University of the Arts - London College of Fashion, London
Sam Taylor-Wood, 10 November 2005, The National Portrait Gallery, London
Rinko Kawauchi, 27 May 2006, The Photographers' Gallery, London.
Nan Goldin, 18 January 2007, Tate Modern, London

Exhibitions

'Spectres: When Fashion Turns Back', Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 24 February - 8 May 2005

'Herzog & de Meuron: an Exhibition', Tate Modern, London, 1 June - 29 August 2005

'Corporate Culture: a History of Corporate Art Collection', (with pieces from the Clifford Chance Art Collection, Deutsche Bank, the Drambuie Collection, the Fleming Collection, Hiscox, ING, JP Morgan Chase, Monsoon, Unilever), the Fleming Collection, London, 21 June - 3 September 2005

'After a Fashion: an Exhibition of Art & Fashion', (with works by Sonia Delaunay, Cecil Beaton, Elisabetta Catamo, Pavlos, Christine Khondji, Vito Drago and Georgia Russell), England & Co., London, 16 July - 3 September 2005

'Art Now: Jan de Cock', Tate Modern, London, 10 September – 30 October 2005

'Lucy Orta', Barbican Curve Gallery, London, 15 September – 30 October 2005

'I Shot Norman Foster', (featuring works by artists: Andreas Gursky, Gabriele Basilico, Norbert Schoerner, Chris Steele-Perkins of photography of buildings designed by Norman Foster), The Yard, London, 17 November 2005 - 20 January 2006

'VBLV', L' Espace Louis Vuitton, Paris, 12 January - 31 March 2006

'Anna Piaggi Fashion-ology', Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 2 February - 23 April 2006, (sponsored by Topshop)

'Clarisse Larousse: Aphorismes, Mode et Design', (Art by Caroline Lauzain and Frederick Deming), La Galerie des Galeries, Les Galeries Lafayette, Paris, 25 January - 15 March 2006

'Performances & Projections', La Galerie du Jour (Agnès b), Paris, 11 February – 1 April 2006

'UK JACK, OK!', Colette, Paris, 27 February – 1 April 2006

'Rinko Kawauchi', 5 May - 9 July 2006, The Photographers' Gallery, London

'Modernism: Designing a New World 1914 – 1939', Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 6 April – 23 July 2006, (sponsored by Habitat)

'Karl Lagerfeld: Farewell to Daylight', Pace/Macgill Gallery, New York, 18 May - 17 June 2006

'Zaha Hadid: Thirty Years in Architecture', Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 3 June - 25 October 2006

'60s Fashion', Victoria & Albert museum, London, 6 June 2006 - 25 February 2007, (sponsored by Miss Selfridge)

'Che Guevara: Revolutionary & Icon', Victoria & Albert museum, London, 7 June - 28 August 2006

'Back to Help!' (photography of the Beatles by Emilio Lari), Galleria Carla Sozzani, Milan (10 Corso Como), 11 June – 23 July 2006

'Maripolarama', Agnès b store (Greene Street, New York) 10 June - 11 July 2006

'Maripolarama', the Gallery, Soho Grand, New York, 10 June - 17 August 2006

'Jim Lee', Galleria Carla Sozzani, Milan (10 Corso Como), 11 June – 23 July 2006

'AngloMania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion', the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 3 May - 4 September 2006, (sponsored by Burberry)

'Icons', L'Espace Louis Vuitton, 15 September – 31 December 2006

'China Power Station: Part I', Battersea Power station, London, 8 October - 5 November 2006, (sponsored by Agnès b)

'An Existence', (exhibition of work by Chen Ruo Bing, Hirata Goro and Yoon Heechang), Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo, 27 October - 24 December 2006

'The Face of Fashion', National Portrait Gallery, 15 February - 28 May 2007, (sponsored by Gap).

