THE ARCHITECTURAL INCARNATION
OF LUXURY FASHION BRANDS

The self-ascribed identity of luxury fashion brands articulated in the design of their flagship stores

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Executive Summary
The research report sets out to what extent a luxury fashion brand identity is aesthetically, symbolically and technically articulated in the retail design of its respective flagship store. The current international luxury fashion market has been increasingly oriented towards the acquisition of new sensations and experiences. As a result, retail design has become more key to the manifestation of luxury fashion brands.

Nowadays, many luxury fashion brands commission architects to design their flagship stores. This can be traced back to luxury fashion brand Prada, which commissioned architect Rem Koolhaas to design the Prada New York Epicentre in 2001. Despite the errors in this project, many other luxury fashion brands followed Prada's lead. Fendi Rome and Dior Seoul are recent and more advanced examples of commissioned flagship stores and were therefore used as case studies for this research report.

Before setting out which aspects of Dior's and Fendi's brand identity were articulated in their flagship store designs, I firstly looked into their self-ascribed brand identities. The identity of both brands revolves around the glorification of the people that create their products (craftsmen/artists). Fendi glorifies their family's ancestral expertise in crafting fur and leather goods. Fendi's creative directors (Karl Lagerfeld and Silvia Venturini Fendi) use the traditional crafts of their ateliers as a breeding ground for creating innovative fur products and iconic leather goods. The brand is furthermore characterized by its love for film and Roman Heritage. On the other hand, Dior's self-ascribed identity mostly revolves around the talents and peculiarities of the founder Christian Dior; the founder's superstition, his rich cultural upbringing, his connection to the art world, his notorious “New-look” aesthetic and Parisian headquarters on 30, avenue Montaigne. An additional theme highlights the significance of Dior's ancestral ateliers.

The semiotic analysis revealed that every aspect of Dior's and Fendi's brand identities is articulated in their flagship stores. This includes references to the brand's place of origin, values, symbols, crafting techniques and product aesthetics. The semiotic analysis also revealed that the flagship store design precisely focuses on the aesthetics of the brand's most renowned, long lived and distinctive products. Dior Seoul's design dominantly focuses on clean and sculptural shapes of Dior's renowned 1947 New Look whereas Fendi Rome's design strongly focuses on applying the inherent abstract qualities of fur and naturally tinted leather onto store-surfaces. The semiotic analysis furthermore revealed that both Fendi and Dior's flagship store design explicitly highlights the importance of their ateliers. Dior Seoul's curved fiberglass exterior reinforced by a steel frame (image 8) represents the stiff drape of the ateliers white toile (prototype) fabrics reinforced by Percale or taffeta. Fendi Rome's fur spikes display (image 16) on the other hand represents the manual production process of fur.
By measuring the frequency of aesthetic, symbolic and technical significations of the brand identity in the flagship store designs I was able to provide the following answer the main research questions; The self-ascribed brand identity of luxury fashion brands is firstly (mostly) aesthetically articulated, secondly symbolically articulated and lastly technically articulated, in the designs of luxury fashion flagship stores. The percentile overview (figure 1) more specifically elaborates on these findings. The percentages can be furthermore useful as approximate guidelines in the process of designing fashion retail environments that aim for a similar communication of their brand identity.

**Figure 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative overview in percentages</th>
<th>Dior Seoul</th>
<th>Fendi Rome</th>
<th>Combined Amount of signs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Icon</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<td>68%</td>
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<td>Index</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Paradigms</td>
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<td>Syntagms</td>
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4.1 Introduction

4.2 Case study I: Dior Seoul

4.2.1 The Dior Seoul exterior

4.2.2 The entrance and staircase area on the ground floor

4.2.3 Interior womenswear first floor

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5. General conclusion

6. Advice for applying the research

6. Source list

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1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale & Relevance

Experiential marketing is a growing trend worldwide, evident in most sectors of the global economy. Experiential marketing is about taking the essence of a product and amplifying it into a set of tangible, physical and interactive experiences that reinforce the offer. (Glyn and Alistair, 2009). Luxury fashion brands prominently use this strategy in their contemporary flagship stores. These stores are designed by architects to become the long lived architectural incarnations of luxury fashion brands (Beccari, 2016).

In the climate of increasing competition and brand growth coupled with a need to reinforce authenticity in respect to the perceived quality and exclusivity of luxury fashion products (Tungate, 2009), the aesthetic experience of flagship stores has become increasingly important in the 21st century luxury fashion market (Winlow & Nobbs, 2013). These factors incited me to research how luxury fashion brands and architects currently formalize their brand identity in the architecture and interior designs of their flagship stores. The flagship stores of Dior in Seoul and Fendi in Rome were chosen as a double case study for the following reasons: First of all because these cases show an evident link between the store designs and the respective brand identities. Secondly because of their diverse approach towards locating and designing a luxury fashion flagship store. Lastly because both flagship stores have additional facilities.

Fendi, Rome is located in a historical 17th century palazzo building in the old city centre. The homebased store is designed by Curiosity Tokyo Japan lead by the French designer Gwenael Nicolas. It furthermore includes seven suites and a rooftop Izakaya style restaurant. On the other hand, the Seoul flagship store of the Paris based Dior is located in Asia. In 2015 Dior commissioned French price winning Architect Christian De Portzamparc to design the flagship store’s exterior and New York based Peter Marino to design its interior. Furthermore, it includes a glazed cafe serving typically French fare in the form of macarons and pastries by Chef Pierre Hermé. (Dezeen, 2015).
1.2 Aim

The aim of this research is to set out (in percentages) to which extent the self-ascribed brand identity of luxury brands is aesthetically, symbolically and technically articulated in the design of their flagship stores. The results of this research can be used as a key model for developing and interim-assessing new retail designs that aim for a similar communication of their brand identity. This is especially relevant for mid-segment fashion brands considering that these brands currently struggle with projecting uniqueness and authenticity in their retail environments. On the basis of my product I will exemplify how mid-segment fashion brands can apply the data in this research report.

1.3 Product

My product consists of a retail-design consultancy report for mid-segment brand Polo Ralph Lauren. The brand’s products and authentic American-sportswear identity have been copied by many competitors. This has moreover resulted in the homogenisation of American-Sportswear retail environments. This homogenisation could potentially threaten the perceived quality and exclusivity the Polo Ralph Lauren products. On the other hand, this issue welcomes the opportunity to update and differentiate Polo Ralph Lauren’s retail experience.

Ralph Lauren, not unlike luxury brands, revolves around authenticity, tradition and a glorified founder. However, luxury fashion brands deploy a more contemporary and abstract articulation of their brand identity in the design of their flagship store. Yet, it does not compromise the communication of their authenticity. A semiotic analysis of two advanced luxury fashion flagship stores can therefore inform a revised retail-design plan for Ralph Lauren’s flagship store.
1.4 Research questions

Main question
Too which extent is the self-ascribed brand identity of luxury fashion brands aesthetically, symbolically and technically articulated in the design of their flagship stores?

Sub questions
What are the characteristics of the 21st century luxury market?
What are the characteristics of luxury fashion flagship stores?
How did architects came to design luxury fashion flagship stores?
What is the self-ascribed brand identity of the two case study brands?
What sort of products do the two case study brands sell?
Which aspects of the self-ascribed brand identities are articulated in the flagship stores of the respective case study brands?

1.5 Methodology
The qualitative research method used in this report is descriptive and interpretive and therefore extendible. In the first chapter I used a literature review to gather qualitative data about the following topics: the 21st century luxury market, the flagship stores and how architects came to design flagship stores. Chapter 1 provides the larger context in which the case studies can be understood.

The second chapter strictly derives its qualitative data from the official websites of Dior and Fendi. These specific sources were chosen to determine their self-ascribed brand identities. Thereafter I used the conceptualization of luxury brands by Klaus Heine (2012) to categorize their product offering. Chapter two provides the specific context for the semiotic analysis of the two flagship stores in Chapter 3.

In order to analyse too how the architecture and the interior of the Dior Seoul and Fendi Rome flagship stores signify the respective brand identities I will deploy the semiotic theory of Charles Peirce revised by Albert Atkin (2010). Peirce’s writings were concerned with the three interrelated parts of sign significations: the object, its sign and its interpretant. In this particular case study, the luxury brand identity (sign) is signified in virtue of some aesthetic features in the flagship store (object that signifies). These aesthetic features are analysed and contextualized in relation to the brand identity of Dior and Fendi by a researcher (interpretant). An explanation of the different sign categories is to be found on the next page.
1.5.1 Charles Peirce’s Sign types

Peirce classifies three different ways of how the object signifies the signified (in this case the self-ascribed brand identity) (Atkin, 2010). Combinations are not mutually exclusive.

