LUXURY MERGES WITH THE STREETS
Graduation Project

How Has Luxury Fashion and its Consumer Evolved Through the Emergence and Growth of the Street Style Trend? - 12000 words (+/- 10%) research project with the intention to then be used by other researchers or luxury brands

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Date : 11/06/2019

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim, Questions &amp; Structure</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology &amp; Limitations</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LITERATURE REVIEW</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defining Luxury</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind the Trend</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present Situation</td>
<td>12-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Luxury</td>
<td>15-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in logos</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New consumer</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Market</td>
<td>22-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborations</td>
<td>24-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundane Luxury and Comfort</td>
<td>26-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trickle Down Theory Challenged</td>
<td>30-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMPIRICAL RESEARCH</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>32-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Survey Results</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Interview Results</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCLUSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIBLIOGRAPHY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This final thesis is written with the purpose of concluding my studies in International Fashion & Management at the Amsterdam Fashion Institute. For the past two years I have been interested in how the luxury fashion industry has grown and become relatable to me as a young adult and to Generation Z and Millennials. This interest is reflected in my study of examining the relation between luxury fashion and these generations.

The research has had a duration of 5 months and the whole period of time has been enormously educational and cultivating. On this page, I would like to take the opportunity to thank a number of people who helped me through this process. First of all, this study and the outcomes could not have been made possible without the input and shared knowledge of the interviewees. Therefore I want to thank: Quincy, Justin, Jiawei, Amaia and Manuel. I would like to thank all those people who took part in the survey that I made. Finally I would like to thank both of my graduation supervisors: Constantin von Maltzahn and Joop Smit for their valuable feedback and guidance.
The aim of this research is to examine the changes within luxury fashion and their consumer and how street style has affected these.

To collect data, two types of primary research carried out, the qualitative research method of individual interviews has been conducted and the quantitative research method of a survey was conducted. The interviews researched interpretations of people within the street style culture and with a high interest in fashion. The survey was completed through convenience sampling therefore the people taking part in it were random.

This thesis first defines the history of luxury fashion and the birth and development of the street style trend in order to gain a solid understanding of these, to then be able to further investigate them and analyse their merging.

The thesis includes a large analysis through secondary research of the current situation in luxury fashion -including the new luxury brands that have been born through the street style trend and the collaborations of the settled fashion houses- the changes that luxury fashion has undertaken in general, the changes of their evolving customer base and finally analyses of how the traditional trickle down theory is challenged by the street style trend.

Interpretations of interviewees on street style as a trend have been carried out, how aware they are about the trend and how they believe it has affected luxury brands in the past lustrum. The interviews concluded that we have entered a new era of luxury from which there is no possibility of retreat however, there is a possibility of the trend fading and becoming a simple mark in the history of luxury fashion. The concept of street style was differently interpreted by the interviewees with one recurrent word coming up that brought the descriptions together, this word was individuality. The idea of luxury fashion was generally understood uniformly and its future was explained comparably where the belief that the trend is here to stay was a leading statement.

The survey resulted in the Millenial generation showing a growing interest in luxury due to the emergence of the street style trend and the link it has to high end fashion. Whereas older generations did not seem content with the direction these labels are going in. The key influencer for the younger generations to feel related and approached by high-end fashion showed to be the collaborations that luxury brands had made with urban brands.

The results suggest that luxury brands have used street style in order to position themselves in this new market of young consumers willing to invest at least 1/3 of their income in high-end products.

In short, the fashion industry has entered a time where the mundane; logo t-shirts and hoodies have become exclusive. It seems that there will be no regression in terms of this new perception of luxury and its new and evolved consumer, and although the trend progresses and will possibly not always be seen in the same way, it is here to stay.
Over the past years, the luxury industry has encountered an incredible growth with an expanding number of the population being able to afford luxury goods and services. Considering all segments, the luxury market grew by 5% to an estimated €1.2 trillion globally in 2017. From that main growth engine of the luxury market is a generational shift, with 85% of luxury growth in 2017 fueled by Generations Y and Z. But a broader “Millennial state of mind” is permeating the luxury industry and changing the purchasing habits of all generations. (C. D’Arpizio, F. Levato, M. Kamel & J. de Montgolfier, 2017)

The rise of a powerful middle class has led to new consumer behaviours that have changed the definition of luxury and brought new lifestyles and a whole new look to fashion. The fashion industry has seen the rise of a new aesthetic that is less conventional, far grittier and full of imperfections and uncertainties (Givhan and Afanador, 2018). We are living in the image-centric age of Instagram and with this, the definition of luxury has become an elusive concept. As younger shoppers are beginning to favour uniqueness over craftsmanship, out goes the desire for traditional luxury.

According to the Deloitte study Global Powers of Luxury Goods 2018, millennials and Generation Z represented around 30% of the luxury goods market in 2016. The research predicts that collectively they will represent over 40% by 2025. Historically, luxury brands were promoting a so-called culture of “exclusion.” Not only were they limiting access to the product, they were also deliberately detached from the final customer and reserved in their communications. What can be observed today is a new dynamic to successfully engage Millennials and Gen Z consumers, brands have to act in an inclusive, engaging and open manner. This requires a great deal of flexibility in communications, tone of voice, social media behaviour. As Olga Panscenko states in her interview for Forbes magazine, it all starts from within. Instead of asking themselves how to sell to these customers, brands should try and become “friends” with those new generations of consumers, participate in their lives through relevant channels and speak their language (Fromm, 2018)

The fashion industry as discussed by Winser (2013) has recently moved towards a new age of young creative directors pushing streetwear and working at historic fashion houses such as Virgil Abloh for Louis Vuitton or Alessandro Michelle for Gucci. Over the past; designers were seeking to offer an alternate reality by designing clothes that differentiated from the mundane (Bain, 2016) however, today fashion has been democratized and the new trend is taking delights in turning the ordinary into the new luxury item. Although there are many fashion houses that have contributed towards this new movement such as Moschino, Anya Hindmarch or Off-white, Demna Gvasalia, creative director of Balenciaga and head designer at Vetements has played the leading role. Demna Gvasalia has been instrumental in blurring and then erasing the lines between what has always been considered street style and the more rarified point-of-view of the atelier. (Givhan, 2016)

For the first time ever, the boundary-defying Balenciaga has been set to break €1 billion in revenue this year. The Demna Gvasalia-steered house has seen immense growth in recent times, with Pinault (chairman and CEO of Kering) noting that it’s the fastest-growing label on its roster of renown brands. In many senses, the rise is due to a growing amount of millennial youth and men, specifically, who’ve opened their wallets to participate in Gvasalia’s luxe streetwear vision (Ingvaldsen, 2019).
The aim of this research is to see to what extent the street style trend has sparked the interest of Millennials/Generation Z towards luxury brands and how these could now potentially change their focus to target this new consumer group. The practical goal of this research is to bring awareness about the developments that are occurring in the luxury industry and to provide a document comprising an amalgamation of research about the street style trend, for those who have an interest in gaining knowledge on these happenings. When there is a finalised conclusion, an article will be written including main findings of the research.

**QUESTIONS**

How Has Luxury Fashion and its Consumer Evolved Through the Emergence and Growth of the Street Style Trend?

Subquestions:

1. What is luxury? What is street style?
2. What kind of fashion houses are adopting the street style trend?
3. How have younger generations become related to luxury fashion? Are they actually investing in luxury?
4. What have luxury fashion houses done in response to the popularity of the street style trend?

**STRUCTURE**

This report follows a chronological order to answer the research question. In the first section, luxury and street style are defined. This information is required through the whole report to be able to gain a complete understanding. The data gathered from the interviews and surveys will be used as reinforcements on the secondary data that is found and will be analysed and interpreted towards the end to be able to complete a conclusion. This research ends with a conclusive overview, which reflects back to the purpose of this paper, answering the research question.
METHODOLOGY

In order to understand how the street style trend has affected luxury fashion houses, this thesis will include primary and secondary research. Regarding the secondary research, information has been gathered from books, journals, magazines and websites exploring the concept of the history of luxury brands, the origin of street style, the behaviour of the luxury consumer and the latest fashion trends. For personal understanding of the subject matter I have delved into the research of sociologists, philosophers and fashion journalists. Being able to analyse how the concept of luxury keeps evolving throughout history, and how the rise in popularity of the street style trend has played a key role in the expansion of the consumer base of luxury brands.

A qualitative research approach was applied through primary research and has been gathered by carrying out 5 interviews that have collected and integrated a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, having a strong focus on the latter, that will provide with a complete comprehension of why participants believe luxury is exclusive, mundane or both and why they support it/are against it. Participants have been chosen through purposive sampling based on the following demographics: age, gender, nationality, cultural background, education, income and their relationship with luxury. This has allowed to extract correlations and see how different sociological groups might have a different approach towards the definition of the luxury fashion industry. The participants were all between the ages of 18-24 who identified themselves as having a high interest in fashion and they were recruited through Instagram and Facebook messenger. The interviews were taken out by myself as the interviewer and note taker, there was a tape recorder running which has allowed me to verify the answers provided by the interviewees.

The research also includes a survey which has been filled out by 102 participants. The survey also includes both quantitative and qualitative data, in this case focusing on the prior which has allowed for comparisons to be made. The non-probability sampling has been convenience sampling where the members of the sample have been selected on the basis of convenient accessibility.

LIMITATIONS

The conducted research follows certain limitations to put the research into context and understand obstacles faced along the gathering of information:

- This research is conducted from a street style culture consumer perspective solely
- This research ignores the still existing part of luxury fashion that has not been affected by the street style trend
- The research is mainly focused on Western countries and their population
- Only five interviews were carried out
- The thesis only allowed for 12000 words which is quite limiting
- The research budget was low therefore primary research was not abundant
LITERATURE REVIEW
Luxury has to be defined in order to gain an understanding on how it has evolved. There are vast amounts of research on the history of luxury and fashion therefore only a brief mention of the main periods/events will be made for this section as the purpose is not to evaluate the history.

