

PAUSE

**THE NEW
BIG FOUR**
FASHION CAPITALS

**COSMETIC TOURISM:
THE NEW PASSPORT
TO REBIRTH**

FW2025
FALL - WINTER

**EAU DE
TRAVEL**

**GLOBAL
GLAM!**

PWE



Chanel Fall 2025 Couture

EDITOR'S LETTER

In a world where speed has become a virtue and visibility a necessity, perhaps the most glamorous act of all is to slow down. To choose stillness over spectacle. To reclaim the time to see, to feel, to truly live.

For this issue, Pave Magazine set out to rediscover what glamour means in our age of constant motion. Our journey took us from Garrya Mu Cang Chai a remote sanctuary in the misty highlands of Vietnam to the runways of New York, Paris, and Milan. In every destination, we found the same whisper of truth: authenticity is the new luxury. It is there, in the scent of rain over rice terraces, in the ease of "lazy fashion" where comfort becomes confidence, and in the patient artistry of hand embroidery where time itself is woven into beauty. These moments remind us that

glamour is no longer about excess; it's about essence.

And yet, the world is changing. AI design tools and digital craftsmanship are redefining creativity, making global beauty more connected, more inclusive than ever. As Thomas Friedman might say: The world is not only flatter it's smaller. Today, global glamour is not found in one capital or trend, but in the dialogue between tradition and innovation, between the human hand and the digital eye. It is a state of being quiet, confident, and endlessly curious.

Ethan Carter

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L I N D B E R G ^{🕶️}

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Every era has its storytellers voices that not only capture fashion but shape how we see it. PAVE is more than a magazine; it is a living conversation where culture, creativity; and commerce meet, showing how style is not only worn, but lived. At PAVE, fashion is never just about clothes. It is about the craft, the vision, and the moments that transform garments into identity. From ateliers of master artisans to the bold experiments of rising talents, we explore the forces that define how we dress, live, and connect. Our pages celebrate beauty in all its forms editorials that challenge convention, profiles that reveal hidden genius, and collaborations that transcend boundaries. More than trends, we curate ideas: narratives that inspire, empower, and leave a lasting mark on the culture of style.

True style does not follow the times. It defines them!

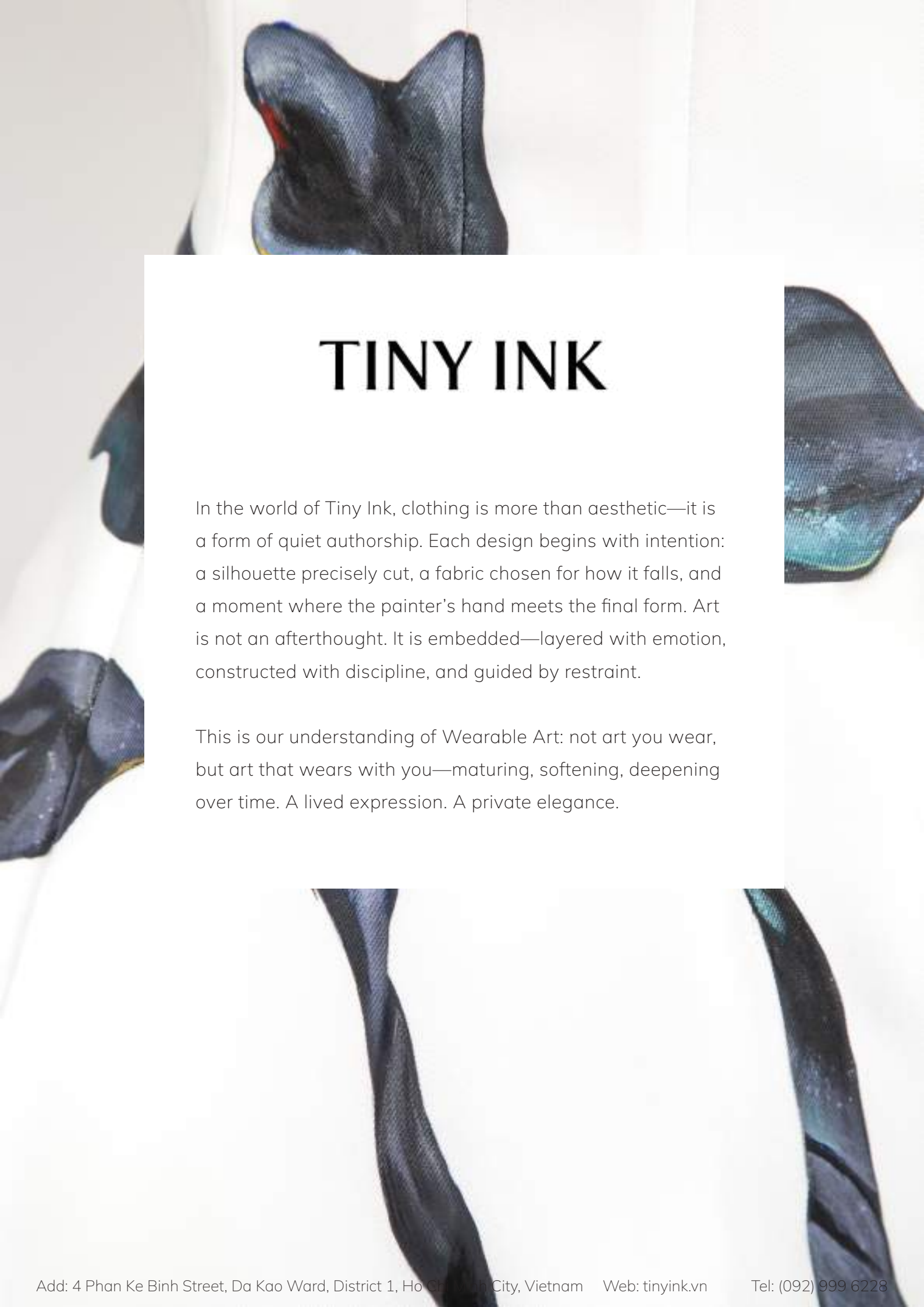


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In the world of Tiny Ink, clothing is more than aesthetic—it is a form of quiet authorship. Each design begins with intention: a silhouette precisely cut, a fabric chosen for how it falls, and a moment where the painter's hand meets the final form. Art is not an afterthought. It is embedded—layered with emotion, constructed with discipline, and guided by restraint.

This is our understanding of Wearable Art: not art you wear, but art that wears with you—maturing, softening, deepening over time. A lived expression. A private elegance.

FASHION

A woman with short dark hair is shown in profile, standing on a dark staircase. She is wearing a long, white, strapless, form-fitting gown with a full skirt and long black gloves. She is looking down and to the right. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

The Art of the Pause

Fashion is shifting into a slower rhythm — one that breathes, lingers, and finds beauty in restraint. What was once dismissed as “lazy fashion” now reads as quiet confidence: a movement defined not by excess, but by the elegance of holding back.

SUJATA GAZDER





The Trending Color Palette OF 2025 FALL - WINTER

Color was the season's fiercest critic — soothing, scolding, and seducing all at once. Designers used it not as a garnish but as a manifesto, painting FW25 with emotions as sharp as the tailoring itself. Steeped in the bold pulse of autumn, FW2025's color palette bursts with unapologetic energy.



Slime Green

Slime green was the season's rebel yell. Neither fully neon nor demure, it was the shot of adrenaline FW25 refused to live without. Balenciaga and Versace used it as shock therapy, splicing acidic highlights into otherwise muted palettes. Its presence sliced through the black and grey like graffiti on a pristine wall. This was fashion's refusal to retreat into the past. Slime green is not for the faint-hearted — thrilling on the runway, polarizing on the pavement — but that was its power. It was there to jolt us awake, to remind us that fashion is not a lullaby but a provocation.

Powder Pink

Powder pink ruled with a quiet authority, a soft murmur rather than a shout. It rebelled against the old idea that winter demands armour and austerity. Across houses, blush tones softened utilitarian shapes, turning coats and separates into gestures of tenderness. Designers clearly indulged a hunger for intimacy and nostalgia, a gentle antidote to the cultural chill. But beware: pink can turn saccharine when left unchecked. When paired with sharp tailoring or grounded by darker contrasts — a trick seen across Paris, powder pink became subversive, a whisper with a bite.

Mocha Brown

Brown grounded the season with a firm hand, a color that feels eternal, ritualistic, almost ceremonial. Mocha's reign was about texture over spectacle — velvet, cashmere, leather. Loewe explored supple browns in outerwear, while Bottega Veneta's plush knits gave the shade depth and tactility. It is the anti-neon, the sophisticated counterpoint. Its ubiquity signaled fashion's deeper flirtation with permanence and sustainability. But brown can easily slide into safe, dull territory. The clever designers injected sheen and shape — polished leathers, sculptural coats — keeping the weight without the slump.

Magenta Purple

The jewel of the season, magenta came cloaked in gothic drama, seductive yet solemn. Designers from Prada to Valentino embraced deep purples and magentas, proving they could be lush without tipping into costume. The message was clear: fashion wants drama, but not a circus. When handled with sculptural drape or clean architecture — as seen in Paris and Milan — magenta became poetry. Its allure lies in this tension: romance tinged with melancholy.

Tomato Red

Where magenta brooded, tomato red blazed. Brighter, warmer, and more grounded than crimson, it set FW25 alight with approachable passion. Seen across Paris in leather outerwear and knitwear alike, this was red without the grandstanding confident, fresh, and deeply wearable. Historically, red never really leaves fashion, but this season's choice of tomato hinted at a hunger for authenticity, a color that feels lived-in rather than theatrical. Clever restraint kept it from cliché, letting the color speak for itself.

Seasonal Reading

Together, these five hues made a balanced chorus: powder pink for tenderness, mocha brown for grounding, slime green for disruption, magenta purple for drama, and tomato red for raw energy. This was not mere decoration — it was a statement about where fashion stands now: craving comfort, daring to seduce, and refusing to abandon spectacle. FW25 proved once again that color is not background — it is the story itself.



WHY COUTURE *Feels More Alive Than Ever* **THIS SEASON**

Debutantes, farewells, and the quiet revolution of embroidery: The Fall/Winter 2025–2026 collections promise a Parisian winter steeped in storytelling—with echoes stretching from Riyadh to Los Angeles.

The haute couture calendar is rarely just about clothes. It's a barometer of change, a stage for creative rebirth, and—this season more than ever—a testament to fashion's enduring ability to spin magic from mere thread. As Paris prepares for Fall/Winter 2025–2026 couture week (July 7–11), anticipation crackles in the air. There are debuts (Glenn Martens at Maison Margiela), absences (Dior, Valentino), and swan songs (Demna's final Balenciaga collection). But beyond the headlines, something quieter yet more profound is unfolding: a return to craftsmanship so meticulous, it borders on alchemy.

The New Guard and the Missing Pieces

This season's calendar resembles a chessboard of strategic moves. At Maison Margiela, Glenn Martens—still juggling Diesel and his Y/Project legacy—will unveil his first couture collection on July 9. Known for



deconstructing norms, Martens' debut is poised to challenge the house's archival mystique with his irreverent vocabulary. Meanwhile, Balenciaga bids adieu to Demna on the same day, as he presents his fifth and final couture collection before departing for Gucci. Expect a retrospective infused with the Georgian designer's brutalist romance—perhaps even a whisper of Cristóbal's ghost in the seams. The conspicuous void is Dior. Jonathan Anderson, fresh off his men's debut, won't present couture until January 2026. Maria Grazia Chiuri's Resort 2026 offering—sprinkled with couture-esque gestures—will have to tide us over. Similarly, Valentino (now under Alessandro Michele) and Jean Paul Gaultier (with newly appointed Duran Lantink) are sitting out, opting to recalibrate. Yet in the silence, opportunities arise. Celine—not officially a couture house—will stage a “couture-adjacent” show on July 6 under Michael Rider,

its new creative director. Like Peter Copping at Lanvin last January, Rider's off-calendar gambit feels shrewd, a way to command attention before the circus begins.

Revolution: Threads of Paris, Beirut, and Riyadh

Amid the musical chairs of creative directors, the true heartbeat of this season lies in the ateliers, where embroidery has shed its supporting role to become the protagonist. No longer decorative, it is narrative. At Ashi Studio, the Saudi-born designer stitches memory into silhouette. Porcelain shards and antique fabrics are woven into coatdresses so intricate they seem excavated from a forgotten aristocrat's trunk.

Rahul Mishra, in Paris, elevates thread to metaphysics. His lotus motifs—thousands of hand-sewn variations—shift like living organisms beneath the light. Elie Saab conjures a Versailles of the mind, where beadwork nests like jewels in a crown and florals bloom across translucent tulle as if breathing. Robert Abi Nader, Beirut's couturier laureate, treats embroidery as a study in contrasts—rattan entwined with metallic threads, silk knotted with whispers of light.

Hollywood to Fifth Avenue: Couture's American Stage

If the Middle East sustains couture privately, America projects it publicly. The Oscars, the Met Gala, the Grammys—these are couture's unofficial extensions. A Schiaparelli bustier or Iris Van Herpen's biomechanical gown can reach more eyes on one Los Angeles red carpet than in a Paris salon. New York, too, offers its runway of discretion. On the Upper East Side, couture finds its clientele among collectors who treat gowns like canvases, commissioning pieces with the same fervor as one acquires a Basquiat. In Beverly Hills, stylists act as conduits, bridging Paris ateliers to Hollywood's elite.

Power of Stylists: The New Gatekeepers

Couture may be made in Paris, but it is seen through the eyes of stylists. Rachel Zoe, once crowned by Time magazine as one of the most successful stylists before launching her brand, transformed how Hollywood wore fashion. Today, Cedric

Haddad in Beirut or Carla DiBello in Dubai orchestrate red carpet moments for Gulf royals and global stars alike. These five-star stylists are the new arbiters of visibility—deciding which atelier takes the spotlight in Riyadh, Los Angeles, or Cannes. Their influence underlines a truth: couture today is not only about ateliers and clients, but also about mediators who translate craft into cultural impact.

Why It All Matters

Couture has always been a paradox: exorbitant yet intimate, fleeting yet eternal. This season, that tension feels heightened. With fewer megabrands dominating the schedule, the spotlight shifts to

artisans—the true custodians of fashion's soul. The absence of Dior and Valentino isn't just a gap; it's an invitation to look closer. To marvel at Daniel Roseberry's Schiaparelli surrealism (July 8), or Iris Van Herpen's biomechanical poetry (July 10). To ponder why Chanel's studio collection—its last before Mathieu Blazy's reign—might hint at a return to les années Lagerfeld. But most of all, it is a reminder that couture exists in a dialogue between Paris and the wider world. Between a petite main in Rue Cambon and a red carpet in Los Angeles. Between embroidery artisans in Beirut and private patrons in Jeddah. Between the hands

“Couture has always been a paradox: exorbitant yet intimate, fleeting yet eternal. This season, that tension feels heightened. With fewer megabrands dominating the schedule, the spotlight shifts to artisans—the true custodians of fashion's soul.”

that sew and the eyes that behold. As the lights dim on July 11, one truth will linger: couture isn't merely seen—it's felt. Whether through Demna's parting provocation, Martens' audacious debut, or the silent brilliance of a single embroidered thread, this season proves that fashion's oldest tradition is also its most radical.