'Alvar Aalto, through the Eyes of Shigeru Ban', Barbican Art Gallery, London, 22 February - 13 May 2007

'Skins & Bones: Parallel Practices in Fashion and Architecture', Embankment Galleries, Somerset House, London, 24 April - 10 August 2008

Visits

Birmingham - 26 May 2006:
The Bullring Centre - Selfridges (Designed by Future Systems)

Gateshead - 24 May:
Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art
Angel of the North (public art sculpture by Antony Gormley, 1998) - (examples of a regional regeneration project using art to boost the economy, supported by the British government)

Glasgow - 23 May 2006:
Comme des Garçons Guerrilla store

Liverpool - 25 May 2006:
Microzine (concept store which specialised in limited editions)
Tate Gallery Liverpool (built as part of the 'cultural' regeneration of Liverpool)

London - multiple visits, November 2004 / ongoing:

9 Albemarle Street, Mayfair (Paul Smith's independent furniture and 'curios' boutique)

A Bathing Ape, Carnaby Street (Japanese streetwear brand which mainly produces limited editions)

A Butcher of Distinction, Spitalfields ('trendy' boutique with a butcher's shop interior theme)

Adidas Originals, Carnaby Street and Covent Garden (Adidas' concept store which specialises in limited editions and reissues of past collections)

Agnès b, Floral Street (designer shop with in-store art exhibitions)

Apple Store, Regent Street (first stand alone Apple London store, with award winning high-architectural design - built-in 'theatre' and after care support 'genius bar')

Browns, South Molton Street (high-end fashion boutique which specialises in limited editions and vintage collections re-issues)

Build-a-Bear, Covent Garden (experiential oriented toy store)

Camper, Notting Hill and Floral Street (shoe store with artistic displays and 'theme')

Coco de Mer, Covent Garden (lingerie boutique designed by artist and designer Simon Withers, with in-store exhibitions)

Dover Street Market, Mayfair (Comme des Garçons' concept store)

Foot Patrol, Soho ('sneakers' shop with experimental architectural design - closed in March 2008)

Fortnum and Mason (luxury department store which underwent a £24 million refurbished in 2007)

Harrods, South Kensington (considered as the most luxurious department store in London)

Harvey Nichols, South Kensington (department store which had been 'decorated' with a sculpture by Thomas Heatherwick in 1997)

Issey Miyake, Conduit Street (designer store with an in-store like sculpture similar to one displayed in the New York store)

Liberty, Regent Street (luxury department store set in an Arts and Craft building)

Maison Martin Margiela, Mayfair (designer store with conceptual architectural design)

Mandarina Duck, Conduit Street (designed by Marcel Wanders with an in-store sculpture)

Marni, Sloane square (interior design and display furniture by Future System)

New Look, Oxford Street (high-street brand, interior designed by Future Systems)

Niketown, Oxford Street (example of a 'super-flagship' or 'brand-theme park')

Oki-ni, Saville Row (experimental streetwear boutique, closed in 2006, now only existing as part of an online project)

Paul Smith, Notting Hill and Floral Street (designer store with high-architectural designs and 'art theme')

Primark, Oxford Street (low-end fashion brand, used as an example of the antithesis of high-end fashion retail design)

Rough Trade Concept Shop, Spitalfields (Record Label concept store)

Selfridges, Oxford Street (luxury department store which has exploited an 'art strategy' to differentiate itself from its competitors and establish a unique brand identity)

Ted Baker, Floral Street (designer store with an 'art theme' - artistic displays and interior design)
Topshop, Oxford Street (popular high-street chain which has made attempts to be involved with highbrow culture by sponsoring exhibitions and art projects)
The Design Museum (interesting museum shop)
Sketch (restaurant with high-architectural interior design by designers including Philippe Stark and video art gallery)
The Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising, (private museum which traces the history of brands)
National Portrait Gallery (museum that has rebranded itself and attracting a wider public through 'blockbusters' exhibitions on fashion and celebrity culture)
Serpentine Gallery (art gallery with high coverage of its annual summer high-architecture pavilions)
Tate Modern (the UK's biggest art gallery, an example of the branding of culture - branded Tate goods sold in the shop, designed by Herzog & de Meuron)
Victoria & Albert Museum (museum that has rebranded itself and attracting a wider public through 'blockbusters' exhibitions on fashion and celebrity culture, and its 'Friday Late' night events. Also a famous example of successful branding - one of the first museums to offer a range of products based on its collection and open a high-standard restaurant).