The key events in the history of luxury fashion have been summed up by Uche Okonkwo (2007) where she states several important phenomena that brought change to both consumption and management of luxury fashion. The following events include the facet of creative design, the influence of society and the management aspect of fashion, coming down to:

1. The early Egyptian era of opulence
2. The Italian Renaissance period of art and fashion
3. The reign of France’s King Louis XIV and the rise of French luxury fashion and lifestyle
4. The century of Charles Frederick Worth and the invention of Haute Couture
5. Coco Chanel, Christian Dior and the birth of modern luxury
6. The rise of New York and American ready-to-wear
7. The second Italian fashion revolution of the sixties and seventies
8. Tom Ford, the revival of Gucci and commercial luxury fashion
9. Bernard Arnault, LVMH and modern luxury fashion management
10. The internet revolution and e-commerce

From the first event to the last, luxury fashion has evolved immensely. These happenings have shaped what luxury fashion is today, providing a framework for the current and future practices of the sector.

As far as the Middle Ages, the concept of clothing did not exist in the greatest part of the world. It was by the 16th century when fashion started to gain meaning for European culture as it became an economic stimulus and an international export (Thompson, 2018, p.138). The textiles industry completely changed during the Industrial Revolution, consumers benefited from falling prices of clothing thanks to new manufacturing methods. Europeans could suddenly afford to dress like aristocrats and new styles had to be developed often so that the bourgeoisie “would stay ahead of the plebes” (Thompson, 2018, p.138). It was during the start of the 18th century when clothing styles started to be differentiated as luxury and ordinary. Thompson (2018, p.137) mentions that “before the 18th century people didn’t change the way they dressed from year to year, or from millennium to millennium” clothing was an exclusive luxury and only the bourgeoisie could afford fashion. Having these luxury goods was a sign of prosperity, exclusivity and power, as well as the fulfillment of non-basic necessities (Brun and Castelli, 2013).

In postmodern societies, the consumption level of luxury goods has peaked and everyone has a right to access luxury (Kapferer and Bastein, 2012). Luxury has been democratized and its definition has become ambiguous with no agreed paradigm within scholars. Armitage and Roberts (2016, P.26) define luxury as associated with “expensive, elegant and refined products of the highest quality as well as rich, comfortable and sumptuous lifestyle”. Luxury is viewed from the perspective of an individual and it depends on cultural, social and individual contexts (Berry, 1994). Bauman (2001) argues that today, luxury items are those that provide a sense of belonging and identity. Luxury is a new kind of reflection of who we are, extending beyond clothes (Petty, 2018). This means that what luxury is for one group might not be luxury for another.
To be able to carry out research on the matter, it is important to have a clear understanding of what street style is, how it began and where it finds itself now. However much street style and fashion might resemble each other they are poles apart. Fashion celebrates change as “This years New Look” elbows aside “Last years New Look”.

Street style has always existed. It is, however, only since the mid-1950s that its significance has been recognized, valued, and emulated. Ted Polhemus (1994) states that the most profound and distinctive development of the twentieth century was this era’s shift from high culture to popular culture—the slow but steady recognition that innovation in matters of art, music, and dress can derive from all social strata rather than, as previously, only from the upper classes. The reevaluation of street style as a key source of innovation in dress and appearance—in the early 2000s, is the principle engine of the clothing industry demonstrating the democratization of aesthetics and culture.

It is very debatable when this trend dates back to. It could be said that what was previously meant by street style was differentiated by tribal styles which were very specific. Being part of one group for instance London Punks, Mods or Surfers. Each tribe had set styles that were easy to define. Significant remains of many of these subcultures can be found scattered around the globe however commitment and group identity like those have become less typical in the twenty-first century. Collins dictionary defines it as inspirational outfits worn by real people on the streets however this explanation falls short of meaning. It could better be described as a comprehensive approach to fashion that produces styles which intersect and differ from mainstream fashion considerations.

One of the most significant factors of influence for what we now see as street style was the street-inspired fashion known as “grunge”, born in Seattle and rocketing into mainstream via Kurt Cobain and other musical icons. The look known for it’s worn-out and grime-ridden appearance, officially mainstreamed when design great Mark Jacobs previewed his now infamous “grunge line.” back in 1993. From then up to present, the idea of street style has evolved tremendously. It has now become the common social practice, embodied by particular sociocultural groups, to the important segment of mass fashion industry. This process was accompanied by extensive social, cultural and economical changes. People have been using the term Streetwear since the early 90’s, but it is only recently that it has been considered anything other than derogatory (Jones, 2019)

Hip-hop music has been a huge influence in the steep growth of the trend. This was one of the first genres for which there was no specific attire that seperated the artist from its audience. Hip-Hop was not the popular music of the time however it started growing internationally by the end of the 90’s, which led fashion brands to begin to respect rappers as influential marketing assets. Once hip-hop became mainstream, followers became interested in that style and the style was then popularised.

Now rappers and their street style have become major influences in pop culture and subsequently their presence in the luxury industry has grown. This meant that luxury brands started to embrace the culture by using collaborations with rappers and urban brands to connect with younger generations. A key moment for this trend was the point when street style merged with luxury in one of the first collaborations to happen within the luxury market back in 2017 when Louis Vuitton joined Supreme bringing out a collection which was sold out within minutes –later to be expanded on-. The gap in the market had been identified and with the merge of luxury and urban style the interest in street style was boosted becoming a macro trend.
The rise of social media fashion blogs and Instagram celebrities has given place to icons in the culture. This has created new networks such as Kyra TV—a Gen-Z entertainment network—who take advantage and make use of existing platforms like YouTube to create content that explores popular culture from all angles through the lens of fashion. The way young people consume media has changed and companies have picked up on this.

A big part of the growth of this trend has been Hypebeast culture. It finds its roots in streetwear culture, although there are no definitions on what accounts for one. The term was first popularized in 2012 by rapper Trinidad James in his song *All Gold Everything*—“Hypebeasts we know about chea’ / Don’t buy shoes unless they popular.” Founded in 2005, the popular online magazine HYPEBEAST, with 5.5 million followers, presented insight into the so-called hypebeast lifestyle and aesthetic. The generally accepted definition is that it’s slang for someone who is a “beast” (or obsessed) about hyped-up fashion brands, and will thus undertake whatever means to achieve that hype.

The trend comes under scrutiny twice a year when Fashion Week periods start. A big part of it is photographers taking over the entrances of the shows to capture the “street style” of those attending, and those outfits are then viralised used as huge inspirations for some. Although a recent reality for this part of the trend is that very little of what is now presented as “street style” is actually off-the-street, born and bred which is the whole idea of street style.

Given all these factors, the trend being around for such an extensive period, it being a complete lifestyle for those who have adopted it, including defining their identity, it has become not only a trend but a developed tribe. Which is where the primary research part of this investigation will come in. Focusing on the “victims” of this fashion fad rather than the designers and brands feeding them what they desire.
The process of bringing street fashion into luxury of past lustrum has been quick to develop. There have been a number of pioneers that have made this development result the way it has, each in their own way. This section explains who these innovators are and how their work has made luxury relatable to younger generations.

Armitage and Robert’s statements -about expensive, elegant and refined products- that have been previously mentioned (see definition of luxury) put into question the positioning of street style oriented brands that have risen in popularity and found their place in the luxury market such as Off-White. “In a large part streetwear is seen as cheap. What my goal has been is to add an intellectual layer to it and make it credible,” explains Virgil Abloh, founder of brand Off-White, whose label unites an edgy street aesthetic with luxury-level fabrication and positioning, tapping into the tastes of a generation of consumers for whom streetwear is just as fashionable as traditional luxury brands. “The consumer is already dictating what they prefer,” he adds. “Vintage Levi’s are just as important as an Hermès bag and today they’ll come together in the same outfit.” (BoF, 2016). Speaking about his brand the designer stated; Off-White means menswear and womenswear, and wedding dresses as well as sweatshirts. (Fashion Network, 2018). Combining the exclusive with the mundane has become standard. It is also no coincidence that Louis Vuitton appointed Virgil Abloh as artistic director of menswear, he has an incredible understanding of the Millennial demographic and is both creator and purveyor of luxury streetwear.

Gvasalia has captured the industry’s attention with his new aesthetics starting off at Vetements. He has elevated to the world of luxury cheap fabrics, dazzling colours, knockoff brands and unflattering fits (Sebastian, 2018). It is argued that his post-soviet take on fashion is a reaction to the current political climate. “He is in search of a different kind of beauty, particularly in an industry that has always tried to define and
dictate luxury” argues Alessandro Michelle (Vogue, 2018). Gvasalia’s career is not only limited to Vetements, he is now the creative director at Balenciaga and already made shocking changes at the fashion house. For example, the Balenciaga extra-large Tote bag (£1,695) that had been openly inspired by the IKEA Frakta bag (£0.60).

Another post-soviet obsessed designer known for his Russian-rebellious-youth-inspired looks is Gosha Rubchinskiy. Only three years after debuting his first fashion week, his brand was bought by the CDG group. Although Rubchinskiy insists on selling his clothing at affordable prices so that his teen followers will also be able to afford the label, it is still within the higher price range. Rubchinskiy has had a massive impact on the fashion industry and how people dress, particularly when it comes to streetwear (Elinor, 2017).

When talking about street style within the luxury fashion market, one must also mention Kim Jones, he was the men’s wear creative director of Louis Vuitton for 7 years where he redefined the house, bringing a more casual vision of modern luxury. He was the brain behind the memorable LouisVuittonXSupreme collaboration back in 2017 which has been described as heralding a new era in the relationship between luxury and streetwear brands -later to be explained-.
High-end streetwear is also pioneered by Riccardo Tisci who recently became the men’s wear creative director at Burberry. The first change he made was rebrand the company and change the logo. He has also adopted a new sales strategy of monthly product drops that will be available for just 24 hours and sold exclusively through the brand’s social media platforms. The purpose of this new strategy is to capture the attention of younger generations especially as these products will be launched exclusively via brand’s Instagram, WeChat, Line and Kakao. He understands Millennials as a digitally savvy audience.

Labeled as the ‘Yeezy Effect’, Kanye West’s role as a fashion force has been established. West began designing footwear for Nike in 2009. The ‘Air Yeezy’ 1 and 2 collections gained instant cult-status, setting new records for how much they fetched in re-sale prices. According to Business of Fashion, the collaboration had the biggest impact on sneaker culture in the last decade. (BoF, 2019) His collection’s focus on athleisure staples like hoodies, track pants and crop tops have also been instrumental in fashion recent re-focus on ‘street classics’. (O’neill, 2016)
Fashion is a matter of both taste and timing (Thompson 2018, p.139). It reflects social, political, cultural and economic changes but it is also an expression of modernity that symbolizes the spirit of the time (Lehman, 2000; Blumer, 1969; Laver, 1937). There is no right or wrong answer to whether an aesthetic is good or bad and whether it should be considered luxury or not. The industry has encountered numerous changes that have been decisive in the transformation of luxury to what it is now.