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Fendi

2025 FALL WINTER

FW25 spoke in texture, not volume — faux fur sweeping with conscience, lace breathing restraint, and shoulders sculpted to command space. Once corporate armor, they now signal confidence in motion. Between softness and strength, fashion found balance: the glamour of being fully, deliberately yourself.

Faux Fur & Power Shoulders and Lace

If there was a single roar that echoed across the FW25 runways, it came not from the models' heels but from the resurgence of faux fur. Sweeping in with unapologetic volume, it wrapped itself around nearly every collection from floor-sweeping coats at Fendi to cropped, boxy jackets at Miu Miu. Faux fur is divisive, yes — equal parts excess and ethics — but its surge across the season suggests that it has become the defining pelt of our time. The message was not subtle: FW25 is ready to swaddle.

It was revealing, but in a restrained, almost architectural way. In a season where bombast seemed to lead, lace offered a counterpoint — an elegance

that breathed between threads, feminine yet controlled, romantic without sentimentality. And then there were the shoulders. Once the preserve of the power suit, FW25 broadened its reach. Stella McCartney inflated them with sculptural intent, while Dries Van Noten exaggerated them into coats and gowns that suggested women could command space simply by walking into a room. No longer an accessory to corporate armor, the power shoulder is now the punctuation mark of eveningwear. The cumulative effect of FW25 was one of polarity — fur versus lace, volume against transparency, softness cut with steel. And yet, the interplay was deliberate. Fashion, after all, has always thrived on contradiction. What became clear is that these are not



Dior



Ermanno Scervino



Marni

mere seasonal flourishes, but reflections of a shifting cultural wardrobe: the need for protection, the longing for fragility, the insistence on strength. In this tug-of-war between artifice and authenticity, FW25 proved that it is precisely in these tensions that modern fashion finds its voice.

The Leopard's Leap

Few patterns roar quite like leopard, a perennial emblem of both danger and decadence. This season, the feline spots prowled far beyond their traditional outerwear cage. They slipped onto fluid dresses, and strutted across the kind of sharply tailored skirt suits that Saint Laurent, in particular, has always known how to sharpen to a claw. It was a reminder that, even in a world addicted to newness, fashion still bows

to its most enduring animal instincts.

The Pencil's Point

This season, the pencil skirt has returned with the poise of a woman who knows exactly where she is going — but refuses to be boxed into the office. Designers teased out its versatility with oversized knitwear slouched just so, with corseted strapless bodices, and with blouses that fluttered with almost frivolous femininity. By night, the silhouette held its ground, reimagined in delicate lace or shimmering with embroidery that would make even the most jaded of couture eyes take a second look.

The Skirt Set's New Stature

If the pencil skirt was about fluid adaptation, then its sibling — the skirt

set — spoke of rigour and command. For Fall 2025, the ensemble arrived with bold colour, architectural cuts, and fabrics that exuded rarefied taste. The pièce de résistance was a made-to-order croc suede duo: part jacket, part miniskirt (or pleated midi, or abbreviated dress). It was less about practicality and more about precision — a distilled vision of tailoring where elegance and authority met in a single, perfectly calibrated line. FW25 ties together palette and accessories: mineral tones — gunmetal, moss, cognac — with icy silver make faux fur and lace feel modern. Soft-spoken jewelry — flat collars, drop earrings, industrial clasps — and boxy mini bags or slim clutches echo the season's "hard vs. soft" dialogue. With recycled faux fur and cellulose lace, power is now calibrated: warmth, fragility, and disciplined poise.



Georges Hobek FW 2025 Couture

The Beaded *Heartbeat* **OF COUTURE** **FW2025 and BEYOND**

Haute couture has always been an art of illusion: fabric spun into fantasy; embroidery whispering of time and devotion, a dress embodying not just beauty but a culture's highest aspirations. And if couture has a pulse, then in 2025, that rhythm beats with beads. Sequins, crystals, pearls, and metallic threads—these tiny fragments of light—have become the defining gesture of the season. They are no longer mere embellishment but the very language through which designers speak of identity, resilience, and desire.

A History Written in Beads

The story of couture beading is older than its current sparkle suggests. The 1920s flapper dresses, dripping with bugle beads, gave women a new freedom of movement—and shimmer. Christian Dior's New Look in 1947 often concealed its hours of Lesage embroidery beneath stiff skirts, a reminder that embellishment is sometimes more intimate than show. By the 1990s, John Galiano at Dior and Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel turned beads into fireworks, celebrating excess in a decade when fashion lived for spectacle. Fast-forward to today, and the beaded gown is no longer about excess but essence. The beads themselves carry meaning. A crystal-studded neckline is not just a flourish—it is a signature, a cultural code, a whisper of the artisan's hand.

PARIS WHERE LIGHT BECOMES COUTURE

In Paris, the center of gravity for couture remains firm. At Chanel, Virginie Viard presented a collection that shimmered with restraint—sequins arranged not as ostentation but as whispers of light on tweed. A black velvet cape was embroidered with tiny mirror shards, catching the glow like candlelight in a medieval hall. The restraint was almost monastic, a reminder that couture, at its best, is about intimacy as much as spectacle.



Chanel Fall 2025 Couture



Chanel Fall 2025 Couture



Schiaparelli Fall 2025 Couture

Schiaparelli, meanwhile, under Daniel Roseberry, pushed couture towards the surreal. His FW2025 show scattered constellations across sculptural gowns, the beads arranged like galaxies in orbit. It was daring and theatrical—an echo of Elsa Schiaparelli's love for fantasy—but beneath the drama lay hours of needlework, each bead stitched in place to map a universe.



Dior Fall 2025 Couture

At Dior, Maria Grazia Chiuri looked to the idea of protective armor—gowns beaded with metallic motifs that seemed both shield and jewel. One gown, heavy with bronze sequins and silver threading, appeared less like a dress than like a relic, dug from the earth of an imagined archaeological past. Here, beads became talismans, evoking history as protection in uncertain times.



Patronage and Radiance

If Paris invented couture, it is in the Middle East that beading finds its most devoted patrons. In Beirut, even after tragedy, ateliers continue to produce gowns that seem carved from light. Zuhair Murad's FW2025 collection paid homage to phoenix-like resilience—scarlet gowns ablaze with sequins that shimmered like embers.



Elie Saab, forever the master of fairy-tale femininity, created gowns that flowed like waterfalls of crystal, each bead catching light like a prayer. The Middle East has always understood what couture means: not simply fashion, but the public face of wealth, culture, and pride. The beaded gown is a passport to global red carpets and royal weddings. And in an era when Western markets fret about couture's survival, the Middle East sustains it with patronage, ensuring that Lesage, Montex, and Lemarié—the Parisian embroidery houses—remain alive.



At Georges Hobeika Fall 2025, beading returns not as ornament, but as language. Each crystal and pearl is placed with the precision of a heartbeat — a conversation between the hand, the fabric, and the light. The gowns shimmer like constellations caught mid-motion, proving that the future of couture lies not in reinvention but in reverence.

AMERICA: RED CARPETS POP STARDOM

Across the Atlantic, America may lack the centuries-old couture ateliers of Paris, but it has something just as potent: Hollywood. The Oscars, the Met Gala, the Grammys—these are the nation's catwalks, where beadwork and embroidery glitter under a million flashbulbs. For FW2025, Thom Browne transformed Wall Street gray flannel into a beaded spectacle, a gleaming suit of armor that questioned where power dressing ends and fantasy begins. Rodarte dialed up the drama with gowns dripping in crystal fringe, evoking the glamour of silver-screen sirens. Naeem Khan and Pamella Roland delivered unapologetically opulent, hand-beaded gowns designed for the flash of paparazzi cameras.



Naeem Khan Fall 2025



Rodarte Fall 2025



Pamella Roland Fall 2025



Carolina Herrera Fall 2025

Carolina Herrera kept things polished and regal, adding precise embroidery to her sculptural silhouettes. Libertine injected New York energy into embellishment—playful, maximalist, a wink at fashion's love of excess—while Diotima threaded delicate beadwork into her signature crochet, bringing artisanal intimacy to eveningwear.

Together, these designers turned New York Fashion Week into a stage where American glamour feels tailor-made for the red carpet, proving that when it comes to sparkle, the U.S. is anything but understated.



Temperley London Fall 2025



Richard Quinn Fall 2025

London

GOTHIC SPARKLE VS MODERN ROMANCE

London, with its daring and inventive spirit, turns beads and embroidery into storytelling. For FW2025, designers transformed sequins, pearls, and intricate stitching into expressions of drama, romance, and playful maximalism. Temperley London embroidered gowns with intricate motifs and tassel accents, balancing elegance with narrative flair.

Richard Quinn turned eveningwear into theatrical spectacle, shimmering fringe and delicate beadwork catching light like moving constellations. Simone Rocha, the poet of modern romance, threaded pearls and subtle sequins into fragile tulle, her designs trembling between innocence and quiet seduction. Meanwhile, Ashish brought maximalist vibrancy to the runway, hand-embroidered sequins creating joyful textures that refused to be restrained.

In London, beads and embroidery are never merely decorative—they are narrative. Each stitch, sequin, and pearl carries meaning: a hint of rebellion, a whisper of intimacy, a flicker of theatricality. Here, embellishment is language, and the runway is a story told in sparkle.

The Craft: Time Embodied

What unites Paris, Beirut, Hollywood, and London is not aesthetics but devotion to craft. Beading is the slowest of couture techniques, each stitch requiring not just time but presence. A single gown may demand 3,000 hours of embroidery—time that cannot be digitized, outsourced, or rushed. In this way, beads become vessels of resistance: against fast fashion, against algorithms, against disposability.

The ateliers—Lesage, Montex, Hurel—still carry secrets passed down through generations. A specific knotting technique, a hidden stitch, the art of making sequins from wood shavings or metal. In Beirut, in Cairo, in Mumbai, other ateliers echo this patience, ensuring that the language of beads remains global.

FW2025: A Season of Meaning

What makes FW2025 unique is not the quantity of beads but their weight of meaning. Each designer, in their way, turned beading into more than sparkle. At Chanel, restraint whispered of private elegance. At Dior, metallic motifs suggested resilience. At Schiaparelli, galaxies dared us to dream. In Beirut, beads became symbols of survival. In America, they became cultural fireworks. In London, they turned into questions of identity.

This is what couture offers in an age of speed: not just garments, but philosophy in fabric. Every bead is not just a decoration but a heartbeat, a reminder that behind the glitter lies time, patience, and the hand of an artisan.

The Future: Will Beads Survive the Digital Storm?

As fashion collides with AI, NFTs, and digital clothing, one may wonder if beads still matter. After all, a virtual gown can sparkle infinitely without a single stitch. Yet, watching a model walk under the lights in Paris this season, beads alive with every step, one feels that no digital screen can replace the human glow of craft. Couture will survive because of these details—because someone, somewhere, still believes in the poetry of time. FW2025 has shown us that beads are not just fragments of light, but fragments of history. They carry whispers from the 1920s, echoes of Dior's salons, memories of Galliano's theatrics, and the resilience of Beirut's ateliers.

Couture is not dying. It is beading itself into the future, stitch by luminous stitch.





Photo by Bastiaan Woudt

THE RISE OF “LAZY” FASHION

Or Are People Increasingly Cherishing Private Moments?

The Unseen Rebellion

When Rihanna appeared at Dior in a silk slip that looked suspiciously like nightwear, the world gasped. Was it audacity or elegance? Zendaya, too, strode into Valentino's couture show in languid trousers, her hair undone, as if plucked straight from a Sunday morning. There are moments in style when the runway tells only half the story. The other half is whispered from the street, magnified by celebrity, and multiplied across TikTok. Today, that murmur is unmistakable: the rise of what some dismiss as “lazy fashion.” Yet beneath the irony lies something more nuanced—a rebellion that questions not only how we dress, but how we exist in an age of surveillance, speed, and spectacle. These women, paragons of glamour, were telling us something: the new power move in fashion is ease.

The Shift Towards Privacy

The tracksuit, once banished to gyms and corner shops, now parades at Paris and Milan Fashion Weeks. Demna at Balenciaga has twisted sportswear into dystopian couture, while Matthieu Blazy at Bottega Veneta renders jeans and flannel shirts in supple leather—comfort masquerading as craftsmanship. Even at Miu Miu, ballet flats and rumpled cardigans, layered over schoolgirl skirts, exude the studied ease of dressing down. The message is clear: clothes are no longer just about seduction or status, but about autonomy. Post-pandemic, the tyranny of office suiting dissolved into elastic waistbands and slipper shoes. Comfort became synonymous with efficiency—and, more tellingly, with privacy.

Commodification and Paradox

Naturally, the industry adapts. The Row sells cashmere hoodies at four-digit prices. Brunello Cucinelli's €1,200 sweatpants blur the line between luxury and leisure. Dior's sneakers command the same reverence as their handbags. The Digital Life and the

“Un-styled” Identity

But in a world of digital self-exposure, dressing down is never innocent. On Instagram or TikTok, even a plain hoodie can feel like performance art. What looks un-styled is often highly styled indeed. Take Kendall Jenner's oversized hoodie, Zoë Kravitz's plain white tank, or Hailey Bieber's low-slung jeans. Their “effortless” looks ignite millions of reposts. And luxury has noticed: Balenciaga's logo-free hoodies are calculated subversion, while Loewe's art-infused denim implies intellectual intent. The anti-style becomes style itself: authenticity commodified and sold at a premium. Sociologists call it “curated casualness”—a wardrobe that whispers of intellect, leisure, or financial confidence. What looks lazy is, in fact, another form of branding: the projection of a life too secure to be over-dressed.

The New Elegance: Less Armor, More Ease

What's most radical today is not embellishment but understatement. Where the early 2000s worshipped “It” bags and vertiginous heels, 2025's icons are pragmatic: the Adidas Samba sneaker, Uniqlo's viral £14.90 crossbody bag, Toteme's slouching coats. Hermès, Loewe, and Loro Piana now market discretion over spectacle—objects that whisper, not shout. The Row, built on clothes that look plain until one notices the fabric or the fall of a seam, has become the high priestess of understatement. As Suzy Menkes might put it: elegance has shrugged off its armor.

Global Currents: From K-Pop to California

Lazy fashion is not confined to the West. In Seoul, K-Pop idols mix designer sweats with luxury handbags, making athleisure aspirational across Asia. In Los Angeles, wellness culture blurs yoga pants into boardrooms. In Scandinavia, brands like Toteme, Acne Studios, and Ganni codify minimalism as chic.

Fashion's Carousel of Trends

Fashion today spins faster than ever. Prada reintroduces silhouettes before they have cooled in memory; Celine cycles back to minimalism even as Saint Laurent revives 1980s shoulders. TikTok accelerates the churn with micro-trends like “blokecore,” “office siren,” and “mob wife”—each flaring and fading within weeks. In this carousel, “lazy fashion” is not inertia but survival. Fluid trousers, elasticated shirting, and minimalist sneakers function as a pause button. Against volatility, comfort becomes continuity. The numbers tell their own story. McKinsey's State of Fashion 2025 reports casual apparel growing 12% year-on-year, while the global loungewear market—valued at \$37 billion in 2023—is projected to hit \$59 billion by 2030. Lazy fashion is no passing fad; it's a structural shift.