Milan - 21 July 2006:
10 Corso Como (described as the oldest concept store in the world)
Marni (interior design and display furniture by Future System)
Paul Smith (designer store with high-architectural designs and 'art theme')
La Rinascente (now directed by Vittorio Radice, former head of Selfridges, who first used an 'art strategy' to rebrand a department store)
Spazio Armani (Armani's 'super-flagship', with in-store florist, hairdresser and bookshop)
Versace (designer shop with high-architectural design)
Viktor & Rolf. (designer shop with an 'artistic' theme and high-architectural design)
La Galleria Carla Sozzani (10 Corso Como's in-store art gallery).

New York - 1 to 13 June 2006:
ABC Carpets (store with an 'artistic theme')
Agnès b, Greene Street (designer shop with in-store art exhibitions)
Apple (part of a series of first stand alone international Apple stores, with award winning high-architectural design - built-in 'theatre' and after care support 'genius bar')
Bergdorf and Goodman (luxury department store for which Dalí and other artists had created window displays)
Bloomingdale's (luxury department store)
Comme des Garçons (designer store with high-architectural design by Future systems)

Macy's (luxury department store)
Nieman Marcus, New Jersey (department store with in-store exhibitions by local artists - Nieman Marcus has also built a large collection of U.S folk art)
Prada (designer store with high coverage high-architectural design by Rem Koolhaas and OMA)
The Gallery, SoHo Grand (in-house art gallery of the 'trendy' SoHo Grand hotel, which organised an exhibition in partnership with Agnès b)
The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), (museum that has rebranded itself becoming a famous example of successful branding - one of the first museums to offer a range of products based on its collection and offer a high-quality of goods in its shop)
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (designed by Frank Gehry, an example of the use of high-architecture to attract a wide public and generate publicity)

Paris - repeated visits 2004 - 2007:
Agnès b (designer shop with in-store art exhibitions)
Colette (one of the oldest and most successful concept store in the world)
Le Bon Marché (luxury department store with occasional art exhibitions)
Les Galeries Lafayette (luxury department store with in-store art gallery)
Le Printemps (luxury department store with regular art exhibitions)
Louis Vuitton, Champs Élysées (designer store with high-architectural design by Peter Marino, with in-store art gallery)
Marni (interior design and display furniture by Future System)
Surface to Air (concept store which specialises in limited editions and reissues of past collections)
Le Centre Pompidou (designed by Renzo Piano, an example of the use of high-architecture to attract a wide public and generate publicity)
L'Espace Louis Vuitton (Louis Vuitton's in-store art gallery)
La Galerie du Jour (Agnès b's independent art gallery)
La Galerie des Galeries (Les Galeries Lafayette's in-store art gallery)
Le Palais de Tokyo, (museum that has rebranded itself becoming a famous example of successful branding)

Tokyo - 2 to 12 October 2006:
10 Corso Como Comme des Garçons (temporary concept store established by 10 Corso Como and Comme des Garçons brands)
A Bathing Ape (Japanese streetwear brand which mainly produces limited editions)
Apple store, Ginza (part of a series of first stand alone international Apple stores, with award winning high-architectural design - built-in 'theatre' and after care support 'genius bar')
Chanel, Ginza (designer store with high-architectural design by Peter Marino, with in-store cultural centre)

Chloé (designer store with high-architectural design by Sophie Hicks Architects)
Comme des Garçons, Aoyama (designer store with high-architectural design by Future Systems)
Dior, Omotesando (designer store with high-architectural design by SANAA)
Dover Street Market (second branch of Comme des Garçons' concept store)
Isetan, Ginza (luxury department store with regular art exhibitions)
Issey Miyake by Naoki Takizawa, Roppongi Hills (designer store with high-architectural design by SANAA)
Louis Vuitton, Ginza, Omotesando and Roppongi Hills branches (designer store with high-architectural design by Jun Aoki)
Maison Hermès, Ginza (designer store with high-architectural design by Renzo Piano and in-store art gallery and museum)
Mikimoto, Ginza (luxury jewellery store with high-architectural design by Toyo Ito)
Mitsukoshi, Ginza (luxury department store with regular art exhibitions)
Prada, Aoyama (designer store with high coverage high-architectural design by Herzog & de Meuron)
Ralph Lauren, Omotesando (designer store with traditional European style architecture)
Takashimaya (luxury department store with regular art exhibitions)
Sebu, (luxury department store with regular art exhibitions)
Tod's, Omotesando (designer store with high-architectural design by Toyo Ito)
Shiseido, Ginza (high-class cosmetic firm with high architecture design by Ricardo Bofill)
Y's and Y3 (Yohji Yamamoto), Roppongi Hills (designer store with high-architectural design by Ron Arad).
The House of Shiseido (Shiseido's independent brand-theme cultural centre)
The Onward Gallery (corporate art gallery)
The Shiseido Gallery (Shiseido's independent art gallery and oldest Japanese contemporary art gallery)