It has already been stated and acknowledged that the influence of streetwear and the hirings of its best designers in the most of luxury houses—Gvasalia at Balenciaga and Abloh at Louis Vuitton—has seen a surge in headlines questioning the fate of luxury in a time of logo t-shirts and hoodies. It would be hard pressed to find a luxury retailer that hadn’t increased its sneaker offering over the last few years, specifically across the market, sneakers are up a total of 246% since 2014. Katie Smith (Katie Smith, 2018) argues ‘New luxury’ doesn’t really exist, fashion markets are continuously reinventing and embracing newness. However, streetwear does operate a little differently, and its characteristics are influencing the market. The best brands and retailers are not fighting that, they are embracing it.

Fashion is a phenomenon that cannot be explained with one specific description, luxury is no different, it is a notoriously difficult term to pin down and it is doubtful whether it is possible to have the necessary conditions to justifiably call something luxury. What is now seen as luxury may not or rather, was not seen as luxury a decade ago. The definition of luxury has changed simultaneously with the change of peoples opinions and tastes. Throughout history, luxury fashion houses have always incorporated new styles that have led to unconformity. For example, when Miuccia Prada started designing in the 1970s she challenged the notion of conventional femininity. While at the time designers were pursuing a polished beauty, Prada arrived with girls that did not follow that ideal of beauty. She designed many garments that were considered unsightly by the industry. “The wrong chic dress” (1990s) was one of them, made from industrial nylon, a fabric which had previously never been used. Prada was criticized heavily, 40 years later, the company she founded is one of the most luxurious fashion houses, with historians looking back at the designs as avant-garde and revolutionizing.

Although there have been transforming happenings in fashion previously, for the first time, the industry has faced changes which have redefined luxury fashion. Changes involving luxury and street style are now seen on a day to day basis. In the 2019 Met Gala, a fundraiser dedicated to New York City’s Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute which is considered one of the biggest fashion events of the year. It is a huge night for show-stopping outfits, however Kanye West (previously mentioned as one of the pioneers of street style) attended in a simple black Dickies zip-up jacket known as “The Eisenhower Jacket,” modeled after a World War II style that was inspired by General Dwight D. Another gamechanger was Serena Williams wearing a creation of the Atelier Versace combining it with a pair of highlighter green Nike x Off-White Air Force One sneaker. In such an event, these two celebrities dressing themselves down to a simple jacket or sneakers would not have gone unnoticed, however, the press received the outfits without comment, it has not been groundbreaking news. The highest of luxury has accepted that street style is taking over, leaving space for original luxury but making new space for this world wide trend.
The findings of this detailed research have resulted in three main significant changes that have remodelled luxury fashion. These being:

1. Luxury fashion houses **rebranding** themselves, changing their logos and becoming a homogeneous group of luxury brands

2. **New consumers** entering the market, younger generations have become a crucial part of luxury fashion – simultaneously, the Chinese market has been key in the development of the new luxury

3. High end fashion using urban brands’ strategies –**collaborations**– to get closer to their new consumers.

These three changes involve more factors which have been found to be driving forces of the evolution in luxury fashion and will be thoroughly explained and backed up with sources that have been used to take out this research in the following chapters.

It must also be mentioned that the one thing that has stayed the same, despite of all the advances in the luxury fashion industry, is the consistency in pricing. This is key to brand success according to Lyle Maltz, Director at Kantar Consulting. Luxury brands are now responding to Millennial consumers who want, over anything else, trust in the relationship and when it comes to pricing that means transparency. Key to retaining customers for a luxury brand is having pricing consistency to encourage loyalty. (WealthX, 2018)
A pattern can be seen where luxury brands are reinventing themselves by changing their logo. It seems as though they have been designed not to stand out at all, but to blend in. Logos can communicate trust or chaos, and come across as expensive or cheap; if the name belongs to a company that stands for heritage and quality, getting this right is key. The direction that luxury brands have gone in is all sans-serif-centric. Back in 2012, Slimane dropped the “Yves” from Yves Saint Laurent and two years later John Galliano’s tenure meant that Maison Martin Margiela became Maison Margiela. More recently, Raf Simons marked the beginning of his time at Calvin Klein by recruiting Peter Saville for new branding unveiled in 2017. Later that year — almost two years into Demna Gvasalia’s time with the house — Balenciaga followed suit. Last August, Burberry kicked off the Tisci years with an update from Saville.

It could be because of the reliance of the same handful of individuals’ or companies and their aesthetics. Peter Saville created both Calvin Klein and Burberry’s new logos and related branding. Bureau Borsche was responsible for Balenciaga and Rimowa’s rebrands, as well as for the recent bland-centric revamp in the menswear site Highsnobiety and Nike. Beyond that, the uniformity in design is part of the larger approach to modern fashion, which is becoming more formulaic, corporate, and spread sheet-driven. Because a sizable number of fashion brands are owned by publicly-listed parent companies, the stakes, from a bottom line perspective are higher, and as a result, they tend to be increasingly risk averse. Thus, much of what they produce – from garments to branding – is the product of trend forecasting and careful metrics. (The Fashion Law, 2018)

This change could be due to the fact that the luxury fashion consumer has changed because it now also includes younger, more technologically developed consumers. These new high fashion consumers are not shopping in the same way as the original luxury consumers used to. More than that, an ever-growing percentage of luxury goods sales are occurring online, where labeling tends to be clearer than it is in multi-brand stores, and this has had a practical impact on the need for new logos. This change has suggested a concerted effort by the industry to prepare for a radically different future. David Rudnick, graphic designer and typeface specialist, believes the new logos are a break from the past. He believes they are removing the shadow of the ego that they are stepping into, by removing the presence of the great legacy designer of the houses.

Sarah Hyndman, a London based designer studied the associations between typography and luxury. She found that most consumers tend to view high-contrast fonts with thin hairlines, such as the old Burberry logo, as more high-end. Bold typefaces with rounder terminals appeared cheaper. People stated that the they associated the elicacy of the detail with craftsmanship, skill, and quality. She concluded that as the industry evolved and looked for new customers, naturally a more subtle, less flashy aesthetic was born. The look can’t stray too far from an embedded, inherited sense of worth, but it must look fresh and different. (Hyndman, 2016)

“Heritage” has been up 40% in retailers newsletters compared to the same time last year (Smith, 2018) so regardless of the new consumer being young, there is still an interest in the history of the brands and their authenticity. This decision to make the logos look
practically the same could have been a setback. The luxury fashion houses taking this step has put on the stand and made them become object of judgment to the whole world. The changes in the branding of the companies with the “blanding” trend were not received well by the wide public at first. However, we are in the age of logomania and where luxury used to be focused on clothes in terms of cut, style, fabric, silhouettes and their relationship to seasonality, due to the street style trend, they are now driven by a different market. The bulk money that luxury labels make is on items which no longer reflect that cut, style, fabric and silhouettes, the focus is on: T-shirts, sneakers, bags and accessories. The rebranding has meant that it is now easier for designers to brand these products, they place logos which read in a much more legible manner.
NEW CONSUMER

As luxury evolves and changes, so does its consumer. Today’s consumer is different from the wealthy consumers of the past who were easier to understand and satisfy. It is difficult to place them in a box of definite descriptive characteristics. Consumers cannot be segmented or at least not in the way they used to be i.e. income, age and gender. Okonkwo (2007) points out that this is because consumers have evolved beyond the head-to-toe designer-clad single-brand loyalist, to a smart savvy discerning consumer. They are highly sophisticated and brand literate. Their choices are based on an understanding of their own style. This comes together with the evolution of streetstyle where Polhemus (Polhemus, 1995) mentions that whereas fashion in its heyday managed to get practically everyone to fall in line behind the particular look which was decreeted to be the trend, completely irrespective of ones shape, nowadays we see pluralism. Designers are offering radically conflicting New Looks, now difference, rather than consensus is the order of the day and people are inclined to simply wear what suits them rather than swallowing fashion’s prescription.

The luxury consumer from the present is individualistic. They are empowered to stamp their personality through an independent style rather than through a single brand. They now have the confidence to be experimental and bold enough to mix high-street with luxury fashion in one outfit; something that would have been considered taboo in the past. Luxury brands now are expected to understand consumers needs in advance and satisfy them. (Okonkwo, 2007)

According to the Financial Times, Millennials are “the world's most powerful consumers”. In 2017, Gucci’s sales grew by 44.6% over the previous year nearly 50% of Gucci’s total sales is generated by Millennials (Primo, 2018). Millennials have grown up in an era where technology has evolved immensly, they have experienced the use of internet almost throughout their whole lives. Their consumptions, social patterns and values are therefore significally contrasting to those from elder generations. Baby-Boomers and Generation X value traditional store buying and prefer personal contact (Deloitte, 2017) . Millennials are the largest potential luxury market and will replace the Baby Boomer market starting around 2018 and will present 45% of the global personal luxury market by 2025 (Baron, 2015, Kerviler & Rodriguez, 2019) . It can be concluded that the Millennials are increasing their spending on luxury products more than any other age group (Baron, 2015) . Delivering a superior customer experience is no longer just an option, but an expectation for many luxury brands and it seems that through the street style trend, they have become relatable to the younger generations.

Today, many marketers in the luxury domain respond to the desire for brand experience by allowing customers to enter the brand’s universe through storytelling, emotional stimulation and sensorial discoveries (Kerviler &amp; Rodriguez, 2019) . Luxury brands have been compelled to engage with consumers via social media using digital marketing and web listening data analytics to gain insight into customer behaviour (Fin 24, 2018). This strategy has been key for the growth of luxury companies as this has been the way to connect with Generation Z and Millennials.
According to a Deloitte survey, Millennials do not buy luxury products because of their the traditional selling points such as: high quality craftsmanship and exclusivity. Millennials are less interested than previous generations in outward displays of status. Nowadays, luxury spending is more focussed on the self (Deloitte, 2018). That could be a reason for the success of street style trend within younger generaetions, because quality was not their motivaiton. Whereas the Baby Boomer generation feels ridicuuled with the street style offerings of luxury brands. In a study carried out by Zoe Zanon, participants were asked what their opinion was regarding fashion luxury brands incorporating mundane products into their collections and the Baby Boomers bluntly stated that designers were mocking the lower classes, selling products that had always been affordable to all at a much higher price to prove how they could do better them. These were the participants who had previously related luxury with the durability and authenticity (Zanon, 2018).