Rick Owens



Sustainability and the Rebellion

There is also a moral undertone. Consumers weary of overproduction turn to “capsule wardrobes” and seasonless dressing. Gucci experiments with resale via “Vault,” while Balenciaga launches repair services. Lazy fashion, then, becomes resistance — not only against spectacle but against excess. By choosing simplicity, wearers quietly protest waste and overconsumption.

Lazy or Luxurious?

The genius of lazy fashion is its refusal to be pinned down. It is both retreat and rebellion: a sigh of relief, a gesture of defiance. Its paradox is its strength. By appearing effortless, it achieves the highest sophistication. Coco Chanel once quipped, “Luxury must be comfortable, otherwise it is not luxury.” In 2025, her words feel prophetic.

Final Reflection: Elegance in Privacy

Perhaps the most radical fashion statement of our time is not spectacle but subtlety. Lazy fashion grants the right to privacy, to comfort, to authenticity. It insists that clothing serve us, not enslave us. In an era of surveillance and saturation, understatement may be the boldest form of elegance. Lazy fashion, far from apathetic, may be our most articulate rebellion yet — against noise, against spectacle, and for the quiet dignity of simply being.



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Vietnam's Emerging Fashion Frontier: Between Quick Wins and Global Recognition

As South Korea fuels luxury's logomania and the Middle East embraces discovery, Vietnam's designers weigh short-term sales against long-term ambition

Vietnam is not yet the name whispered on the front rows of Paris or Milan. But behind the grand show calendars and glossy campaigns of fashion's old capitals, the country is building momentum. Not through headlines, but through deals struck in Paris showrooms, wholesale orders signed with global e-commerce platforms. Even recruitment drives from Middle Eastern luxury houses seeking Vietnamese artisans.

It is a story marked by ambition and fragility, of dazzling million-dollar wins and abrupt exits, of e-commerce acceleration and age-old handicrafts. Then it raises a fundamental question: can Vietnam build the staying power to become more than a seasonal curiosity in luxury's unforgiving global market?

Allures and Traps of Quick Wins

For many Vietnamese brands, the international journey begins with a Paris showroom. A season's slot in a shared space costs around €10,000, excluding another €5,000 or more for flights and accommodation. The gamble can pay off. One Vietnamese brand, known for intricate beadwork and embellished gowns, secured \$1m in wholesale orders in its second season, which is an almost unheard-of figure for such a young player. Yet stories like this are exceptions. Many debut, stumble, and withdraw after one or two seasons. Designers often underestimate the cultural nuances shaping silhouettes and fits. What appeals to Hanoi may not flatter clients in Riyadh or Los Angeles! Some approach foreign markets as quick transactions rather than long-term investments, prioritising early sales over building reputation. The reality can be harsh. One

seller flew to New York with ten suitcases of samples - 23kg each - dragging them through snow from a hotel nearly 800 metres away to save on transport costs. In Paris, groups of two or three Vietnamese designers have been seen walking silently back to their hotels after a week of showing, with no orders to carry home.

Korea's Logomania, the Middle East's Openness

Vietnam's positioning becomes clearer in contrast with its regional peers. South Korea now leads the world in per-capita luxury spending, according to Morgan Stanley, with an appetite that spans from handbags to watches, and to beauty. Yet its consumers are brand purists: a Louis Vuitton monogram or a Chanel double-C remains

the ultimate prize for themselves. Smaller, emerging labels struggle to compete in such a logomania-driven market. The Middle East is different. Luxury spending there is growing rapidly, particularly in fashion, supported by youthful demographics and government cultural investment programmes such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. Consumers in Dubai, Riyadh and Doha are not only buying Hermès and Dior; they are open to discovering new labels, provided the craftsmanship meets exacting standards. This

cultural openness has already created opportunities for Vietnamese designers. Gulf buyers have sourced directly from Vietnam and even commissioned factories to produce exclusive capsules under their own labels. Others are recruiting Vietnamese seamstresses, pattern-makers and designers to staff ateliers in the region - a notable shift from Vietnam's historic role as a low-cost garment producer to a recognised source of luxury skills.

"MEAN BLVD, a contemporary - focused platform, has evolved from selling dresses for under \$600 to specialising in high-end pieces priced between \$600 and \$2,200."

E-COMMERCE *as* GLOBAL GATEWAY

While Paris offers visibility, e-commerce is providing scale for emerging brands. International platforms are moving beyond trial runs to place serious bets on Vietnamese brands. Orders of \$80,000–100,000 per label, renewed every six months, are now common, with groups of seven to ten designers supported at once. Domestically, Vietnam has produced a rare e-commerce success story of its own. MEAN BLVD, a contemporary-focused platform, has evolved from selling dresses for under \$600 to specialising in high-end pieces priced between \$600 and \$2,200. Annual sales now hover around \$5m, with a return rate below 5 per cent, far outperforming global online fashion norms, where double-digit return rates are standard. Crucially, MEAN BLVD has also become a “filter”. International buyers and e-commerce platforms often study which labels succeed there before deciding whom to approach directly. In other words, a domestic marketplace is quietly setting global entry standards for Vietnamese brands. MEAN BLVD’s trajectory underlines two points: first, there is real appetite for Vietnamese luxury when presented in a coherent, curated format; second, infrastructure is beginning to emerge that can anchor the industry beyond seasonal showrooms abroad.

Buyers on the Ground

The new attention is also physical. International buyers fly to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi to scout labels, order private collections and negotiate exclusives. This represents a shift: Vietnam is no longer a passive manufacturing base waiting for contracts. It is becoming a marketplace where creativity and commerce converge. But with visibility comes expectation. Buyers want consistency.

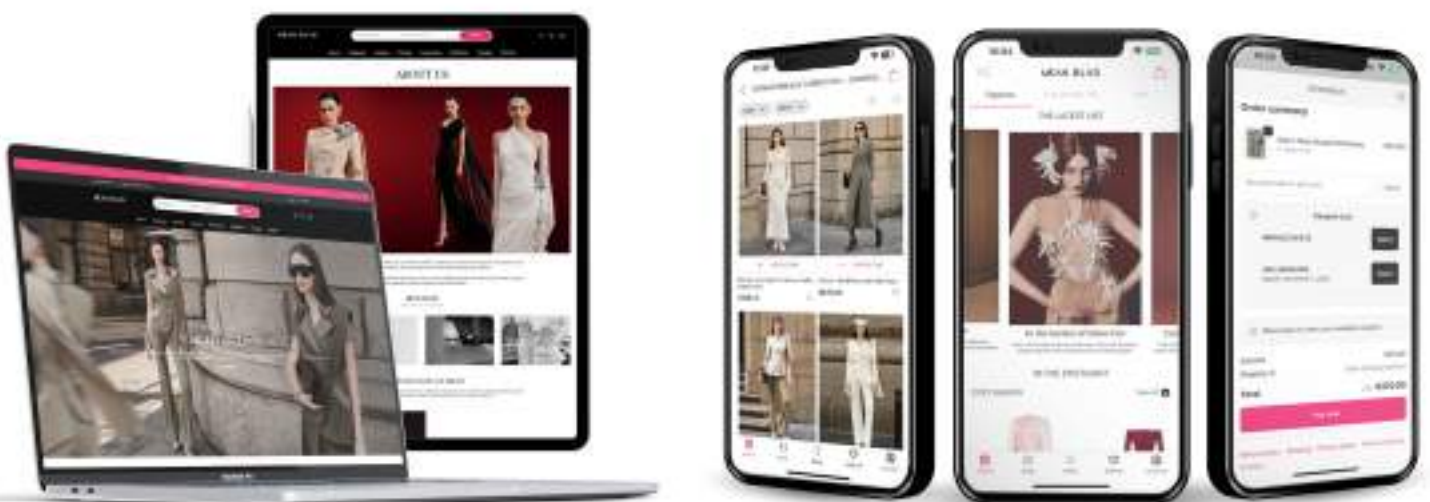
They want cultural literacy in how collections translate across body types and markets. And above all, they want to see whether a brand will still be standing five years down the line.

Between Promise and Persistence

The paradox of Vietnam’s fashion rise is that its very strengths: artisanal skill, youthful ambition, digital savvy that can be undermined by short-term thinking. Million-dollar wholesale orders and splashy press mentions generate headlines. But the global fashion system is built on patience: it took Japanese designers two decades to shift Paris’s aesthetic centre of gravity in the 1980s. Even South Korea’s current dominance in luxury consumption followed years of cultural export through K-pop and K-drama. Vietnam’s designers face the same long road. Success will require persistence across multiple seasons, deep engagement with diverse markets, and a coherent narrative that connects heritage with contemporary relevance.

A Future in the Making

For now, the signs are promising. Wholesale orders are rising. Platforms are investing. Buyers are visiting. Artisans are being recruited. Vietnam is no longer an invisible player. The question is whether the country can resist the temptation of quick exits and cultivate the endurance that global fashion demands. If it does, Vietnam may not only supply the world with luxury labour and occasional breakout brands, but eventually claim a seat at the table of fashion’s capitals. In a world where TikTok accelerates trends and even Parisian maisons struggle to slow the cycle, Vietnam’s greatest asset may be patience: the one quality that cannot be fast-tracked.







MEAN BLVD

The 5th Milestone



5.000+

Collections

80+

Vietnamese
Fashion Brands

60.000+

Customers

A touch of Vietnam



BEAUTY



The Quiet Glamour

The new beauty language whispers, it doesn't shout. Skin that looks like skin, lips barely tinted, eyes brushed in soft shadow — the art of restraint has returned. It's not about erasing effort but refining it, crafting a kind of intimacy between the face and the world. In backstage moments like this, where a model closes her eyes to the calm precision of a brushstroke, we see a larger shift: beauty as stillness. The power lies in what's left untouched, in a glow that feels lived-in rather than staged.

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Bold Gestures



Beauty in Contrast

Projected to reach \$72 billion by 2030 (Mordor Intelligence), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) beauty markets are booming. But this growth is not fueled by borrowing from Paris or Seoul. Instead, it is built on a uniquely regional tension: Islamic traditions fused with modern indulgence. Here, halal lipsticks sit beside gold-flecked serums. Oud perfumes smolder while AI skincare apps scan. The result isn't a contradiction but an identity. One where modesty is wrapped in glamour, and heritage is sharpened into the future. From Riyadh to Dubai, these are the bold gestures shaping the region's beauty wave.

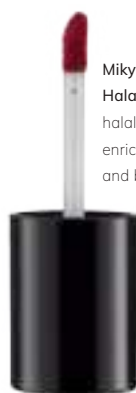


The Halal & Vegan Manifesto

In the Middle East, beauty has always been more than aesthetic. It is a mirror of faith. Halal-certified cosmetics (free from alcohol, pork derivatives, and other prohibited ingredients) have transformed from compliance into conviction. And the market is massive: valued at \$47.76 billion in 2024, projected to reach \$115.03 billion by 2032 (Fortune Business Insights). Saudi Arabia alone is set to double from \$7.78 billion to \$14.67 billion by 2030 (GlobeNewswire). But halal beauty today is not austere. It dances in step with the global clean beauty movement, where transparency is power. QR-coded packaging, blockchain-backed supply chains, vegan and cruelty-free upgrades - halal now speaks the language of modern conscience.



Mikyajy Posh Matte
Halal Lipstick (UAE)
halal-certified, vegan,
enriched with rice wax
and bayberry oil.



Amara Halal Lipsticks (U.S.)
vegan, cruelty-free, halal, bold
colors without compromise



Pro Filt'r Foundation
by Fenty Beauty
not formally halal-
certified, but alcohol-
free and embraced as
halal-friendly across
Dubai and Riyadh.



The Oud Flame

Kalemat by Arabian Oud
halal-certified, oud-amber-musk, a modern Saudi tradition.



Dior Oud Ispahan
smoky oud tempered by rose, a Western nod to Eastern heritage. Dubai and Riyadh.

Maison Francis Kurkdjian Oud Satin Mood
oud softened with vanilla, making an Eastern signature global.

Middle East, to wear oud is to wear history.

Fragrance is not just accessory here - it is identity. The ritual runs deep: bakhour smoke curling through homes, gilded bottles gleaming in modern perfumeries. At the heart is oud - resinous agarwood, smoky and infinite, revered for its longevity and depth. The numbers are just as rich: the Middle Eastern perfume market is valued at \$12 billion in 2024 (Statista). Unlike the West's singular spritz, oud is layered: oils, attars, and sprays merging into a signature as unique as a fingerprint.



Lancôme Hypnôse
Drama Waterproof
Mascara
volume and drama that
survives humidity.

Huda Beauty
Desert Dusk
Palette
copper, amethyst,
gold, made for
drama.

Huda Beauty
Emerald
Obsessions
Palette
compact but in-
tense, tailored for
heat-proof wear.

The Bold Eye Drama

If the West is flirting with no-makeup minimalism, the Middle East is serving full theatre. Here, eyes lead. Kohl smudges, sculptural lashes, jewel-toned shadows - intensity that endures desert heat and nightlong weddings. It is not subtle. It is exaltation. And innovation follows demand: waterproof mascaras, 24-hour liners, crease-proof shadows designed to withstand Gulf climates.



Farsali Rose
Gold Elixir (UAE-born)
24k-infused facial oil, cherished in Dubai's elite spas.



Guerlain Parure
Gold 24K Radiance
Booster Perfection
Primer 24H
Hydration
flecked with 24k shimmer, radiance ritual in a bottle.



Chantecaille Gold
Recovery Mask
peptides, botanicals, and gold woven into an anti-aging treatment.

The Gold Obsession

Gold is not confined to souks or jewelry boxes. In Middle Eastern beauty, it dissolves into creams, serums, and highlighters - a natural extension of regional luxury. Symbolic of purity and prosperity, gold is more than glitter. Science reframes it as active skincare: calming inflammation, reflecting light, boosting collagen.

BEAUTY

The Anti-Aging Armor

Under Gulf sun and relentless heat, anti-aging is not vanity - it is armor. Concerns like photo-aging, hyperpigmentation, and dehydration are treated with clinical precision. Medical-grade skincare thrives, stocked in high-end clinics where packaging meets pharmaceutical efficacy.



SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic Serum
dermatologist favorite for hyperpigmentation and sun defense.



La Mer Crème de la Mer
deep hydration, resilience against visible aging.



Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair Serum
peptides + hyaluronic acid for Gulf climates.



The Natural Reawakening

For every gilded mask, there is a whisper of rosewater. Alongside opulence, the region is reawakening ancestral remedies: argan oil, saffron elixirs, hammam rituals. This movement extends Ainward: collagen drinks, vitamin elixirs, and wellness tourism prove beauty is also digestion, ritual, and breath.

Herbal Essentials Daily Hydrating Face Cream (UAE)
Himalayan spring water bottled modern.halal, bold colors without compromise



Whind Oasis Bright Serum
Moroccan-inspired clean beauty, ritual meets science.



Amal Al Mulk Saffron Elixir (Saudi)
saffron-infused collagen drink, glow from within.