Correspondence

Angela Lee, Display Office Assistant, Harvey Nichols, London, 21 March 2005, via email
Bill Webb, Course Director Retail Fashion, London College of Fashion, January - December 2006, via email
Bradley Quinn, author of *The Fashion of Architecture,* 2003, 20 January 2006, via email
Brian Moeran, author and Professor of Culture and Communication, Copenhagen Business School, 28 April 2006, via email
Claudio Toyama, Senior Consultant in Media and Retail, 12 - 24 May 2006, via email
Timon Screech, Professor in the History of Art, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), 30 September 2006, via email

Films

Arakimentari, dir. Travis Klose, 2005, USA
The Hire, (eight eight-minute shorts films), dir. John Woo, Guy Ritchie, Tony Scott and Wong Kar-Wai, (2001), commissioned by BMW
Lucky Star, dir. Michael Mann, 2002, (commissioned by Mercedes-Benz)
My Blueberry Nights, dir. Wong Kar Wai, 2007, USA
Pulp Fiction, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1994, USA
Seul Contre Tous, dir. Gaspar Noé, 1998, FR
Taxi Driver, dir. Martin Scorsese, 1976, USA

Websites

Agnès b: <http://www.agnesb.com/front/europe_fr.jsp>
Armani: <http://www.armaninobu.it/armani_nobu_index.html> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
Anya Hindmarch: <http://www.anyahindmarch.com/division/environmental_bags.aspx> (last accessed 22 July 2007)
BBC News Online: <http://news.bbc.co.uk> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
Bloody Burberry: <http://www.bloodyburberry.com/wycd.asp> (last accessed 20 March 2007)
Chanel: <http://www.chanel.com> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
Chanel Mobile Art: <http://www.chanel-mobileart.com/?lang=en_eu> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
Chanel Nexus Hall: <http://www.chanel-ginza.com/nexushall.com> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
Colette: <http://www.colette.fr> (last accessed 9 March 2007)
Comme des Garçons – Guerrilla stores: <http://www.guerrilla-store.com/flash.php>
Dover Street Market: <http://www.doverstreetmarket.com> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
The Dubai Shopping Festival (DSF): <http://www.dubaishoppingfestival.com/dsf/dsf-dubai.htm> (last accessed 15 May 2007).
Fondazione Prada - Prada: <http://www.fondazioneprada.com/en/intro.html>
Future Systems: <http://www.future-systems.com/architecture/architecture_list.html>
Galleria Carla Sozzani - 10 Corso Como: <http://www.galleriacarlasozzani.org>
House of Holland: <http://www.houseofholland.co.uk> (last accessed 22 July 2007)
La Galerie du Jour - Agnès b -: <http://www.galeriedujour.com/>
Louis Vuitton – Espace Louis Vuitton: <http://www.louisvuitton.com/web/flash/index.jsp;jsessionid=MEIOFRONN2IKGCRBXUDVAFYKEG4RAUPU?buy=1&langue=fr_FR> (last accessed 22 April 2007)
LVMH: <http://www.lvmh.com> (last accessed 22 April 2007)
Mario Testino: <http://www.mariotestino.com/main.htm> (last accessed 6 April 2007)

Nine AM Limited: <http:www.nineam.co.uk/about.html> (last accessed 17 September 2006)
OMA website: <http://www.oma.nl> (last accessed 12 March 2006)
Rem Koolhaas and OMA: <http://www.oma.nl/>
Selfridges: <http://www.selfridges.com/index.cfm?page=1167> (last accessed 6 April 2007)
SHOWstudio: <http://www.showstudio.com/> (last accessed 6 April 2007)
The Singapore Sales Week website: <http://www.greatsingaporesale.com.sg/english.html> (last accessed 12 May 2007).
Superfuture: <http://www.superfuture.com/city/home/> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
Tate Gallery: <http://www.tate.org.uk> (last accessed 4 May 2008)
Tate Gallery Glossary: <http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/> (last accessed 4 May 2008)