Luxury brands have had to understand who their customers are, where to find them and key factors that drive their behaviour. As previously stated, the luxury market continues to grow and research like Bain&Company’s study shows that from the 5% growth of the luxury market in 2017, 85% of it was fueled by Generations Y and Z which could be why now have had to target them and in this case what is “in” right now is street style. There has had to be a complete change of strategy as a result of this relatively new reality of young people investing huge amounts in luxury products.
Luxury has not just opened its doors to young Western Europeans and Americans, there has also been a constant and very steep growth in terms of the Asian market specifically the young chinese generations. Brands including Kering’s Gucci to Britain’s Burberry and French luxury handbag maker Hermes all reported resilient appetite from Chinese shoppers in the second quarter even as escalating China-US trade tensions cast a pall over the broader economy. Increasing spending by cash-rich Chinese millennials, largely unhindered by a crackdown on corruption and extravagant spending, is prompting brands to revamp some stores and open new ones in second- and third-tier cities where luxury spending is growing faster. (Master & Kwok, 2018)

The youngsters, who account for around 30 per cent of the sector’s China sales, are a demographic less sensitive to wider economic factors, executives said. Now Millennials from this middle and middle upper class are absolutely not hesitant to buy luxury brands. The post-90s generation is definitely a young generation that spends money on luxury said Shanghai-based Mr Daniel Zipser, senior partner at McKinsey & Co.

These Generation Z and Millenial consumers today are typically teenagers and people in their early 20s, born after the mid-1980s and raised in a period of relative abundance. Born at the beginning of a new era of economic reform and of China’s opening up to the world. They are confident, independent minded, and determined to display that independence through their consumption. McKinsey research has shown that this generation of Chinese consumers is the most Westernized to date. Prone to regard expensive products as intrinsically better than less expensive ones, they are happy to try new things (Barton, Chen & Jin, 2013). Millennial wealth is projected to more than double between 2015 and 2020 to somewhere between $19 trillion and $24 trillion (Deloitte, 2015). To put this into perspective, US GDP is projected to be only $22 trillion at that date and the eurozone economy $13 trillion. Chinese millennials are clearly a force to be reckoned with.

Not only are they spending on luxury, they are the biggest consumers of streetwear fashion. These younger Chinese generations account for 48 per cent of the streetwear market share in China, and often spend as much as between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of their disposable income on streetwear brands. Todd Hessert, the founder of Globe Fashion Runway reasoned that the boom in interest comes from the influence of reality variety shows in China. Shows like The Rap of China, Street Dance of China, Hot Blood Dance Crew, and Running Men have pushed street fashion from the underground into the mass market. According to the latest report from OFashion and Nielsen, from 2015 to 2017, the growth of streetwear consumption in China was 3.7 times higher than others, reaching 62 per cent year on year (Zheng, 2018).
The need/want to be a part of this trend has also been seen in fashion houses that are already settled in the luxury fashion market, not only in the new luxury brands that are appearing e.g. Off-White. A big part of the identity of urban brands is their collaboration with other brands, mostly sportswear or even work wear. For example, in 1999, then-emergent New York label Supreme wanted to make some sneakers. They didn’t have the resources to make their own, so they approached someone who did: skate brand DC Shoes. They were sold in Supreme’s Lafayette Street store—back then there were no endless queues round the block, no incessant online coverage—. This is something that had not been seen in luxury fashion since a lack of resources is not their usual issue. However with the development of the street style trend, brands want to jump on the bandwagon and have adapted to keep up to speed. Luxury brands are stretching the limits of their old-world heritage with ultra-hip, but potentially far more ephemeral labels.

Looking back the first and most famous fashion collaboration in history was the Salvador Dalí and Elsa Schiaparelli’s Lobster Dress. This marked the initial collision between fine art and high fashion. It was a cultural affair that has long since produced equally iconic garments. These 20th-century high-end collaboration breakthroughs were mostly designed to appeal to the top 1% of the population. Made with the belief that knowledge and passion of one area would inevitably suppose appreciation and purchase, of the other. Perhaps this sense of pre-millennium class exclusivity explains the failure of the Halston x JcPenny collaboration of 1983, which, 30 years ahead of its time, suggested that the distinct lines between high end and high street were not ready to be blurred. Marc Jacobs famously stated that the collaboration was “very bad for [Halston’s] couture business.” Comparatively, three decades on, Swedish high street powerhouse H&M, has now racked up 17 designer collaborations including Marni, Karl Lagerfeld, Isabel Marant, Kenzo and most recently Erdem. It seems like collaborations are now, very good for business. Therefore partnerships are merely a clever marketing ploy, simultaneously making fashion more accessible and more exclusive. (Merkenschlager, 2018)

With the wave of designers raised on rap music, the fashion industry has begun to mirror Hip Hop’s time-honoured approach to creativity. (Gordon, 2017). One of the first collaborations to happen within the luxury market back in 2017 was Louis Vuitton x Supreme, which sold out at eight dedicated pop-up stores around the world and rocketed in resale value on platforms such as eBay, you can currently buy a red keepall for just under £14,000, almost six times the original retail price. Prior to that, there had also been collaborations such as H&M’s collaborations, which have diminished over the years, according to media impressions. Then it was the blue-chip designers who were in popular demand. Now it’s the cheap-but-cool streetwear and sportswear labels that really matter and the luxury brands are the ones eager to get in on the action. (Ahmed, 2018). Although the post-millennium attitude has grown to be accustomed to expansion, fast-fashion and fast-living, the exclusiveness lies in the limited edition aspect as well as the tight time frame made available to buy them. Often the desirability of a piece consists in the complication of getting it, especially in the streetwear market.

More heritage brands are turning to streetwear brands to create a cooler image and have reflected that ethos in their talent strategies. The origin of this type of self-disruption are traced back to the flurry of collaborations between high fashion and streetwear players in 2017, through which a new kind of experimentation became the norm. This tendency to collaborate and flex a brand’s identity has now reached critical mass, and we expect it to persist in the future. (McKinsey&Company, 2019)
Regardless of what target market these designer collaborations are directed towards, the crowd it has attracted has been the younger generations including Millennials and Gen Z. It can be stated that collaborations have had a huge influence in the link of luxury brands and street style, bringing awareness of these to the younger generations and it seems that luxury is heavily dependent on collaborations and it is not afraid to show it anymore. For many maisons, the current period marks the end of the black box model, in which the creative process was sacred and maintained hidden in house.
Street style fans waiting for a clothing drop
This brief chapter explores the dilemma that comes up of whether what could be considered as non-exclusive aesthetics of street style are still considered luxury or not. If streetstyle is a parallel trend to high end fashion or if it has become part of it. Some scholars underestimate the power of the mundane in fashion as they believe luxury brands are those associated with uniqueness and exclusivity (Aaker, 1991; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). However, this could also be put into question as uniqueness is described as quality of being the only one of its kind (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019) meaning that a product has to be a unique visual design there are other forms of making it ‘unique and exclusive’. For instance, Rubchinskiy talking to BoF about his first collection presented in 2008 mentions he started from making T-shirts –very cheap– and he bought Fruit of the Loom sweatshirts and put embroidery on top. A friend of his helped to fund the first collection, and they made some shirts and denim jackets yet it was still sold at a premium price. As claimed by Charlie Porter (British fashion journalist) luxury in fashion today is a combination of creative thought, manipulation of the material and understanding of the consumer (Charlie Porter, 2018). Fashion houses are escaping from the old elitism and they are creating products that can be aesthetically pleasing to other types of consumers, not only those who are affluent.

The changes in the luxury fashion industry including all the collaborations and the street style trend are part of what is determining luxury brands to create such mundane products yet still selling them at an exclusive price. Although it could be argued that another factor is comfort. Kim Jones states “There is a shift in what people buy now; when you go into a luxury shop, the first thing you see is sneakers, jerseys, t-shirts. People look for comfort […] I go into every store and talk to people and I hear that comfort and style are two things that a man needs.” (System, 2018). Ever since the early days of subversive subcultural movements in the 1970s, young surfers and skaters have gravitated towards garments expressing individuality and comfort. There is an arising need for comfort and wish to be a part of this relaxed stressless-life group.

Where the upper classes used to mock tracksuits and sneakers, now hoards of private schoolgirls can be seen in Kappa tracksuits with the Air Max becoming the sneaker du jour. For a long time, clothing was used as a mirror to represent where you belonged socially. But now the lines are being blurred through the rise of street style. People are seeking authenticity and realness. The younger generations are unchaining themselves from the social and cultural constructions that have always dictated behaviours. For example this can be seen, both men and women now feel bold enough to wear trainers at work and they are no longer accused of looking “scruffy”. This reveals how much flexibility has impacted the essence of work. Comfort translates to freedom.
The changes affecting luxury fashion with the growth of the street style trend that have been explained meant that the traditional *Trickle-down Theory* has been challenged. This is the actual basic model in most accounts of the development of fashion, but this theory has become steadily less tenable as fashion has continued to develop (Svendsen, 2006). The tendency to lean towards urban lifestyles is what has defied this theory which is why it is explained.

A brief explanation of the theory is trickle down theory is a hierarchical process through which individuals with high status establish fashion trends, to then be imitated by lower-status individuals wearing cheaper versions of the styles. The early foundations of this theory can be found in Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, where he states; It is from our disposition to admire, and consequently imitate the rich and the great, they are enabled to set or to lead what is called fashion. (Smith, 1759). However, where the theory explains that there was an attempt to outdo others who belong to the same social class and attempt to gain the same level as the class above –in other words, differentiation inwards towards own class, imitation of the class above– Blumer argued that the explanation actually lies in collective and changing taste that the fashion conscious wish to keep abreast of or preferably anticipate. The elite is constituted by the actual fashion process itself. Those who manage to exploit that development faster than others thereby create their own status by keeping abreast of their time (Svendsen, 2006).
So the following question comes up; do new looks actually begin life within high fashion and trickle down for mass consumption? Mass market fashion takes lead from exclusive designers however the creations that are seen on those exclusive catwalks do not necessarily come from the minds of the top designers. First there is a genuine street style innovation which may be featured on a video and streetkids pick up on the style. Finally a ritzy version of the original idea makes an appearance in a top designer’s collection. Instead of trickle-down, bubble up. Instead of the bottom end of the market emulating the top, it is precisely the reverse. (Polhemus, 1994). Qureshi reinforces this in her article where she explains that fashion houses, artist and designers have repeatedly taken inspiration from the everyday throughout history (Qureshi 2018). Valerie Steele (2010) suggests inspiration can also come from the street and trends can be adopted from lower income groups, therefore, elevating ordinary emblems of mass consumerism into the elitist world of fashion, can be considered luxury. Dan Herman (2006) stated in his Ph.D. article, “The Eternal Principles for Creating Luxury Brands,” luxury goods in the most traditional sense “are not designed and planned according to consumer tastes and expectations.” Instead, he noted, “A luxury brand sets its own standards and does not adhere to fashions.” however it is no longer the case.