The Climate-Proof Canvas

Here, foundations are not just makeup. They are shields. Beauty in the Middle East must endure heat, humidity, desert winds, Eid gatherings, and weddings that stretch to sunrise. Trust is earned through performance - formulas that do not melt, crack, or fade.

7

Huda Beauty
#FauxFilter Foundation
engineered for Gulf heat.



Charlotte Tilbury
Airbrush Flawless
Foundation

heat- and humidity-proof, bridal favorite.



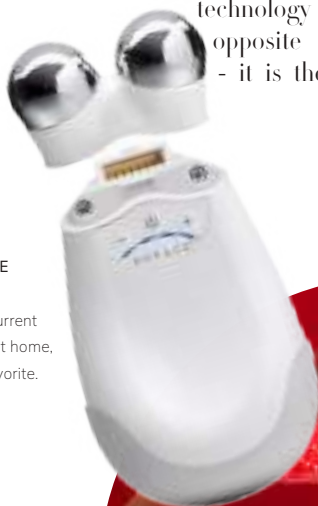
Estée Lauder
Double Wear
Foundation
24-hour icon.

The Tech Glow

In Dubai or Doha, beauty meets data. AI-powered apps scan your skin. AR lets you test a lipstick shade before a brush touches your lips. Five-star medi-spas offer lasers under chandeliers. At home, LED masks and microcurrent tools turn vanities into clinics. Here, technology is not the opposite of luxury - it is the new luxury.

8

NuFACE
Trinity
microcurrent
lifting at home,
Gulf favorite.



Foreo Luna 4 Smart
Cleansing Device
sonic pulses + AI skin
analysis in your palm.



9

Sustainability Meets Opulence

Even in a land of gold masks and crystal flacons, sustainability is reshaping luxury. The new demand: refillable bottles, recyclable jars, eco-formulas - but without losing shine. Eco-responsibility is not sacrifice here. It is refinement.

Eau de Travel

Why Perfume *Is The Ultimate Souvenir*

Forget fridge magnets and postcards. If you really want to bottle your trip, start with fragrance.



Editor's Picks for Carry-On:

Byredo Mojave Ghost Travel Spray (12ml)
desert elegance in your pocket.

Diptyque Eau Rose Solid Perfume (3.6g)
perfect for clutches.

Chanel Les Eaux Paris-Deauville (50ml)
chic, citrusy, and TSA-approved.

Jo Malone 30ml minis - practically built for airports. Post-pandemic, Sephora reported a 45% surge in mini fragrance sales, showing travelers lean toward lighter luggage and versatile scents. And yes, sustainability matters too. Guerlain's refillable Aqua Allegoria bottles and Louis Vuitton's in-boutique refills prove portability doesn't have to mean disposable.

The Numbers Not Lie

The travel-sized fragrance market hit \$4.5 billion in 2023, and Statista projects it will jump to \$5.8 billion by 2027. That is not just a retail story; it is a cultural one. According to Euromonitor, one in three luxury travelers says they would rather pick up perfume than a handbag when it comes to souvenirs. Translation: scent is not just an accessory anymore. It's a passport to memory. "Perfume is the souvenir that lingers long after the trip is over."

A Legacy Of Scented Journeys

This is not exactly new. For centuries, fragrance has traveled across borders before people did. The Silk Road carried frankincense and myrrh from the Arabian Peninsula to Asia and Europe. In the 18th century, wealthy Europeans collected bottles of attar during their "Grand Tours" as cultural trophies. Fast forward: in May 1921, Coco Chanel turned perfume into a revolution. Chanel No. 5, created with radical aldehydes by perfumer Ernest Beaux, became fashion's most global travel companion. Later, Guerlain's Aqua Allegoria launched "olfactory journeys" long before hashtags romanticized wanderlust. Perfume has always been more than liquid luxury - it's a way of carrying places, people, and eras with you.

Why Travel Needs Its Own Scent

Science confirms what poets have always known: smell is our most powerful memory trigger. A Harvard study found scent-linked memories feel 85% more vivid than visual ones. That is why a single spritz of Le Labo Gaiac 10 can transport you back to a quiet incense shop in Tokyo. Or why Jo Malone Wood Sage & Sea Salt feels like bottled nostalgia for a windswept English road trip. Firmenich's latest research adds weight: 72% of travelers feel more connected to their destinations when wearing locally inspired scents. Science of Memory: Smell and taste are the only senses directly linked to the brain's limbic system. That's why perfumes trigger memories faster and more emotionally than sights or sounds. Some seasoned travelers even save a new scent for every trip, knowing every future spray will be a personal time machine.

How To Pack A Perfume Like A Pro

If fragrance is memory's passport, then packing it requires strategy. Airlines may let you bring 100ml bottles, but any traveler who's hauled a heavy flacon through security knows practicality beats romance. That is why 10-30ml bottles, rollerballs, and solids are jet-setters' sweet spot.

How To Shop For Perfume On The Road

Buying fragrance abroad is more than retail therapy. It is a ritual. But where you shop matters:

Airport Duty-Free: Convenient, but usually limited to global bestsellers. Think Chanel Chance, Dior Sauvage, or YSL Libre.

Local Boutiques: These are where you will find niche artistry like Serge Lutens in Paris, Santa Maria Novella in Florence, or Arabian Oud in Dubai.

Artisan Markets: In Marrakech, perfumers blend oils by hand; in Bangkok, you will find temple-inspired incense infusions. These bottles carry stories no mass product can replicate.

Match the Mood, Respect the Climate

Not all scents wear equally well in different environments. Matching fragrance to destination elevates the travel experience.

Beach Escapes: Citrus and aquatic notes shine - try Creed Virgin Island Water or Tom Ford Neroli Portofino.

Urban Adventures: Layered, moody blends match city energy - think Maison Margiela Jazz Club or Byredo Bibliothèque.

Winter Getaways: Vanilla, amber, and tobacco warm you like a fireplace - Tom Ford Tobacco Vanille or Maison Francis Kurkdjian Grand Soir.

Hot Climates: Heat amplifies sweetness, so go airy - Hermès Eau de Merveilles Bleue or Kurkdjian Aqua Universalis.

"Hotels, too, are cashing in. Luxury properties like Shangri-La and Ritz-Carlton now commission "signature scents" because olfactory branding boosts guest recall by 40%."



Beyond The Bottle: The Culture Of Travel Fragrance

Today's travelers are not just packing perfume, they are curating identity. Millennials and Gen Z are driving niche fragrance sales, seeking authenticity and storytelling over logos. According to NPD Group, 65% of Gen Z beauty consumers say a product's story and origin matter more than its brand name. That's why they will hunt for artisan scents in Marrakech souks instead of another mainstream flanker. Hotels, too, are cashing in. Luxury properties like Shangri-La and Ritz-Carlton now commission "signature scents" because olfactory branding boosts guest recall by 40%. Travelers don't just want a bed - they want a memory to breathe in.

The Future Of Travel Fragrance

The next frontier is already here: AI-driven atomizers like Ninu adapt to climate, mood, and even outfit. Dior and Armani are pushing refillable travel atomizers. Jo Malone layering kits let you customize fragrance wardrobes mid-flight. Duty-free counters are turning into cultural stages, complete with scent installations and

workshops. Perfume is evolving from a vanity item to a form of cultural storytelling.

Editor's Travel Fragrance Wishlist

If you're ready to pack your passport in a bottle, start here:

1. Acqua di Parma Fico di Amalfi - Amalfi Coast in citrus form.
2. Bond No. 9 New York Nights - a city that never sleeps, bottled.
3. Diptyque Philosykos - a Greek island fig grove.
4. Amouage Journey Man - Omani incense and spice markets distilled.
5. Tom Ford Soleil Blanc - barefoot luxury for island escapes.
6. Le Labo City Exclusives - the ultimate collector's trophy.

The Final Spritz

So what is the ultimate travel essential? Not postcards. Not magnets. Not keychains. Perfume doesn't just smell good - it makes your trips unforgettable, rewinds your memories on command, and carries entire cities in a single spritz. And when your suitcase is long unpacked, your bottle remains waiting, like a time machine, to take you back.



1. Le Labo Gaiac 10 (Tokyo)

The ultimate urban sophistication - exclusive to Tokyo. A soft, meditative blend of smoky gaiac wood, musky notes, and a hint of cedar. It is an intimate, skin-like scent that whispers more than it shouts.

2. Guerlain's Rosa Verde - Eau de Toilette Refill

The rose, reimagined. A crisp, green, and incredibly modern rose scent, cut with sharp lemon and herbal notes. It's like a bouquet of roses with their fresh, dewy stems still attached, with almost anything.

3. Chance Eau Tendre Eau de Parfum Chanel

A whirlwind of soft, fruity florals. Juicy grapefruit and quince blend with the delicate heart of jasmine and a clean, skin-hugging musk. Playful, optimistic, and endlessly charming.

4. Dior Sauvage

A blast of fresh, wild air. Sharp and metallic bergamot meets ambroxan for a clean, magnetic, and incredibly versatile scent that feels both rugged and refined.



5. Maison Francis Kurkdjian Grand Soir

The golden hour, bottled. A radiant, amber-based fragrance that is both simple and profound. Warm benzoin, vanilla, and tonka bean create a luminous, cozy glow that lasts for hours.



6. Byredo Mojave Ghost Travel Spray (12ml)

The beauty of the desert at twilight. A hauntingly beautiful blend of crisp ambrette, creamy sandalwood, and bright magnolia. It's elusive, intriguing, and perfectly portable. on the go, no spills allowed.



7. Diptyque Eau Rose Solid Perfume (3.6g)

The most practical romance. This wax-based perfume offers a tender, dewy take on rose, paired with green artichoke and zesty bergamot. Apply it effortlessly on the go, no spills allowed.

8. Chanel Les Eaux Paris-Deauville (50ml)

A walk through a rain-kissed Norman garden. Bright, green citrus notes of orange and basil evoke the fresh, breezy air of the French coast. Effortlessly chic and uplifting.



9. Bond No. 9 New York Nights

The glittering energy of the city that never sleeps. A seductive, gourmand fragrance with notes of dark chocolate, champagne, red rose, and patchouli. Bold, sweet, and utterly glamorous.



Gold Rush: Worth Its Weight in Glow?

Would Cleopatra - the original beauty icon - have swapped her legendary 24-karat mask for a nano-gold serum bottled in Switzerland? Or would she have raised a kohl-lined eyebrow at our 21st-century obsession with sprinkling precious metal into every cream, lipAstick, and spa treatment?

Gold has always been theatre. It crowned kings, lined cathedrals, and drew empires into battle. Today, its shimmer glitters across bathroom shelves, promising youth in a jar. By 2025, the global market for gold-infused skincare is forecast to reach \$1.5 billion - proof that, science aside, the world still worships at the altar of the gilded.

But one question gleams brighter than any jar: is this modern beauty alchemy genuine transformation, or simply Midas marketing -all sparkle, little substance?

The Ancient Dream

The allure is nothing new. Cleopatra's nightly gold mask has long been a myth whispered down history's corridors - a ritual more symbolic than scientific. In pharaonic Egypt, gold was thought to preserve the soul, and perhaps, by osmosis, the skin. Across continents, India's Ayurveda declared gold "the metal of the gods," pounded into ash and prescribed as an elixir of balance. In Rome, whispers tell of salves infused with flecks of the metal; in Europe's gilded courts, nobles sipped wine laced with gold dust - a dangerous dalliance that often ended in poisoning rather than preservation. It seems humanity has always been intoxicated by the idea that the eternal glow of gold could become our own.

From Crown to Cream

Fast forward to the modern vanity table. Gold has been milled, melted, liquefied, and nano-engineered into serums, sunscreens, even lipsticks. Yet look closely at the fine print: that 24K label may signify little more than a sprinkling of CI 77480 - gold as colorant, not cure. In Europe, the powder is permitted as a cosmetic pigment. In the U.S., it was delisted in 1976 as an additive. The irony?

While Cleopatra may have bathed in golden myth, today's consumer is more often bathing in golden marketing.

The Alchemist's Trick

Cosmetic science has become the modern goldsmith's workshop. Colloidal gold (particles small enough to swirl in serums) is lauded for soothing and anti-inflammatory prowess. Dermatologists, however, suggest that any glow is likely reflection, not rejuvenation. Nano gold (particles smaller still) may act as a "Trojan horse," ferrying actives like vitamin C deeper into skin. Early studies are tantalizing, yet unanswered questions about toxicity and accumulation remain. Gold leaf facials? More red carpet than research. They lock in moisture briefly, a gilded experience that fades as quickly as it sparkles.

The beauty industry has mastered not so much the science of transformation, but the art of transfiguration - taking a rare material and selling the illusion of immortality.

Lipstick, Powder, and Perfume

Gold is rarely about function; it is about fantasy. In skincare, La Prairie builds an empire around Radiance Pure Gold, a phrase as luminous as the jar itself. Dermatologists quietly insist it is peptides and hyaluronic acid doing the real work. In makeup, Pat McGrath's molten pigments and Guerlain's iconic Meteorites are pure theatre - shimmer as spectacle, mica dusted with glamour. In haircare, Oribe's 24K Pomade offers shine and shimmer, more fashion than follicle food. In fragrance, gold adorns bottles rather than formulas.

Clive Christian No.1 wore a gold collar, while Jivago suspends flecks in liquid - a visual seduction, not an olfactory one. Gold here functions as it always has: a signifier of wealth and exclusivity. Not efficacy.

The Golden Debate

Yet the industry insists. Proprietary studies whisper of collagen stimulation and antioxidant miracles. Dermatologists counter with scepticism: gold, chemically inert, cannot simply melt into the dermis and weave new youth. Some even warn of irritation. In 2001, the American Contact Dermatitis Society named gold Allergen of the Year. For sensitive skin types, the gilded touch may trigger rashes rather than radiance. As dermatologist Dr. Whitney Bowe wryly observed, "You can get a similar glow from a honey and turmeric mask - at a fraction of the cost." A reminder that not all that glitters on the beauty shelf is skin-deep salvation.

The Future: Green Gold or Fool's Gold?

And yet, research continues. From peptide-bound gold complexes to nano-gold delivery systems, scientists chase the possibility that the metal may yet become more than mere shimmer. At the same time, sustainability questions arise. Ethical mining, recycled gold, and lab-created nanoparticles aim to gild the conscience as well as the complexion. "Clean gold" could become the next frontier - beauty that sparkles without the shadow of exploitation.

The Final Reflection

Gold endures because it tells a story - of Cleopatra's mask, of empires, of opulence. Whether suspended in serum or pressed into leaf, it whispers a promise: that beauty can be eternal. The truth? Science has yet to prove gold anything more than a sparkling distraction. But perhaps that is its genius.

For in beauty, as in fashion, sometimes the illusion is worth as much as the reality. Maybe the glow we're chasing isn't just on the skin - it's in the story gold lets us believe.



Miracle Elixir or Just Glitter?

We have seen it all: snail mucin, bee venom, salmon DNA, caviar facials, even diamond dermabrasion. So it was probably inevitable that beauty would return to one of history's most enduring symbols of wealth and radiance: gold.