1. Icon

If successful signification requires that the sign reflect qualitative features of the object, then the sign is an icon (e.g. the shape of the building resembles the shape of the fashion brand’s shaping principles).

2. Symbol

If the sign utilizes some convention, habit, or social rule or law that connects it with its object, then the sign is a symbol (e.g. a spelled brand logo signifying the consumer’s mental image of the brand identity (signified) through the convention of language).

3. Index

If the sign utilizes some existential or causal connection between itself and the signified object, then the sign is an index (e.g. trace, footstep, ash)

1.5.2 Metaphor/metonymy

Signs are further classified into metaphors (1) and metonymies (2).

1. If an architectural sign in the flagship store is a metaphor it reflects the brand identity in a non-literal and symbolic way (e.g. curved forms as a metaphor for Christian Dior’s love of nature).

2. If an architectural sign in the flagship store is a metonymy, it invokes the brand identity by using particular physical or visual details that we see in the products of the fashion brand. (e.g. curved forms as a metonymy of Dior’s curvy new look silhouette)

1.5.3 Paradigms/syntagms

Signs are organized into codes in two ways: by paradigms and by syntagms. A paradigm is a particular unit of the flagship store that by itself enables the signification of the brand identity. A syntagm is a chain of several units in the flagship store that have to be linked in order to signify the brand identity (e.g. a spatial composition).
1.6 scope & limitations

A semiotic analysis was conducted to set out too which extent the aesthetics and symbols of two luxury fashion brand were articulated in the designs of their flagship stores. Aspects looked into were the 21st century luxury fashion market, the characteristics of luxury fashion flagship stores and the involvement of architects in building luxury fashion flagship stores. Followed by the self-ascribed brand identity of Dior and Fendi, their product propositions and a semiotic analysis of the following two flagship stores: 1. Dior flagship store, Seoul 2. Fendi flagship store, Rome. The semiotic analysis of the two flagship stores limits itself to self-ascribed brand identity, online available imagery and the interpretive capacities of the researcher. The research was conducted over a time of two months in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
2. The Luxury fashion brand retail experience

2.1 Introduction

The first chapter consists of a literature review of the 21st century luxury market, its flagship stores and a chronological overview of how architects came to design luxury flagship stores. This literature review helps the reader to understand the general context of the two flagship stores that will be analysed in the later stage of this research report; Dior Seoul is a luxury fashion flagship store that is entirely designed by commissioned architects. Fendi Rome is a luxury flagship store. It has an interior which is designed by a commissioned interior architect.
2.2 The luxury fashion market in the 21st century

The luxury fashion market is traditionally characterized by the quality of materials, the originality of manufacturing methods and the time spent for manufacturing products (Castarède, 2007). These unique and authentic products are born from the imagination, sensitivity and natural gifts of their creator (craftsman/artist) (Freire, 2014). Tradition and innovation are not contradictory but complementary in the current luxury fashion industry. Innovation consists of bringing new ideas, methods, techniques or new materials or methods of creation, in addition to traditional ones, bequeathed by the transmission of successive generations of craftsmen/artists (Freire, 2014). The advanced technical knowhow of craftsman, and creative vision of the founder are the very chore from which inventions and innovations derive.

The traditions of the luxury industry are mostly rooted in Europe. However, many luxury brands have been able to internationalize and democratize their presence. The expansion of the luxury fashion market was mostly caused by the emergence of large multinational conglomerates, such as LVMH and Richemont in the late 1990s and the Gucci Group in the early 2000s (Okonkwo, 2009). When luxury brands enter foreign markets they strive for global coherence (in terms of aesthetics, price positioning and social representation of the brand) while adjusting their product offering and services to the local market. This strategy is referred to as glocalization (Drucker, 1999). In the current international luxury fashion market, luxury is oriented towards the acquisition of new sensations and experiences (Boutaud, 2007; Ladwein, 2002), to conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899; Lipovetsky and Roux, 2003; Lipovetsky and Serroy, 2013; Sicard, 2005) and the search for emotional benefits (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2009 and Truong and McColl, 2011). Luxury fashion is not only about the pursuit of materialism but also about enrichment and longevity. (Yeoman and McMahonBeattie, 2014)

Finally, luxury is considered to be a female affair (Freire, 2014). The current luxury fashion market mostly caters to an international female client base. For female consumers, luxury brands provide more uniqueness, status and hedonic value than non-luxury brands (Stokburger-Sauer Teichmann, 2013).
2.3 The flagship store

Considering that luxury is oriented towards the acquisition of new sensations and experiences (Boutaud, 2007; Ladwein, 2002), a greater importance is lent to how luxury fashion products are presented and proposed in their flagship stores. Moreover, in the climate of increasing competition and brand growth coupled with a need to reinforce authenticity in respect to the perceived quality and exclusivity of luxury products (Tungate, 2009), the aesthetic experience of flagship stores has become increasingly important (Winlow & Nobbs, 2013). We nowadays suppose that flagship stores have an operational and strategic function but this has never been articulated in the form of empirical research (Manlow & Nobbs 2013; Allegra Strategies, 2005; Mikunda, 2004; Riewoldt, 2002; Moore and Doherty, 2007). A flagship store is traditionally located in a large outlet in a prominent area, offers widest and most in-depth product assortment, has a high-quality store environment and serves to communicate the brand’s position and values. (Manlow & Nobbs 2013; Allegra Strategies, 2005; Mikunda, 2004; Riewoldt, 2002; Moore and Doherty, 2007). Flagship stores should incite status seeking individuals to construct and communicate a self with symbols provided by the luxury fashion brand (Manlow & Nobbs 2013; Arnould and Thompson, 2007; Belk, 1988; Holbrook, 1987; Miller et al., 1998).
2.4 How architects came to design the retail environments of luxury fashion brands

Fashion seems to be particularly drawn to the visual clout that architects can bring to the retail environment. The creative constructions of architects can add longevity and respectability to the otherwise ephemeral world of fashion. (Manueli, 2006)

The fully commissioned architectural retail space can be traced back to the 1980’s where Esprit owner Doug Tompkins commissioned Norman Foster, Ettore Sotsass and Shiro Kurumata to design several stores. By 1983, the founder of Comme des Garçons (Rei Kawakubo) commissioned Takao Kawasaki and Future Systems to design her early boutiques. In 1986 came John Pawson minimalist store design for Calvin Klein. In 1990’s Giorgio Armani’s worldwide stores designed by Claudio Silvestrin, and the 2000’s saw the Prada Epicentre by Rem Koolhaas and Herzog & De Meuron (Manueli 2006). By now, the commissioning of High profile architect is used by most of the leading fashion luxury brands. There is an increased tendency towards architects focussing on the façade of the flagship store as tools for creating brand awareness (Manueli, 2006). Similarly specialized interior architects focus on the interior experience of the flagship store. However, there are some architects that design entire flagship stores (e.g. Peter Marino Architect).

Technology, customized furnishings and the use of art installations are devices within a flagship store that aim to elevate the act of purchase into something that resembles a ritual (Manueli, 2006). The flagship has the additional value of being a leisure spot or tourist attraction as manifested by the queues of Chinese tourists in front of Louis Vuitton flagship stores in many of the metropolitan cities (Kapferer, 2014). Yet it must be said that the commissioning of a high profile architect is high financial investment that does not ensure success. For example the Prada epicentre in Soho New York designed by architect Rem Koolhaas had a cost of over $40 million. A quarter of this budget was invested in automated dressing-room doors, microclimate systems and touchscreens that either malfunctioned or were ignored by its consumer (Lindsay, 2004).
2.5 Conclusion

21st century luxury products are still made from the imagination, sensitivity and natural gifts of their creators. A luxury brand's aesthetic heritage and ancestral expertise in a particular craft is the authentic chore from which luxury fashion innovations derive. The roots of the 21st century luxury market remain to be European while products, services and facilities are adjusted towards an increasingly international and dominantly female clientele. Luxury is nowadays increasingly oriented towards the consumer's emotional benefits and the facilitation of sensations and experiences. This orientation has given more importance to the aesthetics of luxury fashion flagship stores. The importance of aesthetics is also due to increasing competition and international brand growth which demands for the reinforcement of the authenticity, perceived quality and exclusivity of luxury products. The need to aesthetically improve flagship stores has led luxury fashion brands towards architects that can bring longevity to the otherwise ephemeral world of luxury fashion. Architects have designed advanced storefronts for luxury fashion flagship stores used as tools for raising brand awareness. Moreover they have updated the interior by adding technology, artworks and customized furniture. This altogether elevates the act of purchasing to ritual and moreover enables the flagship store to function as a leisure spot and attraction. However, involving architects in designing luxury fashion flagship stores remains to be a high financial investment and remains prone to technical and interactive errors.