In this specific case, street style as the name gives away, has come from the streets. There is no way of pin pointing the exact moment or place of this trends rudiment however as spoken about in the Behind the Trend chapter, hip-hop and skate culture was one of the main drivers for the trend to become popular to the mass. These cultures were not related to wealth, in fact, the reputation of this music genre was mostly crime related however through the individuality and authenticity of the style, skate brands have managed to become an indirect competitor to luxury brands.
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH
The secondary data collected from articles, publications, books, databases, reports and studies from other researchers, is used to outline the literature overview. In this chapter, to finalise the research and support these previous findings to be able to gain more insight on how luxury fashion and its consumer have evolved, the empirical research that has been conducted will be analysed and conclusions will be made, the results include quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative researchs in term of an online survey and qualitative data in term of in-depth interviews. Both of these are useful to gain insights on how sharing luxury is perceived from a consumer perspective and how consumers feel towards it.
A survey was taken out and completed by a total of 102 participants. 70% female and 30% male, 76% between the ages of 18-24, 17% between the ages of 25-34 and the rest were either under 18 or above 35. The purpose of the survey was to collect numeric data that represented the consumer behaviour in luxury fashion of younger generations, although it also included data from older generations. The survey mainly focused on asking participants whether they would purchase specific luxury products related to street style, if they already purchased these or how much they would be willing to spend on purchasing them. This was based on the previous research for the literature review. It was found that there have been critical changes in the luxury fashion industry and one specifically is the new consumers that have entered the market, Millennials and Generation Z. This primary research was conducted in order to ascertain whether these generations are actually investing in luxury or not and if the reason their interest has grown is the street style macro trend. Three questions specifically focused on collaboration products to put to test the literature research about collaborations. The results obtained from this survey are purely numerical, however assumptions have been made from these outcomes.

The third question of the survey asked what the income was of each participant; 40% of the participants had an income that varied from €0–€500 per month from these 42 participants, when asked in question 10 how much of their income they would be willing to spend on luxury products which were non-exclusive for instance a hoodie, 12 of them said half of it, 18 of them said up to 1/3, and surprisingly 6 participants said they would spend all their income (also interesting to mention that they were the only 6 of all the 102 participants that said they would spend all their income) and finally 6 said none. Taking into consideration how little their income is, 86% of the 42 participants stating they are willing to spend at least 1/3 of their income on a mundane luxury product is an considerably significant amount. Summarizing the results of this question, those participants that earned the least were the ones that were willing to spend the most on luxury items that are related to street style. This give rise to the possibility of a study that further investigates the reasoning behind the behaviour of Millennials and Generation Z with low income towards mundane luxury fashion.
In question 4, participants were asked if they were loyal to any specific luxury brand(s)? (by purchasing items of the brand(s)). 82% of the participants said no. There was a contrast with the next question which then asked if they were loyal to any specific luxury brand(s)? (following and updating on what the brands are up to) and the amount of participants that said no went down to 58% which suggests that 24% of the participants did not purchase luxury items because their budget did not allow them to. This finding suggests that a big reason for these participants not purchasing luxury products is their financial situation. When asked to explicitly mention the brands that they had interest in, Balenciaga, Dior and Gucci were the most popular. These three brands specifically are pioneers within the street style trend which could make space to hypothesise that there is an interest in luxury because of the merge of the urban trend and luxury.

Question 8 asked if they were aware of the street style trend and 76.5% stated they were, making it quite clear that this trend is acknowledged by the wider public. The following question asked if they were willing to spend above €100 on a t-shirt if it was from a luxury brand and almost 30% indicated that this would be a possibility for them. 18 of the participants that said yes to this question were the ones who previously said their income was €0-€500 per month. As previously mentioned, it seems those that have the least income are the most willing to spend on luxury. Although it does have to be mentioned that this could be an extraneous variable, where their answers cannot be compared to those who had a higher income as their conditions are unlikely to be the same; since these participants are the ones that possibly live at their parent’s house and don’t have any other fixed costs.

The participants were then asked for their opinion on what happens to the value of a luxury brand when selling mundane products at an exclusive price (on a scale of 0-10). 0 being the value is immensely lowered, 5 being no change and 10 being value hugely increases. The results can be seen on the table below. 24 people (23.5% of the participants) chose 7 which suggests that the majority thought that the perceived value of luxury brands slightly increased when selling mundane products which are directly related to the street style trend.
Questions 12, 13 and 14 concerned the collections that came out through the collaborations between traditional luxury brands and urban brands. The following questions were asked; Have you gained interest in luxury brands when they have collaborated with urban brands? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme; Have you purchased any collaboration products? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme; Would you purchase any collaboration products if your budget allowed it? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme. 35.3% youngsters have started to be more interested in luxury fashion because of their collaborations and although this interest did not lead to direct purchase, it did create an awareness that was not so strong prior to the collaboration. Another interesting finding was that almost 1/4 of the participants had purchased collaboration products, a significant amount taking into consideration that all participants that said yes to this question are between the ages 18-24 (18 female and 6 male), the percentage more than doubled, to 52.9%, when asked if they would purchase collaboration products if they could afford it. Which links back to the results of questions 4 and 5 where participants did have an interest in luxury products however they did not own them. Reinforcing the idea that the reason for participants not owning luxury products is solely because of their financial situation. Also, in reference to question 8 where the participants were asked if they would purchase a T-Shirt for over €100 from a luxury brand with no kind of collaboration, 71% said no. This puts into perspective how collaborations have increased the interest in luxury where people are much more willing to invest in luxury when the product they are purchasing is from an exclusive collaboration rather than just a simple garment from a luxury brand.
Have you gained interest in luxury brands when they have collaborated with urban brands? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme
102 responses

Have you purchased any collaboration products? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme
102 responses

Would you purchase any collaboration products if your budget allowed it? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme
102 responses
Finally, participants were asked if they believed we have entered a new era in luxury fashion with the growth of street style within the industry. 70.6% believed we had and the rest did not know, it is important to highlight that not one participant said no. It should also be noted that 25% of the 30% that said I don’t know were those who did not know about the street style trend. This immediately brings the conclusion that these participants are possibly not informed or simply not interested about the news within the fashion industry. There is space for biases as most of the youngsters that filled in the survey are involved with this new trend and represent part of the crowd that is in this so called culture.

Overall, the findings demonstrate the centrality of price in influencing Millennials intentions towards luxury goods. Suggesting that Millennials are driven by financial motives: if the budget was available, the willingness to purchase luxury increases. However, little income does not result in not purchasing luxury goods, there is still a disposition to invest all or part of people’s earnings on mundane luxury fashion. The emergence of collaborations between high end brands and urban brands has increased the awareness and interest towards luxury products platforms by a significant amount. Supporting Mckinsey&Company’s findings, previously mentioned in the literature review, where it is stated that the tendency to collaborate and flex a brand’s identity has reached critical mass, and it is expected to persist in the future. (Mckinsey&Company, 2019). With these results, it can be concluded that the interest that has arisen for luxury by Millennials is partly driven by street style entering the high end market.
The interviews carried out consisted of 7 questions which were the same for all five participants. The five participants were carefully selected through purposive sampling based on the following demographics: age, gender, nationality, cultural background, education, income and their relationship with luxury. Since the focus of the research is on the new consumers in the luxury fashion market, the five participants from the ages 18-24 included two females (Western European) and three males (Western European and one Chinese) with a high interest in fashion and street style.

The questions were strategically devised to gather thoughts on the street style trend from Millennials. Specifically, how involved they are with the subject, the future of it and whether they believe there has been an actual industry changing development in luxury. The literature review solely focuses on the new customers in luxury fashion and the changes that high end fashion has faced, therefore the primary research was conducted centering on the same basis.

To analyse the results of the in-depth interviews a coding method is used where the words that were repeatedly mentioned by interviewees as individuals have been selected. A “+” will be used for those words that are interpreted as positive towards the trend and luxury brands and in contrast a “-” will be used when the words are interpreted as negative. For those words that are seen as neutral a “0” will be used.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Codes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What do you know about street style?</td>
<td>A: Urban (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Individuality (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Daring (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you know about the link it has with luxury?</td>
<td>A: Gap in the market (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Collaboration (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Changing direction (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D: Expensive urban clothes (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you feel involved? If so, how and when did you get involved?</td>
<td>A: Own style (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Expression (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Influencers (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Where do you think this trend is going? (do you still consider it a</td>
<td>A: Trend is here to stay (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fashion fad or has it become an established trend?)</td>
<td>B: Evolve/Reinvent (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Not unique (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D: Mass market (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you think the trend began because of comfort or did it have to do</td>
<td>A: Comfort is a plus (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the actual style?</td>
<td>B: Individuality is key (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Looking good (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In your opinion, how have the collaborations affected the perceived</td>
<td>A: Increased value (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>value of luxury?</td>
<td>B: Growth (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: Brand values (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D: Young generations (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is luxury fashion entering a new era?</td>
<td>A: New unthought styles (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Relatable to everyone (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C: New consumer (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D: Changes (+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the first question, all interviewees mentioned that they had a connection of some sort to street style and knew about the trend, which was the reasoning behind the choice of interviewees. Individuality is a key part of the trend so each of them having their own take and involvement in it shows how diverse it can be. The trend began as an underground code and has developed to become a world wide trend.

To the interviewees, it seemed that luxury brands had seen a gap in the market and took their chance with street style when asked about the link the trend had with street style:

The thing is, luxury brands have seen a gap in the market, well, had seen and they saw an opportunity to come together with urban brands, make a simple garment like a t-shirt and then sell it for however much money they want.