Appendix

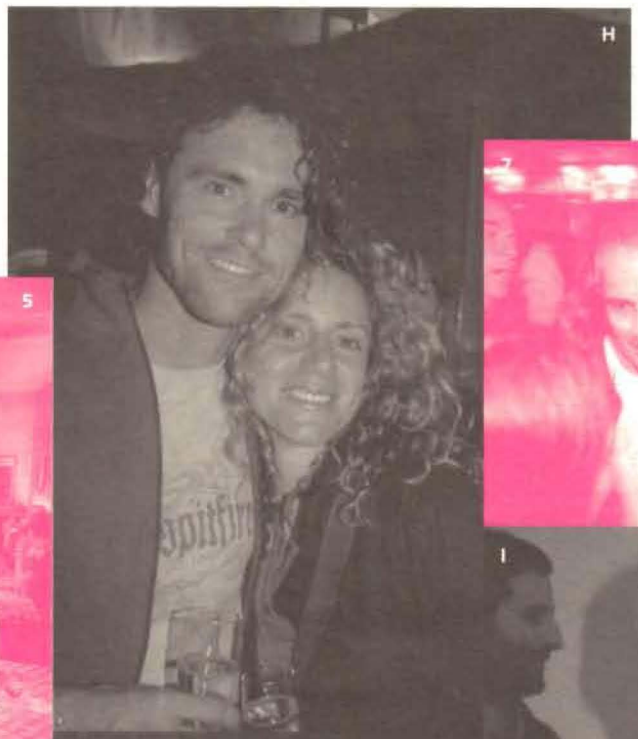
Art Review
issue 13
July / August 2007

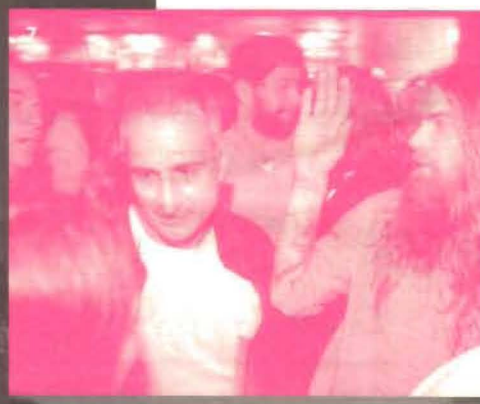
TIM STONER: ALISON JACQUES

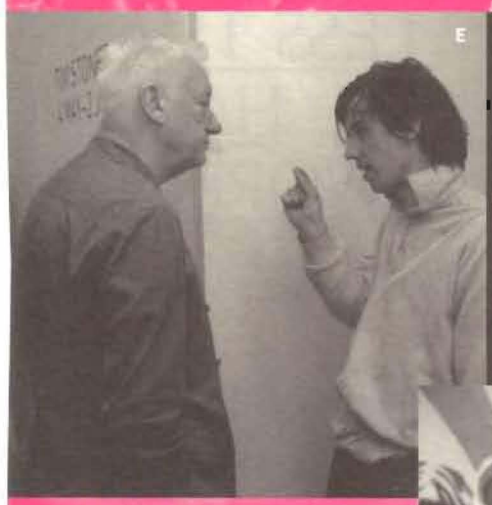
A Detmar Blow
B Julia Peyton-Jones
C Paola Clerico & Alexandre Pollazzon
D Stuart Shave, Alison Jacques & friend
E Michael Craig-Martin & Graham Little
F Tim Stoner
G Uri Geller & Alison Jacques
H Sander Smit & Maria Marshall
I Matthew Slotover

DASH SNOW, CFA

1 Gang Gang Dance
2 Dash Snow, Heiner Bastian & Wim Wenders
3 Jonathan Meese & Dash Snow
4 Dash Snow
5 Bruno Brunnet
6 Elizabeth Bougatsos
7 Lawrence Lühring, Christopher Wool & Dash Snow
8 Nicole Hackert, Bruno Brunnet, Jade Berreau, Omid Khodabakhsh & Dash Snow