Answered Research questions

What are the characteristics of the 21st century luxury market?
What are the characteristics of luxury fashion flagship stores?
How did architects came to design luxury fashion flagship stores?
3. The self-ascribed brand identity and product offering of Dior and Fendi

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we hypothesized the general characteristics of a luxury brand by doing a literature review. In this chapter we will look at how the two case study brands, Dior and Fendi use these characteristics to express a singular and authentic brand identity. Defining the unique identity and offering of the case study brands provides the specific context in which the architectural signs of their flagship stores are understood. This is moreover supplemented by a categorization of their luxury products which clarifies what sort of products these brand are trying to sell within the flagship stores that will be analysed in the next chapter.
3.2 The self-ascribed brand identity of Christian Dior

Christian Dior’s brand story consists of several themes. The first theme concerns the excellent craftsmanship of the atelier. The Dior atelier is divided into two separate parts; *Tailleur* involves pattern making and prototyping the sculptural form of the products. *Flou* involves decorating the often-fine fabrics with intricate handicrafts. It is thanks to this that the current artistic Director, can reinterpret the House’s signature style in a contemporary way (Dior, 2016).

The second theme concerns the good fortune of Christian Dior. Throughout his career he received consultancy from fortune-tellers that would have led him to important career decisions. The owner also related his good luck to several objects; the initiation of the brand is connected to a shimmering star that Dior stumbled upon while rushing into a meeting with French textile magnate Marcel Boussac. Encountering this symbol on the street incited Dior to convince Boussac about opening his own fashion house instead of reviving an old one. Christian Dior furthermore had his lucky flower, the lily of the valley. This flower was kept in hand with a gold coin, inserted into his jacket pocket and hidden in the hem of haute-couture dresses. Lastly, Dior had his lucky number 8 that is also connected to the forms of his curved New Look Silhouette and Dior’s fine jewellery boutique on 8, Place Vendôme, Paris.

The third theme concerns his nostalgic childhood that revolved around Christian Dior’s childhood villa in Granville, which is now a Dior museum. The villa itself was made out of pink pebbledash and grey gravel decorated with a red steel wind rose. This wind rose also reoccurs as a mosaic in the English park style garden. This garden was filled with flowers such as Hawthorns, Heliotropes, Wisterias, Reseda’s and roses. The flora of the Granville Villa would have triggered Christian Dior’s imagination at the first five years of his life and in his later professional adult life (on holidays). He was furthermore exposed to several artefacts in the interior of the Villa; a rose on the ceiling of his bedroom, a multi-coloured glass night-light, the subtleties of bamboo doors, straw pagoda roofs, a Henri II style dining room and a Louis XV style lounge. Furthermore, the overall tranquillity of the villa is connected to his solid volumes and clean sculptural shapes. The stormy nights, the dynamic sea, the foghorn of toiling bells at funerals and the Norman drizzle are considered to be the darker but not less romantic counterpart of Dior’s nostalgic childhood. The dynamic Norman Sea is connected to the freshness of his new look creations and the lively aromas of his past and present perfumes (Dior, 2016).
The fourth theme is entirely devoted to Dior’s new look, a term that was ascribed to Dior’s first collection in 1947 by Carmella Snow, who was at the time editor in chief of American magazine Harper’s Bazaar. The silhouette of the “New look” and its bar-suit jacket exaggerated the curved forms and volumes of the female body; a pronounced bust, a tiny wasp-like waist and sculpted volume around the hips. Mannequins needed to be remodelled with a hammer, and garment lined with fabrics such as percale and taffeta in order to realize the sculptural Bar Jacket. During Dior’s show in 1947 this jacket was completed by a loose, over knee length, pleated skirt, a pillar boxed, fine contrasting gloves and slender heels. Christian Dior intended to give back to women light-heartedness and the art of seduction that women kept hidden in the war period (Dior, 2016). Lastly, the idea of flower-like shapes in the New look silhouette are linked to the many flowers that surrounded the founder in his Norman childhood residence.

The fifth theme describes how Christian Dior was involved in a social circle that included artists, actors, writers and other designers. He also co-owned an art gallery in which he was surrounded by modern artworks and art historians. In a later stage of his career Dior designed dresses for many actresses including Marlene Dietrich, Elizabeth Taylor, Grace Kelly, Jane Russel, Ava Gardner, Rita Hayworth, Brigitte Bardot and Jean Seberg.

The sixth and final theme tells how Christian Dior fell in love with his headquarters on 30, avenue Montaigne. Victor Grandpierre cooperated with the Christian Dior to design an homage to his childhood villa in Granville. The space was divided into several salons and smaller rooms which were decorated in a neoclassical Louis XVI style. This particular style involved white panelling, gilded mirrors, crystal chandeliers, Trianon grey walls, white lacquered furniture, doors glazed with bevelled squares of glass, bronze applied to small lampshades, Louis XVI medallions, wicker chairs, Jouy fabrics, Gruau designs and last but not least flowers.
3.3 Imagery Dior

Image 1: Dior’s lucky star

Image 2: Lily of the valley

Image 3/4: Granville Villa and English style park garden with wind rose decoration
Image 5: Reseda flower

Image 6: Rose flower

Image 7: Nuances of bamboo doors

Image 8: Pagoda roof Granville Villa

Image 9: New look 1947

Image 10: 30, Avenue Montaigne
Image 11: the white toile fabrics of the atelier

Image 12: Salon decorated in a neoclassical Louis XVI style (30, Avenue Montaigne)

Image 13: “Cannage” technique in wicker chairs and bags
3.4 Product proposition Christian Dior

The Dior brand is recognized and sold worldwide and is therefore considered to be a star luxury brand. These brand benefits from being seen and recognized by others (Heine, 2012). The consumer is firstly symbolically and secondly aesthetically involved with the brand. Dior offers products in the category of haute couture, women’s ready-to-wear, men’s ready to wear (Dior Homme), leather goods, fashion accessories, footwear, jewellery, timepieces, fragrance, make-up, and skincare products. When further following Heine (2012) Dior offers luxury product types that range from exceptional luxury products (e.g. bespoke couture dresses) to accessible luxury products (e.g. Perfume). This parameter revolves around the exclusivity, technical rarity and price point of a luxury product. The brand furthermore offers understated luxury products (e.g. Dior Homme tailored suit) alongside ostentatious luxury products (e.g. embroidered silk dress). Understated meaning only noticeable by a connoisseur and ostentatious meaning heavily decorated or equipped with typical symbols and materials that show the wealth of its user.

Images 14 -17
3.5 The self-ascribed brand Identity Fendi

Fendi’s self-described brand story has a chronological set up. The brand was established in 1925 by couple Edoardo and Adele Fendi as the first handmade leather goods and fur atelier in Via del Plebiscito Rome. By 1933 the brand became known for their high quality leather goods with a natural yellow tint. By 1938 Fendi invented the Selleria bag. An iconic product has been manually crafted with the techniques of Roman master saddlers. By 1946 Eduardo and Adele’s five daughters joined the company. Fendi would become a brand made by and for other women. The values of modernity femininity came to be added to the brand and marked a turning point in the restructuring of the company. In 1965, the sisters hire the then young and emerging designer Karl Lagerfeld. From his hands a new concept of fur is born (Fendi, 2016). The status symbol (fur) becomes light, colourful and fun and is meant to be worn by young emancipated woman with a unique sense of style (Fendi, 2016). This went hand in hand with Lagerfeld’s invention of the double F logo, which stand for fun fur. Tradition within the Fendi brand is used to empower innovations. Fendi dares to go with fur beyond what it has traditionally created in the past. Fendi Fur enables women to be larger than life, discreet yet provocative, and create an element of surprise (Beccari, 2016). Since 1983, Fendi’s furs were dyed with multi-coloured graphic patterns reworked with cut outs and collages. Then in the 1990’s Fendi launches its ready- to-wear menswear collection and the Fendi casa line which is specialized in creating prestigious furniture and design objects based on its unmatched style (Fendi, 2016). By 1994 Silvia Venturini Fendi, granddaughter of the Fendi founders, joins the company as the creative director of accessories. By 1997 she invented the successful “baguette" bag. Then in the 21st century, LVMH becomes Fendi’s majority shareholder which enables the brand to open stores worldwide and stage an extraordinary show on the great wall of China in 2007;" The first ever fashion show visible from the moon" (Fendi, 2016). By 2009 Silvia Venturini Fendi comes up with another successful bag; the “peek a boo" leather bag is an icon of the brand and an emblem of whispered luxury (Fendi, 2016). In 2013, Fendi sponsors the restauration of the ancient Trevi Fountain in Rome which ultimately connects to the final sentence in their brand story; Fendi, a timeless heritage.
3.6 Imagery Fendi