Luxury has become street style and street style has become luxury [...] They both have merged and become one [...] It kind of works both ways. Luxury saw the gap in the market and went in the direction of street style, and those who follow the trend and went for luxury.

It should be mentioned that the first connection that the interviewees made when linking luxury to street style was the collaborations. The gap in the market that they mentioned was explained by stating that the reaction of high end brands to finding this gap has been to join urban brands by producing collections in collaboration with them.

When asked how involved they were, they all said that they did feel connected to the trend in some way and they each mentioned people that inspired them to have their own style. The icons they looked up to do not have a lot to do with each other which shows that the trend affects people from all kinds of backgrounds. From Blanca Miró, an fashion instagrammer to Kanye West or Sweedish street style influencers.

There was also a joint belief that the trend is established, that it has entered the industry and is here to stay. However, it was also mentioned that the trend would evolve, which is to be expected since everything, specially in the fashion industry, reinvets itself over time.

I think this will stay but not in the same way that we’ve seen it up to now, it will always evolve and change. [...] I think the trend will always stay but the looks that are associated with street will evolve. But then again if it evolves and changes I don’t know if it would still be considered part of this trend that is happening now.

Luxury brands are always going to be on top of their game, now that they know how to reach a younger audience and have grown immensely because of the direction they have decided to go in, they are going to keep doing that. Influencers are a huge part of fashion right now, they are the ones that connect luxury fashion to younger consumers and so many of these are into street style, so I don’t think they are going to give that up.
Question five concerned the importance comfort has had towards the growth in popularity of the trend. This links back to Kim Jones statement about entering luxury shops and seeing mundane products such as sneakers, jerseys and t-shirts, that are related to comfort (System, 2018) Manu mentioned when asked if fashion was entering a new era, that

 [...] expectations have changed. Everything women & men were expected to be has all changed. For example that trend a few years ago of women wearing sweats and heels and being dressed “elegantly”. Now you can wear a suit and sneakers and it will also be formal. What is seen as formal has also changed in my opinion. It’s now possible to combine comfort and elegance, that wasn’t really acceptable before.

However, although a big part of street style is comfort, not just in regards to mobility in your clothes but also feeling good in your own skin, it does not seem that this factor is the driving force of the trend.

Value and the way in which luxury brands are perceived was thought to have increased. All interviewees were certain of it and mentioned that the direction that luxury brands had gone in had benefited them hugely, which is just slightly dissimilar to the results of the survey which showed that the value increased only slightly. However this increase in value was focused on the opinion of younger generations. The interviewees mentioned that by collaborating with urban brands, luxury was becoming appealing to Millenials. Amaia believed that the value had not increased for those who support traditional luxury.

The brands that they collaborate with are usually brands that are connected to the youth a whole lot more than luxury brands alone so in that way they can reach the younger generation.

They’ve brought a whole new generation into the market and I doubt that they will want to go back on this. Although as I mentioned in a previous question, I don’t know how the older generations will have felt with all of this going on, I can’t imagine that they are into it.

Finally, when asked about luxury entering a new era, all interviewees communicated their thoughts of luxury fashion having already entered a new period. What was previously seen as luxury was left behind and a new perspective and vision of luxury had appeared. The biggest acknowledgment was the fact that luxury is now relatable and achievable to younger generations. This declaration was seen throught all interviews. Also, most explanations included a reference to collaborations and their link to street style.

Everything has changed, designs have changed, expectations have changed. [...] I hope it carries on like this, many more people are expressing themselves through the way they dress in comparison to 10 years ago, it’s not just the fashionistas anymore.

 [...] Luxury took social media and music to their advantage to get kids interested. In a way, the classic luxury fashion houses are all trying to connect with “regular” people by relating to them for example with work wear becoming the new look of street style. Although I still think that those at the top of the pyramid, the trend setters and the original street style tribe do not want to be related to the mainstream take on the street culture.
CONCLUSION
The purpose of this final chapter is to answer the main research question that was formulated in the introduction: How Has Luxury Fashion and its Consumer Evolved Through the Emergence and Growth of the Street Style Trend?

However, before bringing together all the findings and completing an epilogue, let us first recapitulate what initiated this research. Traditional luxury has had to make place for a new consumer which was sneaking its way into high-end fashion. The industry has seen changes in many aspects, from aesthetic of the product offer to how business functions on the inside. The changes have been to such a degree that even those who have little interest in the fashion industry have acknowledged them. Therefore I found it necessary to find out what these changes were exactly and the reasons behind them.

By researching what luxury fashion had been up until recent years, it was concluded that it used to be a straightforward arms race of craftsmanship. Dubois et al (2005), found the original definition of luxury is described in six different facets, which classify a luxurious product from a consumer prospect. The six facets of luxury encompass: ‘excellent quality, premium price, scarcity and uniqueness, aesthetics, ancestral heritage and superfluousness’ (Dubois et al., 2005). In regards to luxury consumers, their interest in luxury products had both personal and social benefits and involved aspects such as pleasure, social acceptance, self-esteem, differentiation, prestige and high status (Berhaus et al., 2014). High status is a key factor as those who purchased luxury were directly related to the upper classes.

The investigation into the origin of street style and its development throught the past 20 years and its tremendous growth in popularity within the last 4 years can be concluded by street style starting as an urban culture born through a mix of hip-hop, skate and underground culture, it has now grown from a subcultural movement into a powerful asset within the fashion industry. Because the term is so complex and has evolved so much it has become increasingly difficult to define it. What was found was that the definition varies per individual, depending on the time and place they became familiar with it. However what was found as a common description was street style represents a certain mentality and most definitely, individuality.

Four main factors have been found as the driving forces of the evolution in luxury fashion. These factors are intertwined with each other where one has affected another however the order in which these have influenced each other is almost impossible to establish. The factors are the following:

- New consumers entering the luxury industry
- Collaborations
- New perception of luxury
- Refreshed creative direction at luxury fashion houses

In reference to the new consumers that have entered the luxury market, specifically regarding millennials, they are the world’s biggest generation, and their global spending power will soon be greater than any other generation, according to forecasts by World Data Lab. One thing that has become clear, looking at the outcome of this research, is that Generation Z and Millennials are trying to stand out from the mass instead of fitting in. In this context, the research has shown that they have tried to express themselves and their individuality through purchasing and showing their luxury products as they were thought to be exclusive, which has actually led to luxury coming a little closer to mass rather than to niche.

Collaborations have played a huge roll in the massification of luxury products. As Agnew very rightly mentions, some think that collaborations between high-end and high-street fashion are just an attempt for luxury brands to engage with Generation Z through social media, storytelling and street style (Agnew, 2017) and if that was their objective then they have certainly reached it. The drops of luxury brands with street style brands had the quickest “sold outs” in the history of luxury fashion.
The new perception of luxury has meant that millennial luxury shoppers feel equally validated wearing a limited edition Supreme Sweatshirt (€120) as when carrying a Chanel Classic Flap bag (€4500) (Milnes, 2018). Street style brands such as Off-White are now presented in the same section as some of the established luxury houses in department stores. These brands have been able to be increasingly perceived as luxury brands. This has also meant that luxury has become normalised. Now, it makes no difference if you come from a high-class family when investing your income in luxury whereas before it was not really an option.

Luxury brands have to be aware of their consumer’s characteristics and consequently adjust their business model, products and communication in a way to address those needs. Luxury brands have had to shift their focus on their content offering, their customers novelty and a new and fresh concept of their brand in order to gratify their new target group. This can be seen by them bringing new young creatives—with no formal fashion education and have had to find their way in—with fresh ideas and styles, like Virgil Abloh or Demna Gvasalia. New sales strategy have been implemented such as Burberry’s monthly product drops that are available for just 24 hours and sold exclusively through the brand’s social media platforms, immitating those of urban brands and seem to be working as every drop manages to sell out.

As is said by one interviewee for the primary research of the report, luxury has become street style and street style has become luxury and with these four factors taken into account, it can be concluded that luxury fashion brands have benefited from the street style trend as the demand has incremented. Their new product offering of mundane products being sold at an exclusive price has allowed the brands to have huge markups and resulting in incredible revenues such as Balenciaga setting to break €1 billion in revenue this year for the first time ever.

Although this trend is relatively new meaning that the developments are fairly recent, it is clear that youth culture is gaining a huge driving power and is likely to continue to influence and shape the future of luxury fashion. Thus, the outcome of this research allows luxury brands to re‐define their market strategies, incorporating the deeper understanding of how Generation Z and Millenials have developed a different understanding of luxury products therefore require different creatinons than the traditional luxury consumer did however it must also be taken into account that the research fixates uniquely on younger consumers, overlooking the loyal consumers of luxury fashion that identify with classic luxury or Haute Couture.
Jess Alexander (street style influencer) | street style
HYPEBEAST for Behind the Trend - Founded in 2005, the popular online magazine HYPEBEAST, with 5.5 million followers, presented insight into the so-called hypebeast lifestyle and aesthetic.
KYRA TV for Behind the Trend – This has created new networks such as Kyra TV—a Gen-Z entertainment network—who take advantage and make use of existing platforms like Youtube to create content that explores popular culture from all angles through the lens of fashion.
Gvasalia works at Balenciaga and Vetements for Present Situation - Gvasalia’s career is not only limited to Vetements, he is now the creative director at Balenciaga and already made shocking changes at the fashion house. For example, the Balenciaga extra–large Tote bag (€1,695) that had been openly inspired by the Ikea Frakta bag (€0,60) or the Vetements partnership with DHL selling DHL polo shirts for $730.
What is your gender?
102 responses

- Female: 70.6%
- Male: 29.4%
- Prefer not to say: 0%

What is your age?
102 responses

- Under 18: 17.6%
- 18-24: 17.6%
- 25-34: 41.2%
- 35-44: 17.6%
- 45-54: 23.5%
- 55-64: 17.6%
- 65+: 0%

What is your monthly income?
102 responses

- €0-€500: 17.6%
- €500-€1000: 41.2%
- €1000-€1500: 17.6%
- €1500-€2000: 17.6%
- +€2000: 23.5%

Are you loyal to any specific luxury brand(s)? (by purchasing items of the brand(s)) If so, what brand(s) - type in the box that says other
102 responses

- Yes: 82.4%
- No: 17.6%
- APC: 0%
- Saint Laurent: 0%
How do you afford luxury goods?