Scroll through TikTok or Instagram and you'll spot shimmering sheet masks, serums speckled with 24K flakes, and facials that look more like art installations than treatments. Cleopatra supposedly swore by sleeping in a gold mask, and if Selfridges can serve a 24K-gilded beef sandwich for £250, why not rub some on our skin too? But as always, the real question: is there science beneath the sparkle?

Why Gold Has a Place in Beauty

Gold's skincare story isn't new. Records from ancient Egypt, India, and China suggest the metal was prized as far back as 2500 BCE for its balancing, healing, and beautifying qualities, those these accounts are often a blend of myth and medicine. In Ayurvedic medicine, it was seen as vitality-restoring. In Chinese medicine, as energy-protecting.

Today, researchers are giving those traditions a second look. Early studies suggest gold may have real potential as an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant. It's thought to calm irritation, reduce visible pores, and soften signs of aging. Some evidence also points to its ability to help fade sun-induced dark spots. And gold does something more unusual: it interacts with light. It absorbs high-energy blue light and reflects a warm tone back to the skin, giving that instant "lit-from-within" effect. Some scientists also believe gold particles can act as tiny couriers, binding to active ingredients like vitamin C or retinol and helping them travel deeper into the skin. One review published in the *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology* in 2023 found gold nanoparticles paired with antioxidants showed improved stability and penetration in lab studies. Translation: the lab potential is there, but whether it translates to your bathroom mirror is still up for debate, since clinical evidence in humans is till very limited.

How Gold Shows Up in Skincare

Not all that glitters is the same. Gold typically appears in skincare in two main forms:

Colloidal Gold

Large particles, more about surface-level benefits and luxury appeal.

Nano Gold

Ultra-small particles (under 100 nanometers) that might slip past the skin barrier and act as carriers for other ingredients. Think of nano gold as the "Trojan horse" of beauty.

A 2010 in-vitro study even suggested these particles could ferry actives like collagen and retinol deeper into the skin. Still, dermatologist caution that these findings remain debated and far from proven in real-world use.

Gold Facials

And then there's the spa experience. Gold facials are now signature treatments in Tokyo, Dubai, and London. A thin sheet of 24K leaf is pressed onto skin, usually layered with serums rich in hyaluronic acid or peptides. Some spas add LED, ultrasonic tools, or oxygen infusions. Dermatologists will tell you: the gold sheet itself isn't doing much beyond locking in moisture and creating a sense of occasion. The true benefits come from the serums underneath. But sometimes, luxury is the point.

Why Now?

The timing of gold's comeback is telling. After years of pandemic-induced stress, consumers are leaning into self-care rituals that feel indulgent, grounding, and, yes, a little magical. Gold carries centuries of cultural symbolism - prosperity, vitality, divine radiance - and brands know that story sells.

It's also global. In China and Japan, gold is linked to luck and longevity. Industry reports suggest launches of gold-infused products rose significantly between 2019 and 2023, with Asia-Pacific leading innovation.

And let's be honest: a flecked serum or gilded jar just looks giftable, whether it's Lunar New Year or a London vanity shelf.

So, Miracle Elixir?

Not exactly. Gold isn't a miracle metal, and dermatologists won't call it essential. But when combined with proven actives, it can add antioxidant support, enhance delivery systems, and deliver that immediate lit-from-within glow. More than anything, it's about ritual. Gold taps into something primal and timeless, a little piece of glamour that turns skincare into ceremony. And sometimes, that's reason enough to add a touch of sparkle to your vanity.



Guerlain Meteorites Setting & Finishing Pearls Of Powder

A cult classic for a reason. These multi-colored pearls, now with a touch of gold, blur imperfections and impart a soft-focus, pearlized luminosity that is utterly timeless.



Clive Christian No.1

An icon of luxury, once crowned the world's most expensive perfume, is for those who do not just wear a scent but make a statement. A breathtakingly opulent blend of rare ingredients housed in a diamond-cut, gold-plated bottle.



Chantecaille Gold Recovery Mask

This is luxury through a botanical lens: peptides, silk extracts, and herbs, all supported by gold for soothing and antioxidant synergy. Ideal as an overnight treatment.



Guerlain 24K L'Or Radiance Concentrate With Pure Gold

Liquid jewelry with real 24K flakes, paired with antioxidant-rich honey technology. Works as a luminous primer and skincare hybrid.



La Prairie Pure Gold Radiance Cream

The pinnacle of opulence. This cream does not just sit on the skin; it transforms it with a potent blend of colloidal gold and the brand's exclusive Cellular Complex. The result? A visage that does not just glow but glistens.



Pat McGrath Labs Gold 001

More than a pigment, it is liquid artistry. This iconic gold leaf pigment delivers a high-shine, molten-metal finish that is the secret weapon behind every show-stopping editorial look.



Oribe 24K Gold Pomade

Where high fashion meets hair. This sleek, weightless pomade tames flyaways and adds a brilliant shine with a signature jasmine and sandalwood scent that whispers luxury.



Peter Thomas Roth 24K Gold Mask Pure Luxury Lift & Firm Mask

A social media favorite, this mask pairs colloidal and pure gold with caffeine and hyaluronic acid. The gold adds glamour; the other actives do the heavy lifting.



Peter Thomas Roth 24K Gold Pure Lift & Firm Hydra-Gel Eye Patches

Instant refresh for tired eyes. Caffeine de-puffs, hyaluronic acid hydrates, gold makes it Instagram-worthy.



La Prairie Pure Gold Radiance Concentrate

The OG of gold skincare. A serum that marries colloidal gold with the brand's signature Cellular Complex. Decadent texture, decadent price, decadent glow.



11

111Skin Rose Gold Illuminating Eye Mask

A cult favorite among celebrities, fusing colloidal gold with rose extract and peptides for lifting and brightening under-eyes.



Orogold 24K Deep Tissue Rejuvenation Mask & Collagen Eye Renewal Mask



A true luxury player. Rich night cream infused with 24K gold, shea butter, and green tea. Marketed for deep hydration and anti-aging.

The A Method 24K Gold Snail Growth Factor Serum

A fusion of 24K colloidal gold, snail growth factors, and peptides. Designed to boost skin regeneration, enhance elasticity, and deliver a luminous glow. A standout for combining K-beauty science with gold luxury.



12

13

Orogold 24K Nano Collection

Uses nanotechnology with gold to enhance penetration of vitamins and peptides. Luxe packaging and a true "status" serum.



Estée Lauder Re-Nutriv Ultimate Lift Regenerating Youth Cream

Packed with colloidal gold and Estée Lauder's signature Floralixir Dew. A mainstay in the world of prestige anti-aging creams.



14

Guerlain Abeille Royale Gold Eyetech Eye Serum

Where high fashion meets hair. This sleek, weightless pomade tames flyaways and adds a brilliant shine with a signature jasmine and sandalwood scent that whispers luxury.



Mimi Luzon 24K Pure Gold Treatment Mask

A celebrity red-carpet prep favorite. Pure sheets of 24K gold pressed onto skin after serum application—seen on Bella Hadid, Bar Refaeli, and others.

15

16

Chantecaille 24K Gold Energizing Face Cream

A cult-favorite that fuses nano-particle gold with peptides and plant stem cells. It promises to fight signs of fatigue, boost collagen, and restore skin's resilience, all wrapped in Chantecaille's signature botanical luxury.



17

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Rodial Rose Gold Serum

Lightweight serum with rose extract and 24K colloidal gold. Sits at the intersection of performance and Instagram-worthy glow.



Ahava 24K Gold Mineral Mud Mask

A mineral-rich Dead Sea mud mask infused with 24K gold, designed to detoxify, firm, and add radiance. Combines natural mud therapy with the glamour of gold.





COSMETIC TOURISM: *THE NEW PASSPORT TO REBIRTH*

Forget fridge magnets, today's souvenirs are sharper noses and tighter jawlines. As flights get cheaper and beauty ideals go global, travelers are trading sightseeing for surgery suites.

In the age of curated Instagram lives and 24/7 filters, travel has taken on a new meaning. Souvenir magnets and postcards have given way to sharper jawlines, sculpted cheekbones, and refreshed skin. Cosmetic tourism - the act of jetting off across borders for aesthetic enhancements - has morphed from niche to norm, intertwining medical procedure with wanderlust. The global medical tourism market, enveloping everything from organ transplants to wellness retreats, topped \$54 billion in 2022, growing at a 30% clip annually. But the aesthetic arm is among the most seductive, as people chase perfection across continents where cost, craftsmanship, and cache come together. It is no longer an escapade; it's an upgrade. A luxury and sometimes controversial ritual where bodies become passports, and beauty the ultimate destination.

When Plastic Becomes Part Of Stardom

America has been at the forefront of the beauty makeover culture for decades. From Mary Hart to Oprah, the line between privacy and plastic has blurred. Yet, in recent years, cosmetic procedures have become not only normalized but badge-worthy. Consider Kris Jenner, matriarch of a clan famed for their image oversight. At 69, her recent deep plane facelift, by Ace New York plastic surgeon Dr. Steven Levine, reportedly cost between \$100,000 and \$200,000 and sparked viral conversation. The deep plane technique - more involved than traditional facelifts - repositions deeper facial layers for natural longevity. Meanwhile, Kathy Griffin, the candid comic, openly described her third facelift, eyelid lift, and chin work - performed by Dr. Ben Talei in Beverly Hills. She joked about vanity yet did not gloss over the painful recovery - or the drain tubes. These high-profile cases illuminate a shift: cosmetic surgery is not shameful espionage - it is a conversation starter, a hashtag moment, even a new form of wardrobe extension. But experts remind us: technique names like "deep plane" matter less than finding a board-certified surgeon you trust.

Transformation With Cautionary Tales

Just south of the U.S. border, cities like Tijuana and Cancun are booming hubs for Americans seeking cosmetic procedures at 40-60% of U.S. prices. Packages often bundle surgery, recovery, and even beachside rehab into one streamlined - though medically complex - package. It is lucrative tourism for Mexico. Yet, the border-beauty rush has its controversies. Reports from patient forums and forums reveal stories of botched results and serious complications, including collapsed lungs and substandard care. While there are excellent surgeons and safety protocols, because it's medical tourism, the margin for error - and the cost of mistakes - is higher.

Ornamentation Meets Identity

In the Middle East, beauty augmentation is both public and political. Cosmetic enhancements aren't always taboo; they are celebrated. Lebanese pop icons like Haifa Wehbe and Elissa are rumored to have had surgery - not quietly, but as a modern ritual of reinvention.



A Lebanese observer once remarked, "They get pictures of celebrities and say, 'I want to look like him or her.'" In other words: cosmetically curated beauty became a cultural benchmark. In the Gulf, Dubai has raised aesthetic tourism to spectacle. Clinics are luxury hotels, injecting both fillers and va-va-voom with equal precision. Concierge chauffeurs, VIP recovery suites, and international clientele have turned cosmetic care into couture.

Celebrities Who Gave Surgery Center Stage

Kris Jenner, as noted, became a case study in how high-investment facelifts re-enter public discourse as style statements. Kathy Griffin broke the façade of vanity with brutal honesty - facelift, eyelid surgery, chin, drains, and scarves - then marched right into Pilates in Malibu. In the Middle East, icons like Haifa Wehbe practically turned their aesthetic transformation into national dialogue - viral before-and-after photos fuel fandom and mimicry alike.

Couture For The Body: The Surgical Aesthetic

These transformations do not happen in sterile rooms alone - they are meticulously choreographed performances, where beauty intersects with branding. A carefully executed facelift or BBL becomes runway-worthy. Surgeons become uncredited artists, and bodies the custom-tailored couture. But unlike fabric, bodies age, shift, and heal unpredictably. The stakes - and stigmas - are higher. In chasing youth or identity, patients can lose something vital: authenticity. Critics worry beauty becomes homogenized, pluralistic diversity replaced by collective cosmetic templates.

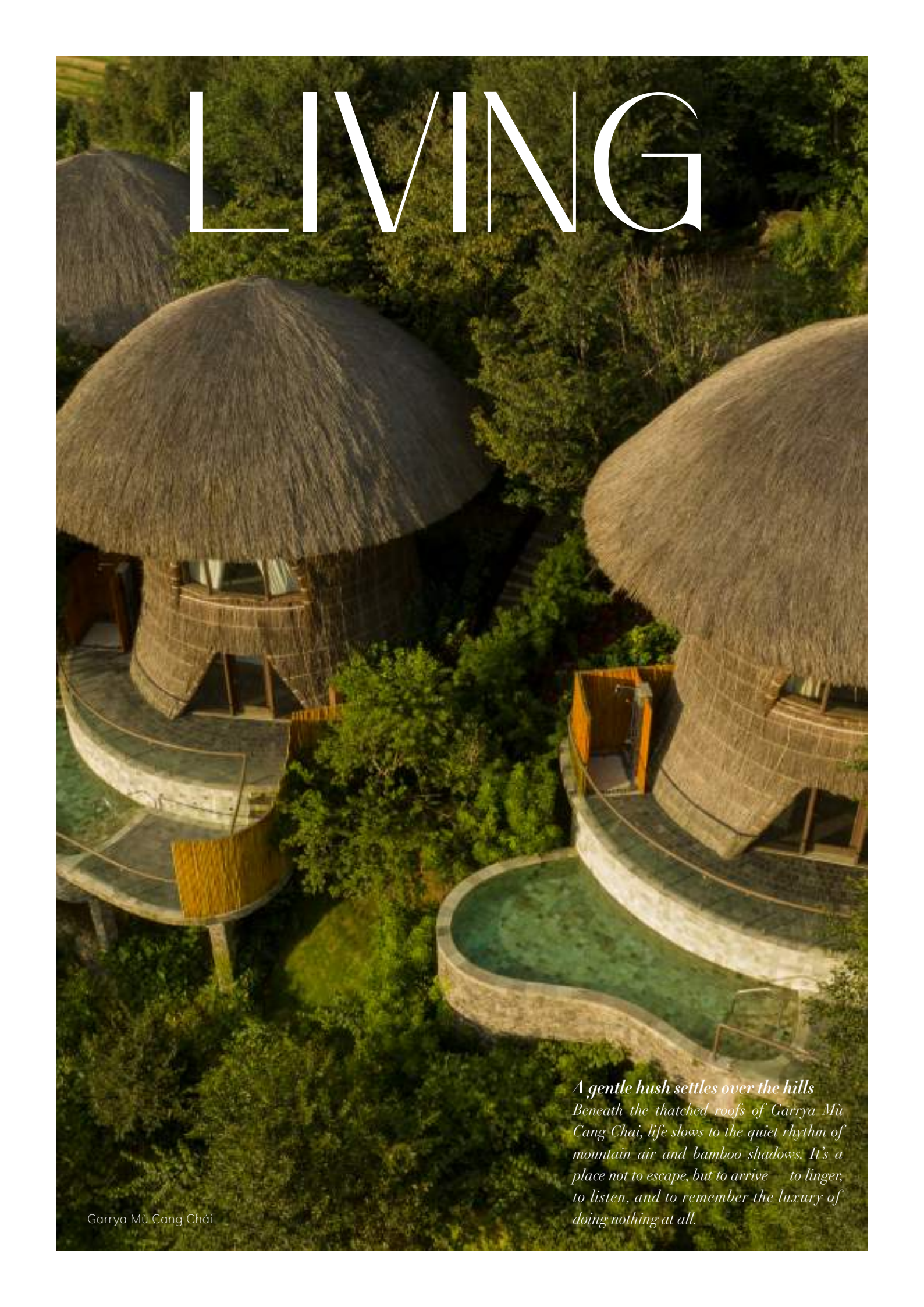
The Future: Visas, AI, And Ethical Questions

The next wave is washing in fast. Think plastic surgery visas, teleconsults that begin before you land, and aesthetic-yoga retreats where fraxel treatments accompany matcha lattes. Yet, as cosmetic tourism accelerates, so do ethical dilemmas. Are we commodifying beauty at the cost of safety and self? Does the quest for global glamour erode cultural uniqueness?