Image 18: Fur spiked on wooden table

Image 19: Fun Fur logo

Image 20: Fendi’s naturally yellow tinted leather

Image 21/22: Fendi’s dyed and collaged furs
Image 23: Fendi Casa’s unmatched style

Image 24: Baguette bags

Image 25: Fendi’s “peekaboo” bag

Image 26: Restored Trevi fountain in Rome financed by Fendi
3.6 Product proposition Fendi

The Fendi brand is recognized and sold worldwide and is therefore considered to be a *star luxury brand*. The consumer is firstly symbolically and secondly aesthetically involved with the brand. Fendi offers products in the category of women’s ready-to-wear, men’s ready to wear, leather goods, fashion accessories, footwear, jewellery, eyewear, timepieces, and fragrances. When further following Heine (2012) Fendi offers luxury product types ranging from *exceptional luxury products* (e.g. panelled multi-coloured fur coat) to *accessible luxury products* (e.g. Fendi Perfume). The brand furthermore offers *understated luxury products* (e.g. Selleria bag) alongside *ostentatious luxury products* (e.g. Patchwork python Boston bag).

Images 27-30
3.7 Conclusion

Dior’s self-ascribed identity mainly revolves around a glorified founder. The first theme highlights the specialties of Dior’s two separate ateliers Taillleur and Flou. All other five themes legitimize Dior’s creative talent. The first theme revolves around the founder’s’ superstitious objects. A second theme revolves around his childhood Villa where the founder developed his love for the sea, flora and an array of interior furnishing styles. The third theme is devoted to the timeless, feminine and elegant qualities of his “New look”. The fourth theme describes the founder’s connection to the world of art and cinema. The sixth theme describes the carefully chosen aesthetics of Dior’s Parisian headquarters on 30 Avenue Montaigne in Paris.

Fendi glorifies their Fendi family’s ancestral expertise in crafting fur and leather goods. Fendi’s creative directors (Karl Lagerfeld and Silvia Fendi Venturini) use traditional crafts as a breeding ground for creating innovative fur and leather goods. Fendi’s products are oriented towards modern, feminine, aristocratic and metropolitan women. In addition, Fendi offers a menswear and furniture line made from mismatched luxurious materials. Fendi is furthermore characterized by their mission of preserving and representing their beloved Roman heritage.

Both Fendi and Dior are considered “Star luxury brands” and offer different types and categories of luxury products. Both their brand stories mention enough aesthetic qualities, symbols and values that provide a large enough context for a semiotic analysis of their flagship stores. However, Fendi’s brand story is less elaborate than Dior’s. This affects the amount of brand references that can be retrieved from two flagship stores that are about to be analysed in chapter 3.

Answered research question

What is the self-ascribed brand identity of the two case study brands and what sort of products do they sell?

4.1 Introduction
In the previous chapter we looked into the aesthetic, symbolic and technical aspects of Dior and Fendi’s brand stories. In this chapter I will deploy a semiotic analysis to designate if and how these aspects are articulated in the design of their respective flagship stores. In order to ensure that the reader follows the semiotic terms in this chapter I will briefly repeat the three sign categories that belong to my analytical framework. Finally, by setting out how often each sign type occurs we can draw a conclusion about to which extent the self-ascribed brand identity of luxury fashion brands is aesthetically, symbolically and technically articulated in the design of their flagship stores.
First categorization

- **Icon:** Drawing attention to abstract quality (e.g. shape, colour, texture, material, dimension)

- **Index:** Drawing attention to a causal or existential relationship (e.g. metal frame causing reinforcement)

- **Symbol:** Drawing attention to a convention in which the sign is understood (e.g. logo is understood through written language)

Second categorization

- **Metaphors:** If an architectural sign in the flagship store is a metaphor it expresses the brand identity in a non-literal way (e.g. curved forms as a metaphor for Christian Dior’s love of nature).

- **Metonymies:** If an architectural sign in the flagship store is a metonymy, it invokes the brand identity by using particular physical or visual details that are associated with the brand (e.g. curved forms as a metonymy of Dior’s curvy new look silhouette).

Third categorization

- **Paradigm:** Single architectural units that are meaningful within the context of the self-ascribed brand identity (e.g. chair)

- **Syntagm:** Several architectural units that are meaningful within the context of a brand only within a group.

*There is a possibility that an architectural sign falls into more than one category per each categorization*
4.2 Case study I: Dior Seoul by Christian de Portzamparc (architecture) and Peter Marino (interior)

Images 1 & 2: Exterior Design Dior Seoul
4.2.1 The Dior Seoul exterior

In image 1 & 2 we observe façade with a curvilinear vertical silhouette created out of seamed hulls of fiberglass. Many iconic signs and metonymies can be retrieved from this syntagmatic composition. The townhouse like scale of the building signifies the scale of Dior’s townhouse headquarters on 30 Avenue Montaigne. The colour and construction of the facade signifies Dior’s white toile fabric that have been seamed together by its ateliers. The form of the building signifies the iconic forms of the new look. The form of the smaller pagoda roof on top of the curved façade signifies the perched hat worn on top of the 1947 New look and the Granville Villa pagoda roof. Then behind the curved façade we see a cubical counterpart. This is firstly a metonymic symbolic sign that can be understood through conventional gender representations; curved long and white represents the female gender whereas cubical, angular and metallic represents the male counterpart. Secondly, it is an indexical sign that indicates the presence of women’s and men’s products in the store. The horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines embossed onto the (male) cubical exterior part signifies the “Cannage” pattern that we still find on Dior’s leather goods and wicker chairs that once were present in Dior’s headquarters on 30, avenue Montaigne. The star on top of cubical building is an iconic and paradigmatic sign that metaphorically signifies the good fortune of the male founder.

At a closer look we see that the hulls of fiberglass are reinforced by a steel framework. This indexical syntagm metonymically signifies the causal relationship between Dior’s 1947 “New look” shape and reinforcement fabrics such as Taffeta or Percalle. We also see that the metal framework overlays the square glass doorways which creates an arched entrance. There are several iconic and metonymical signs to be retrieved from this layered (syntagmatic) entrance. The form of the arched entrance signifies the form of a Reseda flower (from the Granville Villa). The use of perforated steel as entrance decoration signifies the steel decorations on the Granville Villa entrance. The doors and windows made out of bevelled square glass particles signify the square doors made out of bevelled glass in the Parisian headquarters. Another reference to bevelled glass can be found in the small display made out of scaled repetitive squares. The three dimensional effect of the squares juxtapose and highlight the three dimensional curved forms of the displayed dress. Above it we see Dior’s logo made out of metal. The 17th century Nicholas Cochin typeface is a symbolical sign that signifies Dior’s classical French–European origins while being currently situated in a new and fully commissioned building in Seoul Asia.
Images 3-5: Interior entrance and staircase area
4.2.2 The entrance and staircase area on the ground floor

When entering the building we can immediately observe the dominance of the colour grey and the presence of Louis XV medallion shaped chairs and chandeliers which are iconic signs that signify the grey walls and furniture of the Dior’s Parisian headquarters (12, Avenue Montaigne). At a closer inspection one could find out that this chandelier is an actual artwork created by Korean artist Lee Bul. This artwork is a symbolic and paradigmatic sign that metaphorically signifies Dior’s connection to the world of art and moreover defines the brand’s global-local approach. Then throughout the store we see Female mannequins sitting and standing in a feminine manner which is a symbolic sign that is firstly understood through gender conventions, secondly it is a metaphor for the femininity in Dior’s creations. Finally it is an indexical sign that metaphorically signifies how Dior remoulded his mannequins to create the 1947 New look. This famous look is moreover signified by the black and ecru coloured combination of tiles. Rhombus shaped black tiles are inserted into square ecru tiles which form a larger square figure. The horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines form a syntagmatic and iconic sign that metonymically signifies the before mentioned “Cannage” pattern (page 32).