- I use money from my part time job to purchase luxury brand products: 11.8%
- I use money from my full time job to purchase luxury brand products: 23.5%
- My parents give me money to purchase luxury brand products: 47.1%
- I use my student loan to purchase luxury brand products: 5.9%
- I don’t buy luxury goods: 5.9%

What are your reasons for purchasing luxury products (check as many boxes as necessary)

- To fit in with friends: 17.6%
- To follow trends: 17.6%
- Better design and aesthetic: 17.6%
- As gifts: 11.8%
- Exclusivity: 29.4%
- I don’t purchase luxury products: 47.1%
- To show off: 5.9%

Are you aware of the street style trend?

- Yes: 76.5%
- No: 23.5%

Would you spend +€100 on a t-shirt if it was from a luxury brand?

- Yes: 70.6%
- No: 29.4%
How much of your income do you find appropriate to spend on luxury brand products which are non-exclusive (e.g. hoodies)

102 responses

In your opinion, what happens to the value of a luxury brand when selling mundane products at an exclusive price?

102 responses

Have you gained interest in luxury brands when they have collaborated with urban brands? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme

102 responses

Have you purchased any collaboration products? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme

102 responses
Would you purchase any collaboration products if your budget allowed it? e.g. Louis Vuitton X Supreme

- Yes: 47.1%
- No: 52.9%

Do you believe we have entered a new era in luxury fashion with the growth of street style within the industry?

- Yes: 70.6%
- No: 25.4%
- I don't know: 4.1%
Manu

1. What do you know about street style?

Street style is an urban trend. From what I know/think it’s a style that you can define yourself as an individual, whether it’s informal or you make it formal. You mix trends. Originality and being different to the rest is key. I also believe if you want to be a part of it you have to be daring, to be able to dress in a way not caring what people think of you, you need to have courage.

2. What do you know about the link it has with luxury?

The first link that comes to mind is luxury fashion collaborating with urban brands. I feel like luxury brands are trying to make things that fit and can be targeted to all kinds of people not just the higher class older generations. The thing is, luxury brands have seen a gap in the market, well, had seen and they saw an opportunity to come together with urban brands, make a simple garment like a t-shirt and then sell it for however much money they want. These garments they make I would buy anyhow regardless of the price.

3. Do you feel involved? If so, how and when did you get involved?

I do feel involved and I know for a fact that I have become involved because of social media. I started collecting ideas, getting inspired and making up my own style through what I saw on these social media platforms, specifically Instagram. For example, my fashion icon who I have followed for as long as I can remember is Blanca Miró. It’s not even a problem that she is a girl and I’m a boy, her looks inspire me and make up a big part of my style today.

4. Where do you think this trend is going? (do you still consider it a fashion fad or has it become an established trend?)

I think that this trend is not going to fade. Luxury is no longer what it was, this so called trend has marked a before and after in the industry. Luxury in a way has become street and can be seen in so many places in your day to day, in a much more evident way than how you could see it 5-7 years ago.

5. Do you think the trend began because of comfort or did it have to do with the actual style?

It might have something to do with comfort but I don’t believe that is the driving force of the trend, not at all. In fact I see it as a bonus but not the impetus. Luxury used to be impossible for people like us. We don’t come from rich families that have always owned luxury products and could afford luxury effortlessly. Now, if you work and you want to invest all your earnings in luxury and have a lot less of what could be considered priorities, you can. It’s not out of reach anymore.

6. In your opinion, how have the collaborations affected the perceived value of luxury?

For me, the value has definitely increased. All you have to look at is the re-sale of all these exclusive collaborations. People are willing to pay triple, quadruple the original price just to own a simple fannypack. People are crazy for exclusivity, the less products that are make the more people want them. It’s to the brands advantage to do these collaborations, you just have to read the news, they are all growing immensely.

7. Is luxury fashion entering a new era?

Everything has changed, designs have changed, expectations have changed. Everything women & men were expected to be has all changed. For example that trend a few years ago of women wearing sweats and heels and being dressed “elegantly”. Now you can wear a suit and sneakers and it will also be formal. What is seen as formal has also changed in my opinion. It’s now possible to combine comfort and elegance, that wasn’t really acceptable before. It’s been a bit of a revolution in my eyes. I hope it carries on like this, many more people are expressing themselves through the way they dress in comparison to 10 years ago, it’s not just the fashionistas anymore.
Quincy

1. What do you know about street style?

For me street style is people's take on luxury fashion, well not only luxury but what is going on in fashion right now. It is people's individual take on what they see on the runway, what they see on the streets, what people are wearing. When I think of street style I think of urban trends. When you start seeing people wearing daring things, at one point everyone ends up wearing but it has started way before. For example dad shoes, they were seen as such an ugly piece a few years ago but now they are cool.

2. What do you know about the link it has with luxury?

I know that luxury brands are trying to target the younger audience that is into street style. You can see with the brands like Balenciaga, Gucci and Louis Vuitton. A couple of years ago when I thought about luxury brands I would think about older people with a high income and very high class, now brands are aiming at a younger, more street style based consumer. If I would see one of my friends in a Balenciaga t-shirt I wouldn't think anything of it but that its cool, I wouldn't be surprised whereas a few years ago it would have shocked me that they would have spent so much money on a t-shirt. I have completely normalised luxury because of street style. Also, because of Instagram and influencers, we see so many brands on a daily basis combined with high street or second hand clothing. I think clothing is being so hyped through social media, that's why young people are so into it because they are bombarded with it every single day. For some people, wearing luxury brands gives them a value and they show this on their profiles giving them confidence. Luxury brands are linking up with urban brands because they have seen the opportunity, with the biggest example being Louis Vuitton x Supreme although in my opinion that was still very unobtainable for it to have been really considered street style, if it had been what was originally street style it wouldn't have been so incredibly hard to get, that's not what street style is all about if you ask me.

3. Do you feel involved? If so, how and when did you get involved?

I love looking and researching about street style, unfortunately I don't have enough money to buy all the street style looks I wish for. I really like to follow trends, what is in style right now. I follow quite a few influencers. I'm specifically inspired by street style from Copenhagen. Swedish street style influencers are really on top of their game. I really enjoy looking at people who are dressed well even though it is not for my wallet. Because I like to see people expressing themselves, for me fashion is all about expressing yourself. The older I got and started to make my own money, the more I could choose what I invested in. I used to be really into highstreet brands such as Zara or H&M. For the past three years I would say I have preferred to invest in things that we're a little more expensive but that would last longer and were a little more sustainable, that's when I started being more interested in street style. By following influencers that have the same taste as I do I really got into the trend. Seeing how they expressed themselves made me want to express myself in a better way through how I dressed. Now with the whole climate change debate I wanted to make an effort in buying things that would last me longer I don't want to invest in fast fashion anymore as I've just said. I also work in a second hand store that focuses on higher end brands, I have been able to buy a lot more second hand quality clothes that defined me and in which I felt good in.

4. Where do you think this trend is going? (do you still consider it a fashion fad or has it become an established trend?)

I don't think the trend is going to disappear. Brands like Zara are always going to copy luxury brands. Luxury brands are always going to be on top of their game, now that they know how to reach a younger audience and have grown immensely because of the direction they have decided to go in, they are going to keep doing that. Influencers are a huge part of fashion right now, they are the ones that connect fashion to younger people and so many of these are into street style, so I don't think they are going to give that up. Although if the trend did go away, they would find a new way to reinvent themselves as they always do but I do think this has signified a change, definitely a before an after in luxury fashion.
5. Do you think the trend began because of comfort or did it have to do with the actual style?

I think comfort is a plus of the trend. If you want comfort why would you put such an effort in investing in luxury when you could just buy some sweats from H&M and forget about combining. For me it doesn’t really make sense. I think luxury brands know that people like to be more comfortable than they used to be and they play into that, but I don’t think that’s the reason why the trend got so popular, I don’t think that at all. But bringing out sneakers, hoodies and hats was a really good move from luxury brands to become more relatable to people who would think that wearing high fashion is too “dressy”. The comfort that comes with street style probably has brought people to be more interested in it.

6. In your opinion, how have the collaborations affected the perceived value of luxury?

I’m not a huge fan of the collaborations because usually the two brands stand for completely different things. I don’t think + + make + in this case. I would expect two brands to make something REALLY good together, but it has always been a little disappointing, they are trying to hard it seems. Having a nice sense of fashion is not about trying too hard it’s about being effortless and these collaborations make me cringe a little bit because all the hype beasts jump on it and that already a reason not to buy it for me. I also don’t think that only collaborations are what make up street style, it’s about many more things. However if a luxury brand collaborates with a chain for example JW Anderson x Uniqlo or a designer with H&M it makes it more relatable to everybody, instead of being so hard to obtain like the Dior x Kaos. I like it when luxury brands make it possible for people with normal budgets to buy products that are not overpriced.

7. Is luxury fashion entering a new era?

Yeah, 20 years ago Louis Vuitton making a hoodie would have been completely unthought and absolutely crazy. Now higher class in not the only aim. There’s a new target group and there is definitely no going back on that. I think, I see a lot of luxury brands that are trying to rebrand themselves by changing their logos and making them look less old and make it more trendy in order to relate to younger generations. It’s a bit of a shame because they are throwing their history out of the window, it’s all a bit bland and all the logos look the same. But indeed we are seeing things that have never been seen before and this is going to go down in the history of luxury fashion.
Justin

1. What do you know about street style?

I feel like I know a lot but that question could touch upon so many aspects. I know it that the trend has emerged in the last few years and has evolved hugely. Nowadays, it’s literally what you see on the streets, it can be anything, from luxury to urban. When the term started being used more often a few years ago, it kind of meant this one specific look; the track pants and hoodies look. I feel like that’s where it started, but now the mass market has appropriated the term and it has become very vague as it’s everyone’s individual look. I feel like the daring individuals who were interested in it at the very beginning don’t like to call it street style anymore. The term has become a little too mainstream.

2. What do you know about the link it has with luxury?

Luxury has become street style and street style has become luxury. Luxury has taken steps in a new direction. They both have merged and become one. I also think because the hoodie and track suit look has become so mainstream, people wanted to look for something fresh so they turned to luxury. So actually because of those terms merging, regular people have been welcomed into the “world” of luxury. It kind of works both ways. Luxury saw the gap in the market and went in the direction of street style, and those who follow the trend and went for luxury. Also, when I say merged, I include collaborations where they literally merged.