Beauty Without Borders But Always Personal

Beauty once meant a passport stamp, a sunset snapshot. Now, in an age of cosmetic passports, surgeries sit beside souvenirs. The global consumer is labeled - and sometimes literally sculpted. But amidst this cross-border competition for beauty, one truth remains: health is deeply personal, even when beauty becomes a status symbol. So, yes, board the flight if you're prepared - but remember to bring a trusted doctor, a realistic heart, and the humility that not all transformations require passports.

LIVING



Garrya Mù Cang Chái

*A gentle hush settles over the hills
Beneath the thatched roofs of Garrya Mù
Cang Chai, life slows to the quiet rhythm of
mountain air and bamboo shadows. It's a
place not to escape, but to arrive — to linger,
to listen, and to remember the luxury of
doing nothing at all.*



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The New *BIG FOUR* *Fashion Capitals*

The balance of fashion power is shifting. No longer confined to Paris's gilded salons or New York's lofts, the style conversation is now shaped by Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, and Copenhagen — cities where culture, commerce, and creativity are rewriting the rules of what it means to be a fashion capital.

Fashion has always been a passport, crossing borders with ease and carrying ideas faster than any diplomat could. For decades, the “Big Four” — Paris, Milan, New York, London — ruled with imperial authority, dictating silhouettes, palettes, and even hemlines. But in 2025, the symphony sounds different. A new quartet has emerged, its tone sharper, bolder, and decidedly more global: Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, Copenhagen. These cities are not merely staging fashion weeks; they are reframing the narrative of style itself.

Tokyo: Tradition Meets Punk

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in the 1980s, when Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yohji Yamamoto, and Issey Miyake stormed Paris, dismantling the Western hourglass and replacing it with asymmetry and intellect. “I want girls to feel safe in Yohji clothes,” Yamamoto once said — and he meant it literally, offering garments as shields rather than seductions. That rebellious spirit is still Tokyo's heartbeat. Harajuku's labyrinth of side streets is a living runway, where teens layer vintage Comme des Garçons with manga-inspired accessories, turning sidewalks into mood boards. Luxury houses are paying attention: Kering reports double-digit growth in Japan, even as other markets cool. The weak yen has lured global shoppers, and Tokyo's legendary customer service — from private “gaisho” shopping salons to perfectly wrapped purchases — has turned the city into Asia's most refined luxury destination. Tokyo does not just follow fashion cycles; it bends them, proving that eccentricity can be both commercial and couture. Want girls to feel safe in Yohji clothes,” Yamamoto once said — and he meant it literally, offering garments as shields rather than seductions. That rebellious spirit is still Tokyo's heartbeat. Harajuku's labyrinth of side streets is a living runway, where teens layer vintage Comme des Garçons with manga-inspired accessories, turning sidewalks into mood boards. Luxury houses are paying attention: Kering reports double-digit growth in Japan, even as other markets cool. The weak yen has lured global shoppers, and Tokyo's legendary customer service — from private “gaisho” shopping salons to perfectly wrapped purchases — has turned the city into Asia's most refined luxury destination. Tokyo does not just follow fashion cycles; it bends them, proving that eccentricity can be both commercial and couture.





Seoul: The Hallyu Effect

If Tokyo is the philosopher of fashion, Seoul is its pop star. Once a quiet consumer of Western trends, the city now exports them — amplified by the unstoppable force of the Korean Wave. BTS, Blackpink, and K-dramas have transformed hanbok silhouettes, streetwear codes, and even beauty rituals into global obsessions.

South Koreans are the world's top per-capita luxury shoppers, and their influence is reshaping retail. When Dior staged its Fall / Winter 2022 show in Seoul, it was not just spectacle — it was strategy. The city has become a bellwether, where a look's success on the runway is measured as much in Instagram posts as in sales figures.

Seoul's fashion DNA is sleek and fearless: oversized coats, sculptural tailoring, neutral palettes punctuated by electric accents. Local brands like Low Classic, Andersson Bell, and Minju Kim are finding Western audiences eager for their polished minimalism. Even the retail landscape feels curated for discovery: Garosugil in Gangnam is lined with concept stores that merge fashion, art, and coffee culture, while Dongdaemun Design Plaza, Zaha Hadid's gleaming landmark, serves as the city's futuristic catwalk.

Seoul no longer borrows from fashion capitals — it sets the tempo.



Shanghai: Drama in High Definition

Shanghai is not subtle — and that is precisely its charm. The city that dazzled in the 1920s has reclaimed its title as China's fashion capital with a vengeance. International brands are locked in a race to secure flagships along West Nanjing Road, where malls look more like cathedrals of luxury. Shanghai Fashion Week now draws millions of viewers online, a hybrid of couture spectacle and digital innovation. Here, fashion is status, but it's also performance art. Street style is high-octane: Balenciaga sneakers under cheongsam-inspired coats, Louis Vuitton trunks as casual props. Local designers — Ziggy Chen, Uma Wang, Samuel Gui Yang — are rising fast, offering collections that channel China's cultural heritage with a contemporary edge. "When I started attending shows abroad, people would dismiss me — 'Oh, so you are from China,'" designer Lu Kun recalls.

"Now they lean in." Shanghai has flipped the narrative; no longer a market to conquer, but a stage the world must respect.



Copenhagen: Green, Clean, and Chic

And then there's Copenhagen, the quiet radical. This Nordic capital has turned sustainability from a trend into a mandate. Since 2023, Copenhagen Fashion Week has required participating brands to meet 18 strict sustainability criteria — from material sourcing to inclusivity — making it the most progressive of the fashion weeks. Its style is a study in contrast: practical yet playful, minimal yet romantic. Balloon trousers meet boxy blazers, sherbet-pink scarves brighten neutral trenches, and recycled fabrics are cut so precisely they feel couture. This is not virtue signaling — it is proof that ethics and aesthetics can coexist.

Retail reflects the same ethos: concept stores like Storm merge avant-garde fashion with art and design, while ILLUM curates global luxury with Scandinavian restraint. In Copenhagen, fashion feels less like a performance and more like a conversation about how we live — and how we will live tomorrow.

The New Map of Fashion

Together, Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, and Copenhagen are redrawing fashion's map. They are proof that creativity no longer flows from a single Western fountain but from a constellation of global nodes, each with its own aesthetic grammar and cultural currency. For Paris, Milan, New York, and London, the message is clear: the monopoly is over. The future of fashion is a dialogue — bold, diverse, and borderless. And if you listen closely, you can hear the rhythm of this new quartet, playing fashion's next movement.



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Fashion's Cinematic Soul

Why Film Still Matters *in the Age of TikTok*

If TikTok is fashion's speed date, film is the long, smoldering love affair: One gives trends by Tuesday, the other gives Audrey Hepburn forever!

Film has long given fashion its mythic resonance, from Audrey Hepburn's Givenchy gowns to the kaleidoscopic fantasies of Baz Luhrmann. Yet today, with TikTok condensing trends into 15-second cycles, one question emerges: does fashion still need cinema? The answer, as history and industry remind us, is a resounding yes. Fashion without film risks losing not just its glamour, but its memory.

The Myth-Making Machine

Fashion has always been about more than clothes. It is a system of symbols, of aspiration and allure. But those symbols need a medium strong enough to endure, to seep into cultural memory. That medium, for over a century, has been film. When Marilyn Monroe sang "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), clad in William Travilla's shocking pink satin gown, she created more than a costume moment - she carved an archetype of glamour. When Audrey Hepburn appeared outside Tiffany's in Givenchy's little black dress in 1961, she elevated a simple garment into an eternal emblem of sophistication. Fashion magazines, however powerful, could not offer that kind of permanence. A magazine cover fades by month's end; a movie lives on in endless screenings, remakes, and homages.

TikTok, by contrast, devours novelty. A micro-trend might light up the algorithm for a week - the "Tomato Girl Summer" aesthetic, or "Coastal Grandmother Chic" - only to be discarded with the next swipe. What film offers is not just trend, but myth: images powerful enough to transcend time.

From Hollywood to Haute Couture

Fashion's relationship with cinema has always been symbiotic. Hollywood gave Parisian couture its global stage; couture gave Hollywood stars their immortal silhouettes. Consider Edith Head, who dressed everyone from Grace Kelly to Elizabeth Taylor; her Oscar-winning designs influencing department store racks as much as runway collections. Designers have long recognized cinema's cultural capital. Yves Saint Laurent's partnership with Catherine Deneuve in *Belle de Jour* (1967) not only dressed the actress but cemented Saint Laurent's modernist vision of Parisian chic. Decades later, Baz Luhrmann's short films for Chanel No. 5 starring Nicole Kidman or Gisele Bündchen reimaged perfume advertising as cinematic event. Fashion houses continue to invest in the language of cinema precisely because it creates mythology. Gucci's collaboration with Ridley Scott on *House of Gucci* turned corporate family intrigue into pop spectacle. Prada regularly partners with auteurs like Wes Anderson,



Roman Polanski, and Ridley Scott to craft campaigns that feel like short films, not mere commercials. These are not frivolous indulgences; they are calculated efforts to secure a place in the cultural imagination.

Fashion Films as Cultural Memory

Fashion films - whether feature-length dramas like *The Devil Wears Prada* or documentaries like *The September Issue* - serve as archives of style. They not only showcase garments but contextualize them within human stories: ambition, desire, rebellion, transformation. Think of *Clueless* (1995), with its yellow plaid suit and digital wardrobe interface - both a satire and prophecy of consumerist fashion culture. Or *Phantom Thread* (2017), which meticulously dramatized couture's obsessive rituals. These films are not disposable "content". They are cultural texts, ensuring that the labor, artistry, and social meanings of clothing are not lost in the scroll. TikTok can replicate the surface - the plaid, the silhouette, but it cannot tell the deeper story of class, aspiration, or identity embedded in clothes. Without film, fashion risks losing its archive of meaning.

The Industry's Dilemma: Spectacle or Substance?

The fashion industry itself stands at a crossroads. On the one hand, it benefits enormously from TikTok. Viral trends drive sales, especially among Gen Z consumers who discover brands through "GRWM" videos and micro-aesthetics. On the other hand, the industry knows that long-term cultural capital requires more than virality.

This is why, even in 2025, houses like Dior, Gucci, and Chanel continue to stage fashion films or fund cinematic collaborations. Maria Grazia Chiuri's Dior shorts, directed by feminist filmmakers, reinterpret couture as narrative; Alessandro Michele's surreal Gucci "Ouverture" series transformed the fashion show into episodic cinema. These projects may not go viral like a TikTok challenge, but they embed brands into cultural consciousness with far more longevity.

Why Fashion Still Needs Film

Film allows fashion to breathe, to unfold, to be remembered. It offers depth in an era of surfaces, permanence in a world of flux. It creates a space where clothing is not just consumed but contemplated. Audrey Hepburn's black dress at Tiffany's still influences designers six decades later—not because it was trendy in 1961, but because it was immortalized through story. Compare that to last summer's TikTok "Barbiecore" - a bubblegum-pink aesthetic that flared brightly and then fizzled by autumn. One lives on in cultural mythology; the other disappears into algorithmic ether. Fashion without film risks becoming fashion without memory. And memory is what transforms garments into icons.

The Future: A Necessary Coexistence

Does this mean TikTok has no place in fashion? Of course not. Social media expands reach, democratizes voices, and keeps the industry responsive. But it cannot replace the cinematic register. The challenge - and opportunity - for brands is to balance both. Imagine this future: TikTok generates the spark, the instant buzz. Film provides the lasting flame, embedding those sparks into cultural memory. Together, they create a layered ecosystem where immediacy coexists with legacy.

Fashion needs TikTok for virality. But it needs film for immortality.

Closing Thoughts

Cinema has always been fashion's great mirror and magnifier. It translates fabric into fantasy, style into story, clothing into cultural artifacts. In an age where algorithms demand endless novelty, film insists on depth, permanence, and poetry. If fashion abandons cinema in favor of TikTok alone, it risks becoming ephemeral - no different than a fleeting filter or meme. But if it sustains its cinematic soul, fashion remains what it has always aspired to be: not just garments on a body, but stories stitched into culture, myths woven into memory. And that is why, even under the glare of TikTok's hyper-speed spotlight, fashion still needs film.

"Fashion's relationship with cinema has always been symbiotic. Hollywood gave Parisian couture its global stage; couture gave Hollywood stars their immortal silhouettes."

When Fashion Meets Film

ELEVEN CINEMATIC STORIES

THAT SHAPED STYLE

Behind every fierce heel and iconic hem lies a story of ambition, ego, and very expensive thread. These eleven films reveal fashion's juiciest and most cinematic secrets!

Fashion is not only about fabric, fit, and finish; it is about memory, myth, and meaning. Few art forms capture this interplay as vividly as cinema. A dress on screen can be more than a costume. It can be character, culture, even revolution. Over the decades, films have become fashion bibles, not through glossy stills alone, but through narrative power, emotion, and the ineffable way that clothes move when a character breathes life into them. Here are eleven films that reveal fashion's paradoxes: its glamour and absurdity, its artistry and its commerce, its eternal hunger to reinvent, and its inability to escape its own reflection.

Prêt-à-Porter (1994) The Circus Exposed

Robert Altman's *Prêt-à-Porter* is not a love letter to fashion, but a satirical postcard. Shot in Paris, it is a kaleidoscope of chaos, a week-long romp through Fashion Week that reveals an industry intoxicated by its own image. There are editors jostling for seats, designers flouncing backstage, and a ludicrous final runway in which models march naked - a metaphor as subtle as a feather boa, yet unforgettable. Altman's genius was not in flattering fashion but in puncturing its balloon. He showed how the industry, with its obsession with status and spectacle, often teeters on the edge of parody. And yet, beneath the laughter, there is truth: fashion is theatre, and the runway is its stage. The film reminds us that fashion is not just about beauty; it is also about absurdity, ego, and excess.

Phantom Thread (2017)

Genius and Tyranny in Couture

Paul Thomas Anderson's *Phantom Thread* is the antithesis of Altman's chaos. It is slow, meticulous, and suffused with dread - a meditation on obsession. Daniel Day-Lewis's Reynolds Woodcock, a fictional couturier in 1950s London, is the embodiment of couture's beauty and cruelty: a man who can coax silk into poetry, but who tyrannises the women around him. The film captures couture's rituals: hand-stitching hems, measuring models with forensic precision, the silence of the atelier punctuated only by the snip of scissors. Yet Anderson is honest about the price of genius. Beauty here is not benign; it is suffocating, controlling, and, at times, destructive. Watching *Phantom Thread* is like slipping into a gown woven of silk and thorns. Exquisitely, but impossible to forget.