If we then look at the ecru tiles near the staircase we see another syntagmatic colour combination. The porthole video installations which project blue splashes of seawater, the ecru colour of the tiles and the spiral staircase merge into an iconic syntagm that signifies the colour and motion of the Norman Sea nearby Dior’s Granville Villa. The separate elements are furthermore meaningful as separate iconic (metonymic) paradigms. The square shape of the floor tiles is an iconic sign that signifies the square floor tiles that once were in Dior’s Parisian headquarters. A single porthole video installations is a symbolic sign that metaphorically signifies Dior’s relation to the art world. The amount of portholes is moreover a symbol that metaphorically signifies the owner’s lucky number eight. The staircase as a paradigm resembles an unfurling ribbon, (Peter Marino, 2015) is a symbol that metaphorically signifies femininity and the decorations of Dior’s Flou atelier. Additionally, the staircase transforms its meaning when it is observed from an aerial perspectives. This perspective reveals an icon sign that metonymically signifies the aerial perspective of a rose from the Granville garden. Secondly the rose can be considered a symbol sign that metaphorically signifies Christian Dior’s love for flora and femininity.
Images 6&7: Interior womenswear first floor
4.2.3 Interior womenswear first floor

When we enter the first floor we again observe the dominance of the colour grey. Except now there are several colour nuances and textures involved. The juxtaposition of different shimmer levels, colour nuances and textures is firstly a symbolic sign that metaphorically signifies Dior’s aesthetic principle of Dior’s Parisian headquarters; decorated, not decorative. The sculptural and textured walls also metonymically signify the conventional co-operation of Dior’s Flou and Tailleur atelier (symbol sign); The Tailleur atelier is responsible for form whereas the Flou atelier is responsible for the decorative textures. Then the movement of the herringbone pattern, the grey colour melanges, curved forms and levitating mannequins placed at different heights form a syntagmatic icon which metonymically signifies the motion of the Norman Sea. Lastly the floatation of the mannequins by itself is considered a paradigm icon sign that metaphorically signifies the free floating skirt worn under the 1947 bar jacket of the New Look.

Walking into the cabined around the corner of the levitating mannequins we see a literal representation of the Norman Sea in another video installation of artist Oyaram. Combined with the grey melanges in the furniture and flooring, the video merges into another syntagmatic icon sign that also metonymically signifies the motion of the Norman Sea. Another nature reference in this cabinet is the garden of Dior’s Childhood Villa. When we look at the butterflies on the ceiling as a separate paradigm it metonymically signifies the shape of the wind rose that is mosaicked into the garden’s floor. When relating the butterflies to the green flower on the table they become an iconic syntagm that metonymically signifies the flora-fauna relation in this Garden. The green flower as a paradigm is also a symbol sign that metonymically signifies the many flowers that have traditionally decorated Dior’s Parisian headquarters. Lastly we can observe another reference to these headquarters. Translucent glass walls with transparent stripes are paradigmatic icon signs that metonymically signify the headquarters’ doors with square bevelled glass.
Image 8: Dior Homme (menswear) interior

4.2.4 Dior Homme interior

When observing the Dior Homme area we see many aesthetic oppositions in comparison with the womenswear area. Most of these oppositions are metaphors that within Dior’s given brand story can be understood through gender conventions. We see many smooth and matte surfaces in the menswear area opposed to the glossier and more textured surfaces in the female area. Also a dominance of angular lines in the floor, furniture and displays opposes the female area which is dominantly curved. We furthermore see that the different colour palette is a symbolic and indexical syntagm that represents and indicates the male area. The only element in this area which is curved, the pillar, has a black colour. This opposes the white colour of the feminine white façade, yet it retains a relation with Dior’s iconic form language. Another important colour aspect that needs to be highlighted is the absence of grey flooring. The herringbone floor that we previously saw in grey is now mixed-beige. Therefore, in this case it also becomes an icon sign that signifies the subtleties of the bamboo doors from the Granville Villa. The colour nuances and zig zag motion of this beige floor are lastly considered iconic and indexical that signify the qualities of an ebbed beach near the Norman Sea.
4.2.5 Interior Pierre Hermé Café Dior Seoul

The Pierre Hermé café on the fifth floor is an additional leisure facility that is integrated into the Dior Seoul store. As a whole this pastry café is a symbolic syntagm that metaphorically signifies the culinary traditions of Paris. Then, the Curved chairs in pink, green and grey along grey flooring and furniture are an iconic syntagm that metonymically signifies Dior’s Paris headquarters and Dior’s Norman childhood Villa at the same time. The dominantly grey colour and medallion shaped chairs signify the grey walls and Louis the XVI’s chairs of the headquarters. On the other hand the colour combination of grey pink, green and yellow (light) signify the colour combination of the Granville Villa illuminated by the French sun. Granville’s nature is furthermore signified in several more paradigms. For instance the shape of the ceiling mirror. This icon paradigm signifies the shape of a heliotrope flowers and along the flora on the balcony it metonymically signifies the garden of Dior’s childhood villa. Yet, the mirror ceiling could also be perceived as splashes of water considering their form and reflection. This in turn would be an iconic sign that signifies the motion of the Norman Sea. Then the parallelogram floor tiles that give the illusion of movement are an iconic sign that generates multiple signifieds within the Dior context; firstly it metonymically signifies the square tiles in Dior’s old Parisian headquarters. Secondly the illusion of movement can be tied to the motion of the Norman Sea. And finally it signifies the new look aesthetic which is as well deals with rigidity opposed to movement.
When we enter the art gallery room we can observe several elements that typify its function; the photographs on the wall, the bags on a pedestal and the white walls of the space form a symbolic syntagm that metonymically signifies Christian Dior’s once co-owned gallery in the 1920’s. The curved white wall along the other pure white forms is also an icon syntagm that signifies Dior’s solidified curved form language. The metal mesh is again an indexical sign that indicates the reinforcement of these iconic curved forms. And finally we see the familiar square tiles that signify the old floor on 30 Avenue Montaigne. A part of Parisian history simulated in the contemporary store setting of Dior Seoul.
Case study II: Fendi Rome by Gwenael Nicholas (interior)

Image 11: Exterior Palazzo Fendi Rome

4.3.1 Exterior Palazzo Fendi Rome

The logos of Fendi are placed on the storefront of a 17th century Palazzo Typology located in the historical city of Rome. This symbolic syntagm metaphorically signifies Fendi’s value of preserving and representing tradition. The geometry of the entrance and windows are dictated by the tradition of 17th century Roman architecture. This moreover metonymically signifies Fendi’s Roman origin. The building is furthermore recognizable as a Fendi building due to the yellow lightning around the windows. This is an iconic paradigm that signifies Fendi’s chromatic identity deriving from the 1933 naturally yellow tinted leather goods. In one of these windows we see bright red an enlarged lightbulb. The bright red is an icon paradigm that metonymically signifies Fendi’s “colourful and fun” aesthetic. The lightbulb on the other hand forms symbolic syntagm with the 17th century Pallazo which metaphorically signifies Fendi’s value of deriving ideas from the source of tradition. Lastly we see some mannequins standing in a feminine pose. They are a symbolic and iconic sign that signifies the Fendi value of femininity.
4.3.2 The entrance

When we enter the store and face the wall near the entrance we again observe Palazzo arches, only this time they bulge from the walls and originate from 19th century Palazzo architecture. This wall is made out of travertine, a limestone that can be traced back to ancient roman times. This syntagmatic combination of palazzo bulges and the travertine stone are firstly a symbol that metonymically signify Fendi’s roman heritage. Secondly the beige colour of the walls (also of the floor) is considered an iconic paradigm that metonymically signifies Fendi’s naturally tinted leather goods from 1933. Another node to roman history is to be found in the red marble staircases which’s design is inspired the renaissance architecture of Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola (Curiosity, 2016). This staircase is firstly a paradigmatic symbol that again metonymically signifies Fendi’s roman heritage. Secondly, the aesthetic qualities of the staircase (irregular structure, mixed coloration and glossiness), along the textured glass elevator and textured silver ceiling make up an iconic syntagm that metonymically signifies the aesthetic qualities of Fendi’s iconic dyed fur products. Finally, the materials marble and silver can be considered symbol paradigms that metaphorically signify the ostentatious connotation of Fendi’s fur products.
4.3.3 The interior near the entrance

On the ground floor interior we again observe a dominance of the iconic beige colour that metonymically signifies Fendi’s naturally tinted leather goods from 1933. We also again see marble, limestone and silver (syntagm) which’s irregular coloration, structure and shimmer metonymically signifies Fendi’s fur goods. The Irregular structure and coloration of Fendi’s fur is also to be found in the surfaces behind the product displays. The shifting, vertical and rectangular shapes of these displays are an iconic paradigm that furthermore metonymically signifies Fendi’s Fun Fur logo. Iconic and metonymic traces of this logo could be furthermore found in the angular lines of the ceiling and the black graphic lines in the floor and furniture frames.
Image 14: Product display made out of bronze fur nails