3. Do you feel involved? If so, how and when did you get involved?

Yes. I got involved a few years ago. It started with shoes. In the time that Yeezy’s became a thing, I started standing in line for hours on end with the intention of re-selling the shoes as I knew I could make a lot of money from it. I wanted to be different. Back then it was more of an exclusive thing. From the shoes I then got into clothing brands and whole outfits and for a while I was interested in big brands and logos. Now I’ve stepped back from that and street style has become more about looking for brands that not a lot of people know. Really digging into what a brand stands for. I wouldn’t call it street style anymore, I would just call it style.

4. Where do you think this trend is going? (Do you still consider it a fashion fad or has it become an established trend?)

I think this will stay but not in the same way that we’ve seen it up to now, it will always evolve and change. Specially for me and all my friends that got into this trend back with the shoes hype, I noticed that back then we were into the Yeezy’s and there was a craze but it wasn’t for the people that are at the bottom of the pyramid whereas now everyone wants to own a pair even those that aren’t really into the depth of the fashion industry. I think the trend will always stay but the looks that are associated with street will evolve. But then again if it evolves and changes I don’t know if it would still be considered part of this trend that is happening now. I do believe that this has become established though. Let me add to this, I do think the perception of the trend has changed. It’s not as unique anymore. The minority was a part of it. The small group that started that is shifting in the search for something new.

5. Do you think the trend began because of comfort or did it have to do with the actual style?

I think it has to do with the individuality. For me, of course clothes need to be comfortable. But if it doesn’t look good then I wouldn’t wear it. It would be a plus but I don’t think that the trend started with comfort, it was definitely other factors. I think the trend started with the hip-hop artists and celebrities started dressing in that way. Mainly rappers. Although it could be the case that these partly started wearing that out of comfort and people unconsciously copied that.
6. In your opinion, how have the collaborations affected the perceived value of luxury?

I think the younger generation values luxury more now and maybe for the old couture heads the value has gone down. Branding has become more important than the clothing itself. I think overall, luxury brands have gained a lot because of these collaborations and the value has gone up. The brands that they collaborate with are usually brands that are connected to the youth a lot more than luxury brands alone. So in that way, they can reach the younger generation. Fashion has become such a thing that kids don’t mind spending --if necessary-- all their income on these products. Before luxury was just for the upper class and that’s no longer the case. Now because it’s become mainstream basically, people don’t mind saving up to buy that one piece and even though the pricing of luxury products has stayed intact, sales have gone up. It’s like the luxury market has gone from niche to mass.

7. Is luxury fashion entering a new era?

Yeah, it has already entered. Although I’m noticing a bit of a shift away from it in the sense of logos slowly disappearing, you see that technical wear matters a lot more. The relaxed hoodie/sweats look is dying out in luxury brands. The logo mania could be coming to an end. Quality and fit is what matters. I would link the new interest to luxury from young consumers back to hip-hop which is now the popular music. The kids want to belong to that. If anything, I blame the shift of luxury fashion on music. Kanye West created the DONDA team with all young creatives who were part of the street-hip-hop culture and have become successful designers. These designers cared so much about fashion and they wanted to compete with the big labels, through reaching this new audience they managed to find their place in luxury. They became the middle man linking luxury to younger generations. The big labels saw that that was working so they took inspiration from that almost. Social media has also been such a big factor in luxury entering this new era. I feel like it all comes together. Luxury took social media and music to their advantage to get kids interested. In a way, the classic luxury fashion houses are all trying to connect with “regular” people by relating to them for example with work wear becoming the new look of street style. Although I still think that those at the top of the pyramid, the trend setters and the original street style tribe do not want to be related to the mainstream take on the street culture.
Jiawei

1. What do you know about street style?

Personally I think that street style was initially created by the famous influencers from Hip-Hop/underground culture and now it has spread. It’s a style which has not always sold at a premium price. It has become a fashion that young people are pursuing and are willing to spend their money on in order to make them feel special, individual and unique.

2. What do you know about the link it has with luxury?

In recent years more and more luxury brands have started to cooperate with urban brands. The first that comes to mind is Supreme X Louis Vuitton. These product sell at premium price just like any other luxury items with the difference that it might just be a simple t-shirt with a logo. Luxury brands have realised that this aesthetic is working so a lot of them have taken on the trend.

3. Do you feel involved? If so, how and when did you get involved?

Yes but not to the extent that I would like to. Personally I feel that it does not matter what brands I own as long as it looks nice however price is a bit of a problem because often the higher quality clothes that I like are priced highly and I am not at a point in my life where I am making my own money yet so I don’t feel it is right to ask my parents for these. In terms of being interested, I am very much involved in street style and it has been like this for the past year I would say. I’ve only just started to figure out who I am and what I like.

4. Where do you think this trend is going? (do you still consider it a fashion fad or has it become an established trend?)

I think that within luxury, the street style trend is a gap that hadn’t been filled and has only just started to be adopted. Young people want to stand out and be able to look different from others and they have done this by showing interest in luxury products. I also think some do this to show that they are of a high status just to feel better although this has always been the case. A certain type of person has always been interested in luxury just to prove themselves valid and now that street style is such a big thing it has been easier for these people to access luxury as it has become more relatable. So I guess the trend is established right now.

5. Do you think the trend began because of comfort or did it have to do with the actual style?

I actually think that there is no need to be comfortable when it comes to fashion but I guess it depends on each individuals although it is true that most street style based products tend to be comfortable. Luxury street style brand became very popular in a moment when people were starting to shift away from heels and uncomfortable clothing so it could be the case, but I wouldnt be able to say what came first; the comfort or the style.

6. In your opinion, how have the collaborations affected the perceived value of luxury?

I think that the collaborations between the street style brands and luxury brands have had a huge positive effect on the brand image of both luxury and urban brands. Especially in recent years more and more Chinese influencers and public figures have started to wear these collaborations in variety shows, tv programmes etc. This has made the brands more relatable to “normal” people, this has made people see as a regular thing to wear the urban X luxury brands leading young people stat buying items from LV, Fendi, Givenchy...
7. Is luxury fashion entering a new era?

As countries like China create more millionaires than ever before (potential consumers) people are seeking something to show their fortune, and no matter what kind of luxury it is; cars, watches or clothes they will buy it. The higher the price the more interest people are in buying it. Also in mega city like Beijing and Shanghai people are willing to get a loan from the banks in order to buy one luxury item which might cause their 3 month wages. (this is also why its almost never seen on the news; Chinese brand sued by LV, Gucci etc. because no matter how many fakes people buy they will end up buying a real product once they get their savings, just imagine the craze and hype for luxury that there is right now) The Chinese luxury market is so important, remember how last year Dolce & Gabbana had such a huge drop in their revenue because they lost their chinese market after some racist comments.
Amaia

1. What do you know about street style?

It's very trendy at the moment, in fact, it's not just trendy, it's huge. Everyone knows about it. If I had to explain what it was I would say it's a way of expressing yourself through the way you dress and the attitude that comes with that. Although everyone wears clothes it doesn't necessarily mean that everyones involved in street style. It's like there is a certain dress code which is more urban than regular clothes. I also think of it as expensive as is related to luxury and to expensive brands such as Gucci Balenciaga.

2. What do you know about the link it has with luxury?

As I said in the previous question, most products that are considered street style come from luxury brands although it wasn't always like that. I also feel like street style boomed and became an actual trend when luxury brands started designing + delivering products of this style and they did this because they saw that people started to be interested in it. They were actually quite intelligent because it's really worked out for these luxury brands. When they started collaborating with urban brands they went huge. I don't know about what the older generations who were always loyal to luxury must have felt or what their thoughts are though. I can't imagine they are very pleased.

3. Do you feel involved? If so, how and when did you get involved?

Kind of but not entirely because I don't have money to buy hypebeast type sneakers or luxury clothes from brands like Off-White however I have found my way into it and my own style through wearing street style clothing created by cheaper brands such as Nike, Adidas etc. I have always been very sporty and I've always worn these brands, although they've made leisure-wear, I do consider that with attitude and different combinations of clothes I've made myself look cooler than I used to. Also, those who can afford luxury items still combine their garments with high-street brands like Nike and Adidas. I'm really obsessed with following street style icons on Instagram too. Hailey Baldwin is the coolest, I love how she mixes both luxury and regular brands and she just makes it work.

4. Where do you think this trend is going? (do you still consider it a fashion fad or has it become an established trend?)

I think it is definitely established as a trend and it still has a long long way to go because this is probably just the beginning but I also think that at some point it will fade as all trends do. Maybe not entirely disappear it might evolve in some sort of way, I cannot say what it will turn into because I think no one knows at this point but it won't stay as it is right now. Also, you have to realise that there is always going to be an underground culture and they will be loyal to their aesthetic so in that sense they are going to keep those urban brands alive.

5. Do you think the trend began because of comfort or did it have to do with the actual style?

I do think that by making style out of comfort people became drawn to the trend. I mean, who doesn’t like to be comfortable? And if you can be comfortable and at the same time have people perceive you as being dressed up elegantly or trendily so to say it’s only a benefit. Also people have normalised luxury and this has meant that when you invest in a garment, you don’t have to just wear it for a special occasion, you can also make the most of it by wearing it on your day to day.
6. In your opinion, how have the collaborations affected the perceived value of luxury?

Both luxury brands and urban brands have benefited from this. Luxury brands couldn’t have found their spot in street style by themselves, without the help of urban brands and vice versa. They made luxury relatable and I think collaborations have become essential. If this hadn’t worked then collaborations wouldn’t keep appearing all the time. They’ve brought a whole new generation into the market and I doubt that they will want to go back on this. Although as I mentioned in a previous question, I don’t know how the older generations will have felt with all of this going on, I can’t imagine that they are into it. Overall I think the luxury brands have gained more than lost.

7. Is luxury fashion entering a new era?

Absolutely. All of the things that we have witnessed happening in luxury were absolutely out of reach in the past. Generation Z and Millennials are not suddenly going to lose interest in luxury fashion, specially not now when it’s so relatable to them. There have been so many changes and evolutions, this is what happens when something moves on and enters a new era. Maybe some people don’t want to accept it but it’s undeniable in my opinion.
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