Phantom Thread Poster



Some screens in Phantom Thread



The September Issue (2009) Power in Print

Few documentaries have captured the balance of power and creativity as precisely as *The September Issue*. Directed by R.J. Cutler opens the doors of *Vogue* during the making of its legendary September 2007 edition, which is the thickest, glossiest, most influential issue in magazine history. At its heart is the battle, or dance, between Anna Wintour, the imperious editor-in-chief, and Grace Coddington, the visionary creative director. Wintour is steel in sunglasses; Coddington is fire in flowing red hair. Their clashes, compromises, and creative triumphs reveal an industry where commerce and creativity are perpetually at odds. What makes the film iconic is not just its access but its honesty. It shows fashion as empire: powerful, flawed, indispensable. For anyone who has ever wondered how an image can ripple across the globe and dictate what women wear, *The September Issue* is the answer.



Valentino: The Last Emperor (2008) A Curtain Falls on Couture

If *Phantom Thread* is fiction, *Valentino: The Last Emperor* is its elegiac reality. Directed by Matt Tyrnauer, the documentary follows Valentino Garavani through his final years at the helm of his house, culminating in his spectacular 45th anniversary show in Rome. What we see is not just gowns. Though they are breathtaking in their chiffon clouds and crimson cascades, but the machinery of haute couture. The seamstresses whose hands make magic. The partner, Giancarlo Giammetti, who steadies Valentino's temper and vision. And the looming shadow of corporate ownership, as the house is sold to private equity. It is a love story: between designer and craft, between Valentino and Giancarlo, but also a lament. A world where beauty reigned supreme is fading, overtaken by spreadsheets and shareholders. The emperor takes his final bow, and with him, a chapter closes.



Coco Before Chanel (2009) Rebellion in a Little Black Dress

Before she became a legend, Gabrielle Chanel was a misfit. *Coco Before Chanel*, starring Audrey Tautou, is less a biopic than a parable of rebellion. It contrasts the frills and corsets of Belle Époque society with Chanel's austere vision: comfort, line, and liberation. The film captures Chanel's refusal to conform: her rejection of ornament, her insistence on simplicity, her creation of androgynous chic long before the word existed. Watching Tautou stalk through salons in crisp white shirts and boyish hats, one realizes that Chanel's revolution was not aesthetic alone but cultural. She unshackled women from clothing that constrained, offering garments that liberated. Fashion, in her hands, became not costume but freedom.

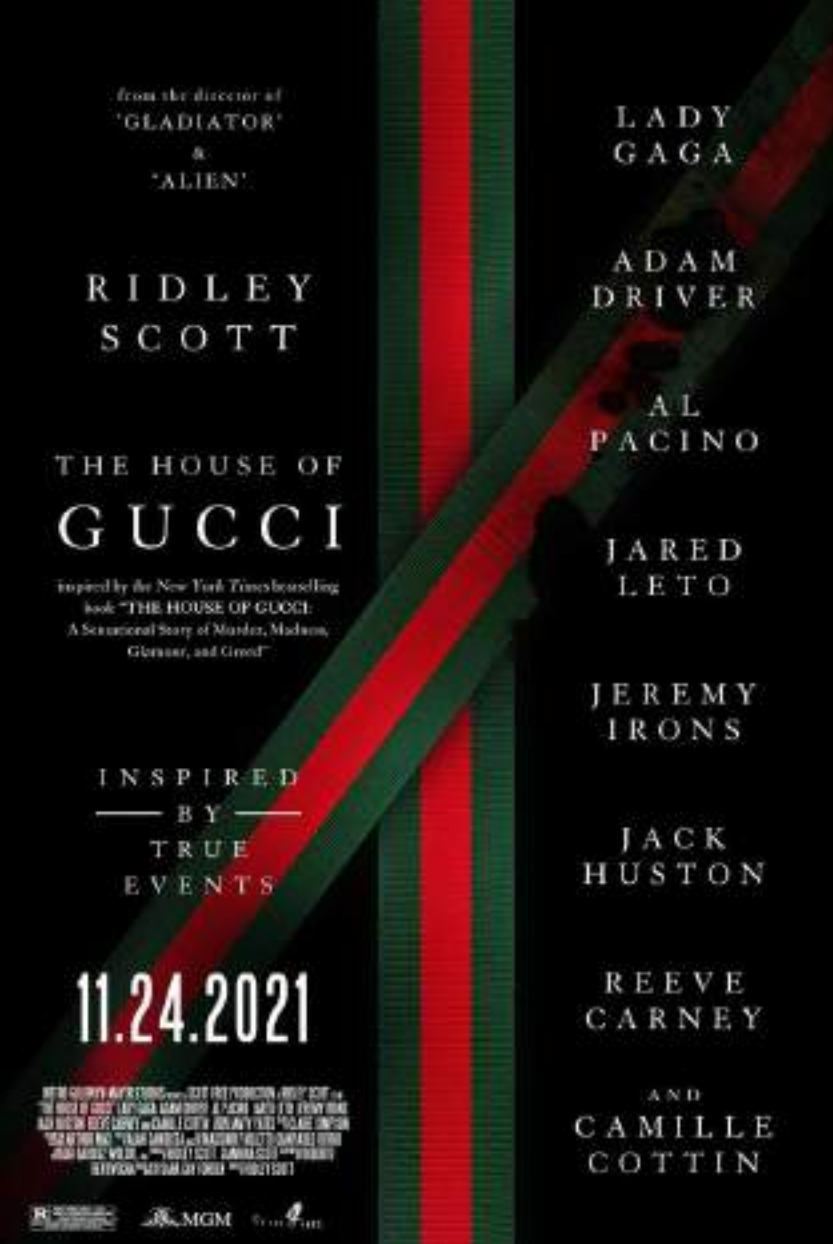
The Devil Wears Prada (2006) **Fashion's Fearsome Face**

It is tempting to dismiss *The Devil Wears Prada* as froth, but that would be to underestimate its power. Meryl Streep's Miranda Priestly is a caricature, yes, but one rooted in reality. Editors who dictate taste with a raised eyebrow do exist, and they shape industries and careers with terrifying efficiency. The film is a parable of power, ambition, and the compromises demanded by fashion's rarefied world. Anne Hathaway's Andrea evolves from sloppy intern to sleek insider, her wardrobe charting her transformation as surely as any dialogue. Valentino, Chanel, and Jimmy Choo parade across the screen, but the true subject is identity: what we lose and what we gain when we enter fashion's gilded cage.



McQueen (2018) **The Dark Poet of Fashion**

No designer embodied the extremes of beauty and brutality like Alexander McQueen, and no documentary has captured his contradictions as poignantly as *McQueen*. Directed by Ian Bonhôte and Peter Ettedgui, it is a mosaic of archive footage, runway shows, and personal testimonies that reveal a man who turned trauma into theatre. McQueen's shows were not mere presentations. They were spectacles that blurred art, performance, and nightmares. Models walked through glass boxes of moths, down runways lined with fire, or became cyborgs sprayed by robots. Behind this genius was pain: personal, psychological, and ultimately unbearable. The film is not an easy watch. But it is essential. It shows that fashion, at its most powerful, can be as devastating as it is dazzling.



House of Gucci (2021) Fashion as Family Feud

Ridley Scott's *House of Gucci* is as operatic as its subject: a dynasty undone by ambition, betrayal, and murder. Lady Gaga chews scenery in vintage Gucci power suits, Adam Driver broods, and Al Pacino declaims. It is camp, yes, but also cautionary. The fashion is meticulously curated: bamboo-handle bags, silk scarves, double-G belts. But beneath the glamour lies a truth: luxury is fragile. It is built not only on leather and logos but on family, trust, and legacy. When those crumble, even an empire as mighty as Gucci can falter.

Bill Cunningham New York (2010) The Man Who Saw Everything

While other films revel in excess, *Bill Cunningham New York* is about humility. Cunningham, the bicycle-riding photographer for *The New York Times*, documented fashion not on catwalks but on sidewalks. His lens found poetry in a passerby's coat, humour in a hat, dignity in a uniform. The film is a love letter to a man who believed fashion belonged to everyone, not just the elite. Cunningham's modesty was radical in an industry addicted to ego. His eye was sharp, his heart open. He reminds us that fashion, at its best, is democratic.

Yves Saint Laurent (2014) Fragility and Fire

Jalil Lespert's *Yves Saint Laurent* is not the definitive film on the designer, but it is a compelling portrait of fragility wrapped in brilliance. Pierre Niney embodies YSL as a man whose radical creativity, from the Mondrian dress to Le Smoking tuxedo that reshaped women's wardrobes. However, his personal life was haunted by addiction and insecurity. The film captures the paradox of Saint Laurent: a visionary who gave women power through clothes, yet who struggled to control his own demons. Suzy might note the melancholy: genius rarely comes without cost.

Unzipped (1995) Isaac Mizrahi's Comic Genius

Douglas Kreeve's *Unzipped* is camp, chaotic, and utterly delightful. It follows designer Isaac Mizrahi as he prepares his fall 1994 collection, with cameos from Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell, and Linda Evangelista. Mizrahi is witty, neurotic, and endlessly entertaining - a reminder that fashion, for all its drama, can also be joyous.

The film captures the madness of show preparation, the sting of criticism, and the sheer thrill of creation. It is fashion as comedy, and comedy as truth.

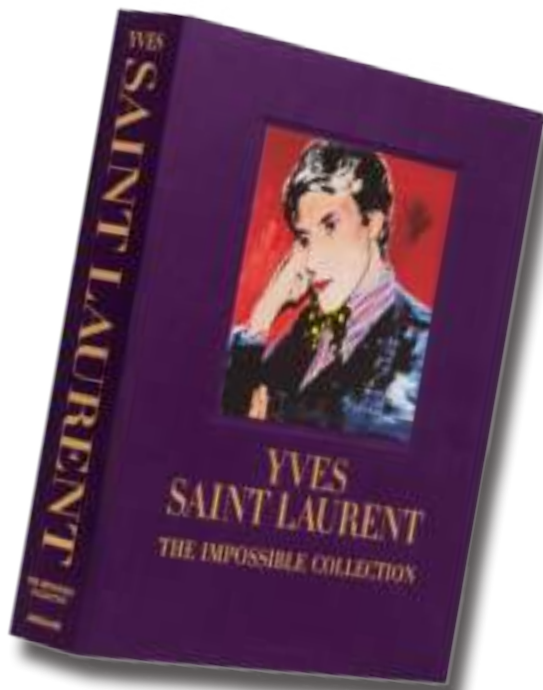
Final Curtain

What unites these twelve films is not their glamour alone but their candour. They show fashion as empire, as art, as folly, as love. They remind us that clothes are not just fabric, but narrative - threads that bind us to culture, memory, and meaning. Cinema, like couture, is a mirror: it reveals not only how we dress, but who we are.

THE READING ROOM

COUTURE IN TABLE BOOKS

Like jewel-box museums in miniature, these volumes archive fashion's most exquisite moments - stitched not in silk, but in paper, ink, and imagination. A fashion coffee table book is not just for show. The best of them go beyond glossy décor and become cultural documents - part art object, part academic record. They tell the story of a designer's obsessions and triumphs, and sometimes their flops too. PAVE Magazine selects ten essential tomes that matter - from Galliano's theatre at Dior to Abloh's revolution at Louis Vuitton - books that do more than just sit prettily under a vase of peonies.



Valentino: Themes and Variations

Themes and Variations is Valentino stripped back to its essence - and that essence is elegance. Sculptural gowns, impeccable lines, exuberant florals: every page confirms that Valentino codified an idea of beauty so complete that even his successors hesitate to tamper with it. This book is a reliquary of couture discipline - and a challenge to the over-decorated maximalism of today.



Yves Saint Laurent: The Impossible Collection

This is curation as love affair. Laurence Benaïm chooses 100 of YSL's most era-defining pieces - Mondrian, Ballets Russes, Le Smoking - and makes the case that Saint Laurent was not just a designer, but a cultural architect. This book is heavy in every sense: it is printed on museum-quality paper and freighted with reverence. Not one for casual browsing, but an essential pilgrimage for anyone serious about fashion's canon.



Chanel: Collections and Creations

There are countless books on Chanel, but Danièle Bott's Collections and Creations is among the most intelligent. By organizing the house around five timeless emblems - the suit, the camellia, the LBD, the jewels, and the perfume - she reveals the secret of Chanel's immortality: it repeats itself, and yet is never the same. Lagerfeld's sketches and the archival images are a reminder that true modernity lies in discipline, not constant reinvention.

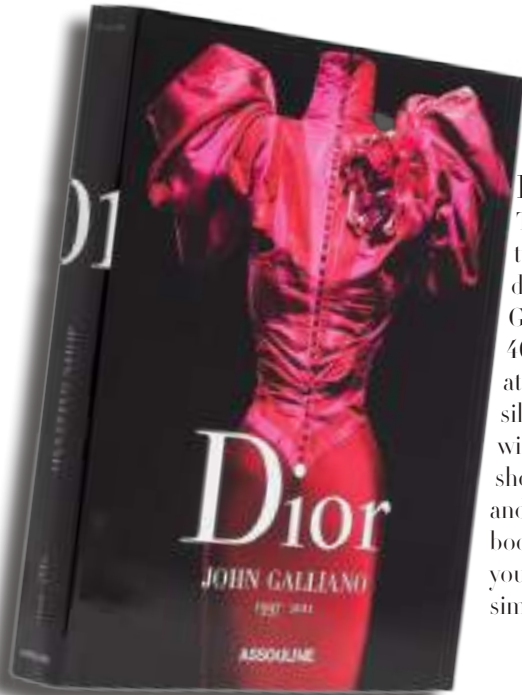
Fendi by Karl Lagerfeld

Fifty years at one house - try imagining that today. Fendi by Karl Lagerfeld unpacks an era where Lagerfeld used fur as if it were cloth, reinventing it season after season. Original sketches, logos, interviews - it is all here, and it proves that his real genius lay in longevity without stagnation. This is not a flashy book but a slow-burn study of sustained creativity.



Vivienne Westwood Catwalk

Here's punk in hardcover. Vivienne Westwood Catwalk chronicles 1,100 looks of rebellion and baroque theatre. It shows that Westwood was not simply an agitator but a technician - a master of drape, cut, and historical quotation. The book's scale is almost overwhelming, but then, so was Westwood. It's a fitting reminder that her fashion was never about fitting in.