4.3.4 Nailed product display

When we scroll to the above right image we see a wall display immersed in a golden-yellow light. This is again an iconic paradigm that signifies Fendi’s naturally tinted leather goods from 1933. However, there is an even more prominent emphasis on fur-production in the bag displays. The central display is made out of 30000 bronze spikes that have been traditionally used to spike fur fabric onto wooden tables during its production process. This is firstly an indexical paradigm that draws attention to the existential relationship between bronze nails and fur. Secondly and finally it is considered to be a symbol paradigm that metaphorically signifies Fendi’s ancestral expertise in fur goods.
4.3.5 The fur room

On the ground floor interior there is one room that is clearly devoted to Fendi’s fur coats. A Grey velvet carpet, velvet brown chair, silver/black gradient wall, organically shaped table and a cubical marble table are the syntagmatic combination that metonymically signify the lively texture, mixed coloration and softness and glossiness of fur. We can moreover observe how the table (placed on a hairy carpet) resembles enlarged seamed together fur nails (in terms of form). Again, this is firstly an indexical paradigm that draws attention to the existential relationship between bronze nails and fur. Secondly and finally it is considered to be a symbol paradigm that metaphorically signifies Fendi’s ancestral expertise in fur goods.
When entering the first floor we again observe the metonymic signification of Fendi’s naturally tinted leather goods in several beige coloured iconic paradigms; the wall, floor tiles, carpets and halogen lightning. We also again observe the iconic angular graphic qualities of the logo in the wall panels and vertical product displays. In contrast to the beige colour and angular lines we observe green curved velvet chairs which are iconic paradigms that metonymically signify two Fendi references. Firstly it signifies the lustre and softness of Fendi’s iconic fur products and secondly the unmatched style of the Fendi Casa furniture line. Next to these chairs we observe a glossy curved black table used for the display of heels. Along with the chairs they form a syntagmatic combination that metonymically signifies Fendi’s values of femininity and modernity. Finally, clients are also be able to look outside through one of the 17th century Palazzo arches from this part of the interior. This is considered to be an indexical paradigm that metonymically signifies the existential relationship between Fendi and the historical centre of Rome.
4.3.7 Roman vault roof construction

In the second part of the first floor interior we can observe another node to Roman heritage in the vertically lifted ceiling. According to interior architect Gwenael Nicholas this construction resembles a Roman vault and thus becomes an icon that metonymically signifies Fendi’s Roman heritage. We also observe a clear metonymic signification of the Fendi logo in several iconic paradigms. We observe angular forms amongst graphic black lines in walls, ceiling and furniture frames. Finally, we see the re-occurring dominance of the iconic beige colour.
4.3.8 Private suites

In Fendi’s private suites there are mostly iconic signs that metonymically signify the abstract qualities iconic Fendi products. The glossiness of fur can be found in the burgundy chairs, grey carpet, bedframe, framed fur above the bed, burgundy wall surface and leather couch. The mixed coloration of fur can be found in the red marble, carpet, chair, bedframe, curtains and cupboards. If we further observe the colours of the suite we see a dominant grey with outstanding burgundy complemented by yellow lights. The colour hue versus the tint signifies the unmatched style of the Fendi Casa furniture line whereas the yellow light again signifies Fendi’s naturally yellow-tinted leather goods. We also again observe the angular lines of the Fendi logo in the furnishings and wall panels. Finally we observe a framed image of the ancient Roman Trevi fountain which’s restoration was financed by Fendi. This framed image is considered a symbol sign that metonymically signifies Fendi’s preservation and representation of Roman heritage.
4.4 Conclusion

A semiotic analysis of flagship stores Dior Seoul and Fendi Rome

Based on the semiotic analysis we conclude that all aspects of the brand identity can be retrieved from the design of the flagship stores. This includes references to the brand’s place of origin, values, symbols, techniques and product aesthetics. However, the flagship store design precisely focusses on the aesthetics of the brand’s most renowned, long lived and distinctive products. Choosing the aesthetic features of the most renowned and distinctive products for the design of the flagship store is a highly strategic decision. It most importantly enables the luxury fashion brand to reinforce and communicate the uniqueness (authenticity), respectability and longevity of their products. Dior Seoul’s design has a dominant focus on clean and sculptural shapes which most prominently links to the 1947 New Look. Dior’s most renowned invention in women’s fashion. Fendi Rome has a strong focus on applying the inherent abstract qualities of fur and naturally tinted leather onto surfaces. Fur products are Fendi’s ancestral specialty and moreover have the quality of being conspicuously luxurious. Not unlike the many noble materials we have observed in the Roman flagship store.

The brand’s most renowned and distinctive products are also implied in how both brands symbolically and metaphorically represent the importance of their ateliers. Fendi Rome has a display made out of fur spikes (traditionally used for the production of fur) and Dior Seoul uses the curvy drape of a white toile (prototype) fabric to create a monumental façade.

Also the use of indexical signs in the flagship stores dominantly revolve around the most renowned, long lived and distinctive products of a brand. They specifically focus upon the making process of these products. Fendi Rome’s fur spikes represent the existential relation between fur spikes and fur products in the making. Dior Seoul’s solidified drape in the façade on the other hand designates the causal relationship between fabric, reinforcement and gravity.

Answered research question

Which aspects of the self-ascribed brand identities are articulated in the flagship stores of the respective case study brands?
5. General Conclusion

When translating the sign categorizations of the semiotic analysis into frequencies and percentages (overview page 58) we can conclude the following: The self-ascribed brand identity of luxury fashion brands is firstly (mostly) aesthetically articulated, secondly symbolically articulated and lastly technically articulated, in the designs of luxury fashion flagship stores.

In figure 1 we see a major 68% of metonymic significations that reflect a particular aesthetic quality of the brands’ products. Also most architectural signs in the two case studies (73%) are iconic, meaning that they draw attention to an aesthetic quality when being signified. This verifies Winlow&Nobbs’ (2013) claim about aesthetics becoming increasingly important in luxury flagship stores for reinforcing brand authenticity. This result moreover designates that the 21st century luxury market’s orientation towards sensations and experiences (Boutaud, 2007; Ladwein, 2002) is (based on the results of the two different cases-studies) prominently manifested through the aesthetics of the flagship store.

The symbolic signs in the flagship store design are considered to be as additional to the aesthetics with average percentage of 24%. The symbolic architectural signs firstly had a metaphorical articulation (18%) and secondly some of them (6%) also included an iconic aspect with a metonymical signification. This means that symbols can also be articulated in a visual language that reflects the aesthetics of the brand’s products. For example the sculptural and textured walls that metonymically signify the conventional co-operation of Dior’s Flou and Tailleur atelier. The aesthetic complementation of texture and form in the walls resembles the one in the Dior products.

The least prominent the two flagship stores are the indexical signs (8%). The two signs that were found firstly had a metaphorical signification because they refer to a causal relation between technical tool and the iconic object of a brand. This metaphorically implies the prestigious role of the brands’ atelier. For example the bronze fur nails of the Fendi store in relation to Fendi expertly crafted fur. Only in the case of Dior Seoul’s façade, where a metal framework reinforces the curved building, we saw a metonymic index. Despite the fact that the sign indicates something technical (reinforcement) it also has an aesthetic result that can be linked to Dior’s curved clothes (reinforced with percale and taffeta).

We furthermore observed that paradigms (64%) are more prominent than syntagmatic combinations (36%) within the two case studies. This means that flagship stores firstly encourage a contemplation of its details and secondly encourages the contextual connection of paradigms. Also many syntagms consist of several paradigms, meaning that separate architectural elements are already meaningful before they become even more meaningful when they are connected by the observer (analyst or consumer). As with luxury fashion products, there is great focus on a detailed execution which is significant in communicating the prestigious self-image of luxury brands.
### Answered research question

Too which extent is the self-ascribed brand identity of luxury fashion brands aesthetically, symbolically and technically articulated in the design of their flagship stores?