3 May
Tim Stoner, Alison Jacques Gallery, London

27 April
Dash Snow: The End of Living… the Beginning of Survival, CFA, Berlin

photography DAFYDD JONES & JAN BAUER

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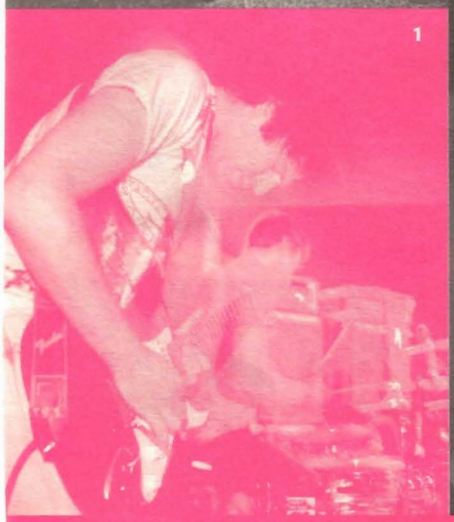
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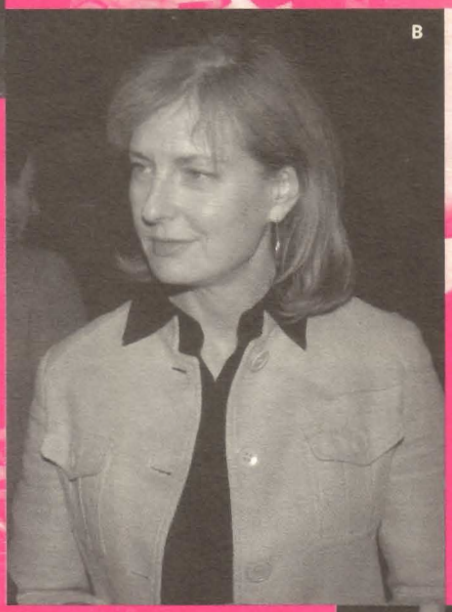
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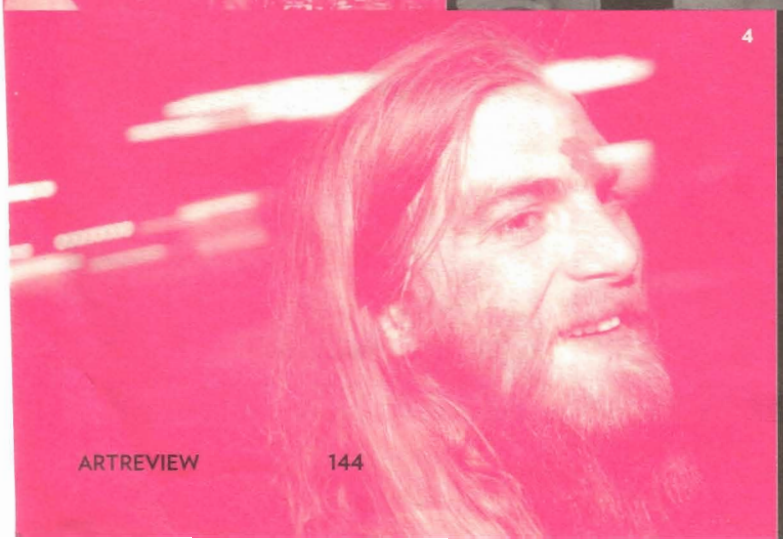
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OK! PARTIES

WITH MARK MOODY

Above: **Hayley Parsons, Porchia, Malene Espensen, Danielle Lloyd and Claire Andrisani.** ***Below:*** **Russ Ballard on guitar and Richard Desmond on drums**

RD CRUSADERS ROCK LONDON!

TEENAGE CANCER TRUST GIG

The invitation to *OK!*'s summer party is always the hottest ticket in town, and this year was no different. The event provides the opportunity to mingle with the A-listers featured in the pages of *OK!* and the chance to help raise money for a good cause. ▷

Above: **Jo Wells, Lorraine Wilson-Morris, *OK!* Express Newspapers group joint MD Stan Myerson and Jane and Peter Youell.** ***Top left:***