### 6. Advice for applying the research

The analytical method (semiotics) and the numbers derived from it were recently used for designing a new flagship store for Polo Ralph Lauren. This experience revealed that the percentile overview is useful as a guideline and as an evaluative model for doing an interim-assessments of a newly designed retail environments. Yet it must be said that the percentile overview is not an absolute key model. It is prone to some standard deviations. Retail-design, like any design practice is always affected by the subjective visual value judgements of its practitioner. These judgments do not necessarily have to be justified by a numerical standard.
7. Source List

Sources Imagery Chapter 3

Self-ascribed brand identity Dior


**Fendi**


Sources Imagery Chapter 3

Dior Seoul


**Fendi Rome**


Sources


8. Appendix

Semiotic frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative overview in Sign amounts</th>
<th>Dior Seoul</th>
<th>Fendi Rome</th>
<th>Combined Amount of signs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Icon</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon (metonymy)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Syntagms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total signs</td>
<td>47</td>
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</table>
## Dior Seoul Appendix

### 4.2.1 Exterior Dior Seoul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signifier(s)</th>
<th>Signified(s)</th>
<th>Sign Type(s) (Charles Peirce)</th>
<th>Metaphor/Paradigm</th>
<th>Paradigm/Paradigm</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Façade has a vertical silhouette made from hulls of counter-curving white fiberglass seamed together</td>
<td>- White toile fabric of the atelier seamed together to create Dior’s voluminous yet soft and feminine drape - Overlap of rose flower leaves</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: form language colour and fabric drape <strong>Index</strong>: Fabric and gravity creates drape</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curved façade with cubical counterpart behind it</td>
<td>- Gender Binary in form language: -Womenswear and Menswear inside the building</td>
<td><strong>Symbol</strong>: Reflects conventional gender binary <strong>Index</strong>: Gender binary in form language designates presence of male and female product categories</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Syntagm (Juxtaposition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star</td>
<td>Christian Dior’s good luck</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: form of the star symbol</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal, vertical and diagonal pattern on the side of the cubical building</td>
<td>- Cannage as stitching pattern to be found on leather bags, and as a knotting technique in the wicker chairs of the Parisian headquarters -Craftsmanship</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: form of the patterning</td>
<td>Metonymy; pattern</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café (Dior, 2016) with separate smaller pagoda roof</td>
<td>- Small perched hat on the curvy shaped new look - Small Pagoda roof of the Granville Villa</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: Form and Scale</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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<td>Signifier(s)</td>
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<td>Paradigm/ Syntagm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiberglass overlays metal framework</td>
<td>New look silhouette reinforced by taffeta and percale</td>
<td><strong>Index</strong>: material causing reinforcement</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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<td>Metal framework which overlays square glass doorways which the creates an arched entrance</td>
<td>Reseda flower like form</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: form and transparency</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
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<td>Perforated steel</td>
<td>Wind rose steel decoration on the entrance of the Granville Vila</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: Material</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Logo                                                                      | - Building belonging to Dior  
- Nicholas Cochin typeface; 17th century typeface which links to Versailles as a source of inspiration for form language and furniture | **Symbol**: read through the convention of European language  
**Icon**: Form of the typeface | Metonymy Metaphor | Paradigm           |
| Reflective repetitive squares in shop window juxtaposed with a Dior outfit with a curvy shape | Bevelled squares of glass and gilded mirrors in Parisian Headquarters       | **Icon**: form material                                 | Metonymy           | Syntagm           |
4.2.2 The entrance and staircase area on the ground floor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signifier(s)</th>
<th>Signified(s)</th>
<th>Sign Type(s) (Charles Peirce)</th>
<th>Metaphor/Metonymy</th>
<th>Paradigm/Syntagm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grey colour in carpets, chairs, wall and displays</td>
<td>Grey walls in Parisian headquarters</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: colours</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black contrasting rhombus tiles inserted into square ecru tiles and form a demarcated square; Resulting in horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines</td>
<td>- Black and white New look 1947 - Cannage pattern of the wicker chairs in Parisian headquarters</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: pattern and colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female mannequins sitting in a feminine fashion</td>
<td>- The femininity of the new look - The remoulded mannequins in the ateliers</td>
<td><strong>Index</strong>: existential relationship</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Symbol</strong>: understood through gender conventions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Suspended artwork by artist Lee Bull resembling a suspended chandelier</td>
<td>- Christian Dior’s connection to the art world - Chandeliers in Parisian headquarters and Granville Villa</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: form</td>
<td>Metaphor; Metonymy; suspension of the artwork</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis XV medallion shaped grey chair</td>
<td>Louis XV medallion chairs in Parisian headquarters</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: Form</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small sprinkling lights in the ceiling resembling starts in the sky</td>
<td>Christian Dior’s symbol for good luck</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: shimmer</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signifier(s)</td>
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</table>
| Spiral staircase resembling an unfurling ribbon (Marino, 2014) | - Femininity of a spiral (curvy) ribbon  
- Movement of the Norman sea (Granville) | **Icon**: form and reflective materials | Metaphor | Paradigm |
| The animation *Movie Toile* by Oyoram is placed around the staircase. These video works, conceived as portholes, reveal fabrics in movement, timepieces and Paris cityscapes (Dior, 2016) | - Movement of the Norman sea  
- Dior’s connection with to the art world  
- Parisian origin of the brand | **Icon**: form, colour, material | Metonymy:  
- Parisian origin of the brand  
- Movement of the Norman sea  
Metaphor:  
- Dior’s connection with to the art world | Syntagm |
| Grey walls | -Grey walls in Parisian headquarters | **Icon**: colour | Metonymy | Paradigm |
| Square tiles | -Square tiles on the floor of Parisian headquarters | **Icon**: form | Metonymy | Syntagm |
| The aerial perspective of the staircase | Rose from the Granville Villa Garden | **Icon**: form | Metonymy | Syntagm |
4.2.3 Interior womenswear first floor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signifier(s)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juxtaposition of different grey textures; walls furniture and flooring</td>
<td>Grey walls with Trianon pattern in the Parisian headquarters; &quot;decorated not decorative&quot;</td>
<td><strong>Icon:</strong> colour and patterning</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curved grey lounge</td>
<td>Louis XV lounge</td>
<td><strong>Icon:</strong> Form, Material</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement and colour melange in herringbone patterned wooden floor</td>
<td>Movement of the Norman Sea near Granville Villa - Colour subtleties in the bamboo doors in the Granville Villa</td>
<td><strong>Icon:</strong> colour and pattern</td>
<td>Metaphor: Norman sea Metonymy: bamboo</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended mannequins evoking levitation illusion</td>
<td>-‘Free floating pleated skirt in the 1947 new look</td>
<td><strong>Icon:</strong> form</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The aerial perspective of the staircase</td>
<td>Rose from the Granville Villa Garden</td>
<td><strong>Icon:</strong> form</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Image of splashing water, melange grey furniture and flooring</td>
<td>- Movement of the Norman sea</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: form and coloration</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silver Butterflies applied on grey clean wall</td>
<td>- Granville Villa Garden&lt;br&gt;- Decorative craftsmanship on clean surfaces (Flou atelier)&lt;br&gt;- Grey Trianon walls in the Parisian headquarters</td>
<td><strong>Index</strong>: Craft application of the Dior atelier&lt;br&gt;<strong>Icon</strong>: Colour</td>
<td>Metaphor: Craftsmanship; Granville Garden&lt;br&gt;Metonymy: Grey Trianon walls</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transparent lines in a square on a translucent glass wall</td>
<td>Bevelled glass in Parisian headquarters</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: Form and transparency</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green flower on table</td>
<td>- Decorative flowers in Parisian headquarters&lt;br&gt;- Flora in Granville Villa Garden</td>
<td><strong>Icon</strong>: Form and colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
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### 4.2.4 Dior Homme Interior

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cubical shapes, angular lines in furniture, displays and flooring</td>
<td>- Male area as counterpart of the curved form principles women’s area</td>
<td>Symbol: Gender conventions in aesthetics</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black curved pillar</td>
<td>- Male area as counterpart of the curved form principles women’s area - Dior’s curvy and sculptural form language</td>
<td>Symbol: Gender conventions in aesthetics</td>
<td>Metaphor: - Male area as counterpart of the curved form principles women’s area Metonymy: - Dior’s curvy and sculptural form language</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smooth black leather couch</td>
<td>- Male area as counterpart of the texturized and shimmering furniture in the women’s area</td>
<td>Symbol: Gender conventions in aesthetics Icon: Form and Colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herringbone pattern in wooden flooring</td>
<td>- Movement of the Norman sea near Granville - Colour subtleties in the bamboo doors in the Granville Villa</td>
<td>Icon: Material and patterning</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicoloured part on table</td>
<td>Flora Granville garden</td>
<td>Icon Colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.2.5 Interior Pierre Hermé Café Dior Seoul

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Signifier</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Paradigm/ Syntagm</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pierre Hermé Café on the roof of the six storey building | - Leisure spot with view where one eat Parisian pastries (relates to brand origin) | **Symbol:** Convention of consuming food as a leisure activity  
**Index:** Pierre Hermé makes Parisian pastries | Metaphor  
(Paris is substituted for a pastry café) | Paradigm |
| Curved chairs in pink, green and grey and grey flooring, furniture and bar | - The curves of Louis XV/XVI furniture  
- Colours of Granville Villa and garden | **Icon:** form and colour | Metonymy | Syntagm |
| Parallelogram floor tiles (1) and ceiling mirrors (2) giving the illusion of movement | - Contemporary interpretation of square floor tiles in 30, Avenue Montaigne  
-Heliotrope flower shape of ceiling mirrors  
-Movement of the dynamic Norman sea (tiles and mirrors) | **Icon:** form, figuration and reflection | Metonymy; tiles  
Metaphor; tiles and mirror | Paradigm; Tiles  
Syntagm; tiles and mirror |
| Flora on the balcony | Flora in the garden of the Granville Villa | **Icon:** form and colour | Metonymy | Syntagm |
| View from balcony | View on Norman sea from the Granville Villa | **Icon:** dimension | Metonymy | Paradigm |
### 4.2.6 Art Gallery room Dior Seoul

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Signifier(s)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art gallery with photographs, white sculptural pedestals for Dior products surrounded by white curved walls</td>
<td>-Christian Dior’s Art gallery in the 1920’s</td>
<td><strong>Symbol:</strong> conventional gallery set up; pedestals, artworks on walls and white walls</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculptural curved white wall</td>
<td>-White bar jacket New look 1947</td>
<td><strong>Icon:</strong> form</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.3 Case study II: Fendi Rome

#### 4.3.1 Exterior Palazzo Fendi Rome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signifier(s)</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17th century Palazzo Typology located in the historical city of Rome with applied Fendi logos</td>
<td>- Preserving tradition - Fendi's roman origin available in the flagship store</td>
<td>Symbol: traditional Roman architecture Icon: form and material colour</td>
<td>Metaphor; preserving tradition Metonymy; Roman origin</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow lightning from windows</td>
<td>Fendi’s naturally yellow tinted leather goods</td>
<td>Icon: form</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance and window geometry is dictated by original architecture</td>
<td>- preserving tradition</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large scale lightbulb (artwork) and bright red patterning in windows</td>
<td>- Colourful and fun (Fendi fur concept) - Innovation from the source of tradition</td>
<td>Icon: colour and brightness Symbol: brand convention</td>
<td>Metaphor; lightbulb and bright colours for innovation Metonymy; Colourful patterning referring to colourful products</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mannequins with a feminine stance at the entrance dressed in the latest collection</td>
<td>Femininity modernity as brand values</td>
<td>Symbol: Gender convention Icon: Form</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 4.3.2 The entrance

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
</table>
| Bulges of 19th century Palazzo arches blending into the clean rectangular travertine building blocks | - Fendi’s tradition empowers a modern creation  
- Natural tint of leather goods  
- Preservation of Roman heritage | **Icon:** Form, colour and materials                                           | **Metaphor:** Tradition empowers a modern creation; preservation of Roman heritage  
**Metonymy:** leather goods with natural yellow tint | Paradigm          |
| Red Marble stairs which’s design is inspired the renaissance architecture of Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola (Curiosity, 2016) | - Fendi’s tradition empowers a colourful modern creation  
- preservation of Roman heritage  
- The colour melange of dyed Fur | **Icon:** form, colour and material                                             | **Metonymy:** Roman origin; leather goods with natural yellow tint; colour melange of dyed fur | Paradigm          |
<p>| Textured silver on the ceiling, textured glass elevator mannequins dressed in a fur coat | - Structure and texture of Fur                                                | <strong>Icon:</strong> form, colour and material                                                        | <strong>Metonymy</strong>                                                                  | Syntagm          |
| Beige square floor tiles and travertine building blocks                     | - Natural tint of leather goods                                               | <strong>Icon:</strong> colour                                                                           | <strong>Metonymy</strong>                                                                  | Syntagm          |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Round panels of different natural stones with Silver reflective ball</td>
<td>- Structure and coloration of Fendi’s panelled fur</td>
<td>Icon: Form, colour and materials</td>
<td>Metaphor Preservation &lt;br&gt;Metonymy &lt;br&gt;Roman heritage; panelled fur; Fendi’s silver emblem on products</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Preservation of Roman heritage &lt;br&gt;- Fendi’s silver emblem on products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vertical shifted wall display along other vertical wall displays with irregularly structured and textured surfaces on the inside</td>
<td>- Fun Fur logo - Structure and coloration of fur - Natural tint of leather goods</td>
<td>Icon: form, colour, structure and texture</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beige colour in displays and wall surface</td>
<td>- Natural tint of leather goods</td>
<td>Icon: colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black tiles in flooring forming frames</td>
<td>Fun Fur logo</td>
<td>Icon: colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
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### 4.3.4 Nailed product display

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yellow light</td>
<td>- Naturally tinted yellow leather goods</td>
<td>Icon: Form, colour and materials</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical displays with melange coloured surface</td>
<td>- Fun Fur logo - Coloration of fur</td>
<td>Icon: form and colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000 bronze spikes as product display</td>
<td>- Fixing fur on wooden board with spikes in fur atelier</td>
<td>Icon: colour, form and material</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
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### 4.3.5 The fur room

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grey velvet carpet, velvet brown chair, silver/black gradient wall, organically shaped table and Marble block</td>
<td>- The liveliness, softness and glow of Fendi’s dyed fur</td>
<td>Icon: Form, colour and materials</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table legs and vertical motion of the wall gradient</td>
<td>- Verticality of the Fun Fur logo - Spikes in fur atelier</td>
<td>Icon: form, coloration, material, texture</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble juxtaposed with fur</td>
<td>- Fur and marble as status symbol</td>
<td>Symbol: Social conventions</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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### 4.3.6 Interior first floor

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curved, glossy green chairs and black tables</td>
<td>- Feminine, fun and colourful - gloss of Fendi’s dyed furs</td>
<td>Icon: Colour, form and shimmer</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velvet chairs and carpet</td>
<td>- Softness of Fendi furs</td>
<td>Icon: form, coloration, material, texture</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green glossy chairs</td>
<td>Fendi’s unmatched luxurious furniture</td>
<td>Icon: Colour, form and shimmer</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beige colour in carpets, flooring and walls with yellow lights</td>
<td>- Naturally tinted (yellow) leather goods</td>
<td>Icon: colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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### 4.3.7 Vault roof construction

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifted ceiling resembling a Roman vault (Curiosity, 2016)</td>
<td>- Preservation of Roman heritage</td>
<td>Icon: Form</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angular wall panels, bar displays, chair legs, black flooring panels</td>
<td>Fendi Logo</td>
<td>Icon: Form and colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beige colour in carpets, flooring and walls with yellow lights</td>
<td>- Naturally tinted (yellow) leather goods</td>
<td>Icon: colour</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
<td>Paradigm(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble juxtaposed with fur</td>
<td>- Fur and marble as status symbol</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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### 4.3.8 Private suites

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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Glossiness in burgundy chairs, grey carpet, bedframe, burgundy wall surface and leather crotch | - Gloss of Fendi’s furs and leather goods  
- Softness of Fendi furs and leathers  
- Femininity                                                                                                                                 | **Icon**: material and texture | Metonymy           | Syntagm          |
| Colour melange in carpet, chair, bedframe, curtains, cupboards and curtains | Colour melange of Fendi furs                                                                                                                                                                                 | **Icon**: Colour             | Metonymy           | Syntagm          |
| Burgundy glossy chairs with a grey carpet, cushion on a grey couch and wall surface with dyed fur within a frame | Fendi’s unmatched luxurious furniture                                                                                                                                                                       | **Icon**: Colour             | Metonymy           | Syntagm          |
| Angularity in carpet, bedframe, wall panelling and desk                  | Fendi logo                                                                                                                                                                                               | **Icon**: Form               | Metonymy           | Paradigm(s)      |
| Image of Trevi fountain                                                  | Preservation of Roman heritage                                                                                                                                                                            | **Symbol**                  | Metaphor           | Paradigm         |
| Yellow light                                                             | - Naturally tinted (yellow) leather goods                                                                                                                                                                  | **Icon**: colour             | Metonymy           | Paradigm         |