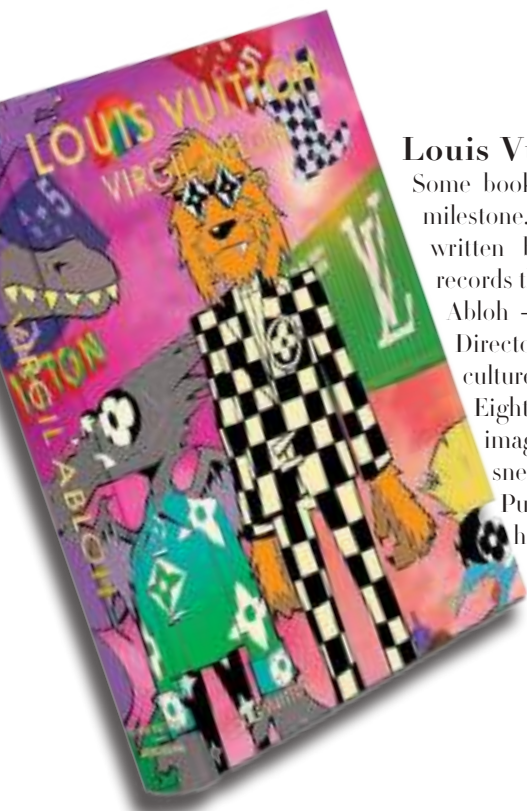
Dior by John Galliano

This is Dior with the volume turned up - drama, danger, and devastating beauty. Dior by John Galliano is packed with over 400 images that capture couture at its most operatic. Galliano's silhouettes, cinched and sculpted within an inch of their lives, are shot by masters like Steven Meisel and Irving Penn. This is not a quiet book; it is a visual aria that reminds you Galliano could make even a simple jacket feel like a plot twist.



Grace: Thirty Years of Fashion at Vogue

Grace Coddington's Thirty Years of Fashion at Vogue is a rare thing: an editor's-eye view of fashion history. It's as much memoir as it is mood board, with forewords from Karl Lagerfeld and Anna Wintour that hint at the power Grace wielded behind the scenes. From Meisel's grunge heroines to Penn's purity, the book reveals that Coddington was the quiet auteur of Vogue's golden age. It's a must-have for anyone who thinks the magic only happens on the runway.



Louis Vuitton: Virgil Abloh

Some books are souvenirs; this one is a milestone. Louis Vuitton: Virgil Abloh, written by Anders Christian Madsen, records the seismic shift that came when Abloh - the first Black Men's Artistic Director of the house - brought street culture into Vuitton's gilded salons. Eight themed chapters and 320 images map his hybrid vision of sneakers, tailoring, and poetry. Purists may grumble, but this is history - and the book makes its case with clarity and style.



Chanel Mobile Art Pavilion

CATWALKS *converge* WITH SKYLINES

What do architects and fashion designers have in common? They both create artworks that people can live in. Chanel once said: “Fashion is architecture; it is a matter of proportions”. And she was right.

From buildings to clothings

In the 1960s, the avant-garde group Archigram redefined design with the visionary Suitaloon and Cushicle projects. They transformed buildings into inflatable garments, collapsing the line between clothing and shelter. Though never realized, these concepts foreshadowed decades of daring experiments at the crossroads of fashion and architecture. Zaha Hadid went further still. Her futuristic NOVA shoe for United Nude — a 16.5 cm heel of fiberglass and metallic rubber, felt more like a building in motion than footwear. Beyond shoes, she left her mark on Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Bvlgari, proving that no element was too small for architectural reinvention, from a handbag handle to a touring pavilion. Others have followed. Ma Yansong translated his flowing silhouettes into Fendi accessories. Virgil Abloh, trained in civil engineering and architecture, reinvented Louis Vuitton menswear with Bauhaus-inspired clarity.



Meanwhile, fashion houses increasingly stage collections inside architectural landmarks — Louis Vuitton at Saarinen's TWA Flight Center, Dior at Blenheim Palace, turning architecture into fashionable spaces. From Pierre Balmain's dictum that "dressmaking is the architecture of movement" to Thierry Mugler's sculptural couture, the message is clear: architecture builds the spaces we inhabit, while fashion constructs the spaces we wear.

Fashionable architecture

The influence flows both ways: if architects sometimes design clothes, many fashion designers think like architects. Both disciplines share a fascination with space, structure, and form, translating ideas of shelter and scale into patterns, textures, and silhouettes. Few embody this dialogue as powerfully as Hussein Chalayan, whose Convertible Skirt Table of the 1990s turned

clothing into furniture with a single gesture. His work, displayed in museums like Somerset House and the Design Museum, is studied as seriously as architectural drawings.

Rei Kawakubo, founder of Comme des Garçons, is often hailed as an "architect of clothes." Her abstract silhouettes distort the human form, much like architecture manipulates spatial perception. Yohji Yamamoto brought architectural sensibility to tailoring. Fusing Japanese tradition with radical cuts, he created garments celebrated as much for their design mastery as their wearability. His 2012 retrospective at Ron Arad's Design Museum Holon placed his pieces in dialogue with the museum's curved architecture. "Conflicts and harmonies between my work and those of architects are interesting to me," he said. At the frontier is Iris van Herpen, fashion's great futurist. Famous for 3D-printed couture, she has collaborated with architects like Niccolò Casas and Julia Koerner, producing garments

that resemble crystalline facades or kinetic structures. Her pieces move with the body yet behave like architecture — responsive environments in miniature. And Nicolas Ghesquière of Louis Vuitton approaches architecture through staging. His runway shows unfold in icons like Oscar Niemeyer's Niterói Museum in Brazil, Bob Hope's futuristic Palm Springs estate, and I. M. Pei's Miho Museum in Japan.

Legendary Partnerships and Crossovers

Some collaborations between architects and fashion houses have gone beyond one-off experiments, evolving into enduring creative partnerships that continue to shape both fields. Take Frank Gehry and Louis Vuitton, a relationship that began in 2014 with the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris. Since then, Gehry's hand has appeared across handbags, perfume bottles, and store concepts, each project blurring art, architecture, and luxury. Their bond was spotlighted at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2023, where Gehry unveiled a limited-edition series of 11 Capucines handbags. Interpreted through four themes — Architecture and Form, Material Exploration, Animals, and Twisted Box, the bags were not mere accessories but precious collectible sculptures. A year later, the partnership lit up Art Basel Paris at the Grand Palais, where Gehry's monumental White Fish Lamp illuminated the palace's Balcon d'Honneur, accompanied by wooden arches riffing on his signature geometries. It was architecture scaled down, yet no less spectacular. If Gehry brings sculptural gravitas, Rem Koolhaas and Prada exemplify how architecture and fashion can evolve together. Beyond reimagined backpacks, Koolhaas's OMA transformed a former Milanese distillery into the Fondazione Prada in 2015 — a sprawling cultural complex that blurred boundaries between art, design, and commerce. Their collaboration extends to stores, books, and stage sets, forging an ongoing dialogue that has made Prada synonymous with architectural daring. No designer embraced this interplay more wholeheartedly than Issey Miyake. Known for treating space as an extension of fabric, Miyake turned his boutiques into architectural laboratories. From Shiro Kuramata's early Tokyo interiors in the 1970s to Frank Gehry's origami-like Tribeca store decades later, his showrooms offered architects a global platform. Collaborators included David Chipperfield, Toshiko Mori, and Gordon Kipping, each translating Miyake's pleats and folds into spatial form. In 2007, Issey Miyake worked with Tadao Ando to create 21_21 DESIGN SIGHT, a freestanding museum in Tokyo's Midtown. Zaha Hadid, too, saw fashion as a natural canvas for her futuristic vision. She created the Chanel Mobile Pavilion, a 700-square-meter traveling exhibition space. Touring from Hong Kong to New York before reaching its final home at Paris's Institut du Monde Arabe, the pavilion was conceived as a tribute to Chanel's legacy. Inside, vaulted forms, translucent ceilings, and sculpted light created an artificial landscape where art and fashion converged. A younger generation of architects has followed suit. Ki Sato, founder of the Tokyo-based studio Nendo, approaches design with playful minimalism that has charmed fashion houses from Louis

Vuitton to Hermes and COS. His 2013 collaboration with Louis Vuitton produced the Surface Lamp for the brand's Objets Nomades line — a portable, sculptural piece that nodded to Vuitton's travel heritage.

For Sato, the smallest design detail could tell a bigger story, and his whimsical touch brought intimacy and humor to the world of luxury fashion. These examples show how deeply entwined the disciplines have become. For fashion designers, collaborating with architects offers gravitas, permanence, and a new way to stage identity. For architects, fashion provides immediacy and intimacy, a chance to shrink monumental ideas into objects worn, carried, or experienced on a human scale.

Shared Ideals, Sustainability, and Future Horizons

At their core, fashion and architecture begin with the human body. One shelters it; the other adorns it. Both balance function and form, and both tell stories, whether it's a skyline or a silhouette. As Maison Margiela once noted: "The most important similarity between fashion and architecture is that they share the same starting point: the human body."

Sustainability has become their shared frontier. Architects experiment with adaptive reuse and energy efficiency, while designers embrace upcycling and circular design. Together, they create recyclable pop-up shops or garments crafted from repurposed building materials, like Bjarke Ingels Group's modular stores for Ganni or Lina Ghotmeh's eco-minded projects with Hermès. Technology further binds them. Parametric modeling in architecture inspires couture's 3D-printed dresses; adaptive buildings mirror smart textiles

that respond to wearers. As digital tools evolve, the line between inhabitable and wearable design grows thinner. Cultural exchange deepens the dialogue. Western architects borrow from Asian textiles; Asian designers echo modernist minimalism. Arabian architecture also leaves its imprint: the Mashrabiya, a traditional lattice window balancing privacy and beauty, has inspired lace-like fabrics, laser-cut leather, and filigree jewelry. Unlike contemporary architecture, which often renames it as "geometric panels," fashion preserves its heritage, turning the Mashrabiya into a symbol of cultural storytelling. These parallels point toward a future where fashion and architecture merge into a global, experimental, and profoundly human experience. While architecture is art on the scale of cities, fashion is art on the scale of bodies. Together, they blur categories, provoke awe, and redefine how we inhabit space and express identity. At the heart of this union lies storytelling. Buildings narrate culture and history, garments reveal the identities of wearers and makers alike. This shared narrative instinct keeps the dialogue alive, pushing both fields to collaborate, innovate, and expand the very idea of what design can be.

"Take Frank Gehry and Louis Vuitton, a relationship that began in 2014 with the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris. Since then, Gehry's hand has appeared across handbags, perfume bottles, and store concepts, each project blurring art, architecture, and luxury."



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Shine and Soul

WHY ETHICAL JEWELRY

Defines Luxury's Future

As fashion grapples with the pressure of TikTok trend cycles, jewelry is rewriting the meaning of permanence. Today's luxury is not just about sparkle — it's about conscience, traceability, and the stories embedded in every stone.

Shine and Soul: Why Ethical Jewelry Defines Luxury's Future

Would you wear a diamond of uncertain origin, mined in conditions that may have funded violence? Or would you choose a lab-grown alternative, or a fair-trade gem whose purchase supported rather than exploited a community? This is the moral crossroads where jewelry finds itself in 2025. It's no longer simply about carats and clarity; it's about ethics and sustainability. According to a recent Bain & Company study, more than a third of consumers say they are willing to pay more for ethical products, while over 80 percent believe a company's environmental and social standards matter when making a purchase.

In short, jewelry has become a mirror of personal values as much as personal style.

Chopard and the Pioneering Role of Ethical Gold

No luxury house has embodied this shift more than Chopard. In 2013, the Swiss maison became the first major jewelry brand to commit to sourcing 100 percent ethical gold. It was a bold pledge in an industry long criticized for opacity. Chopard partnered with the Alliance for Responsible Mining, working directly with small-scale mines in South America to ensure fair labor conditions and reduced environmental impact. By 2018, Chopard announced that all the gold used in its watches and jewelry came from verified ethical sources — either recycled metals or mines certified by the Responsible Jewellery Council. For a house steeped in red-carpet glamour, from Cannes to the Oscars, this was more than a marketing strategy. It was a statement: luxury could lead sustainability, not lag behind it.

The numbers mattered, too. Gold mining is responsible for nearly 38 percent of mercury emissions worldwide. By shifting to certified ethical gold, Chopard helped prove that even the most tradition-bound sectors of luxury could adopt environmentally safer, socially responsible practices — without losing their sparkle.





From Blood Diamonds to Conflict-Free Supply Chains

The most fraught issue in jewelry remains diamonds. For decades, so-called “blood diamonds” funded brutal conflicts, most notoriously in Sierra Leone and Angola. The Kimberley Process, launched in 2003, was meant to stem this trade, certifying diamonds as conflict-free. While the system is imperfect — loopholes remain, enforcement is uneven, and activists argue it does not go far enough — it has nonetheless shifted consumer expectations. Today, brands from Tiffany & Co. to Cartier proudly emphasize not just the quality of their stones, but their origins. Traceability is fast becoming a non-negotiable. This growing insistence on provenance reflects a broader cultural change. As Dana Thomas has long argued in her reporting, “luxury is storytelling.” Increasingly, the story consumers want is one of responsibility.

The Rise of Lab-Grown Diamonds

One of the most disruptive forces in this space has been lab-grown diamonds. Produced in high-tech facilities, these stones are chemically and visually identical to natural diamonds — but without the human and environmental toll of mining. Their production emits a fraction of the carbon footprint, and they cost 20–40 percent less than mined stones. Consumer acceptance has surged. A 2024 De Beers report estimated that they account for nearly 10 percent of the diamond jewelry market, up from less than 1 percent a decade ago. Millennials and Gen Z — generations defined by eco-consciousness and skepticism toward traditional luxury hierarchies, are leading the shift.

But lab-grown is not without its own complexities. Industry experts like Rob Bates have noted liquidity challenges: both lab-grown and natural stones face fluctuating resale values. Even so, the ethical appeal of a diamond free from conflict, and at a lower price, is rewriting the definition of luxury for a new era, celebrating natural

imperfections rather than cutting them away. Together, these practices are reframing fine jewelry as part of a circular economy — one where beauty is reborn, not extracted.

Fonderie 47: Beauty Against Violence

If Chopard represents ethical sourcing, Fonderie 47 represents ethical transformation. Founded in 2009, the brand melts down steel from decommissioned AK-47 rifles — weapons that have fueled violence across Africa — and forges them into luxury jewelry and timepieces. Each purchase contributes to funding the destruction of additional weapons. To date, Fonderie 47 has helped eliminate tens of thousands of rifles. In a market often criticized for indulgence, the brand offers an alternative story: adornment that actively makes the world safer.

It is radical, poetic, and emblematic of a broader truth: jewelry is no longer only about the wearer. It is about the world we share.

Consumers as Drivers of Change

Ethical jewelry is not only a supply-side story; it is driven by consumers. Surveys show that younger buyers, particularly in North America and Europe, increasingly view sustainability as part of luxury’s definition. A 2024 McKinsey report found that Gen Z consumers are twice as likely as Gen X to demand sustainability certifications before making a purchase. And while sustainability was once considered a niche concern, it is now reshaping mainstream luxury. Tiffany has invested heavily in transparency, even offering customers digital tracking of a diamond’s entire journey. Cartier has strengthened commitments through the Responsible Jewellery Council. Meanwhile, smaller brands like Ethica Diamonds promote a “kind not mined” philosophy, and Vurchoo donates part of its profits to education initiatives. The result is a fragmented but undeniable movement. Luxury jewelry is slowly becoming a test case for how ethics and aesthetics can converge.





The Nature Renaissance: Inspired by the Earth

Trends themselves are bending toward sustainability. Designers are embracing organic forms — chokers that echo vines, earrings shaped like ocean waves, rings that mimic leaves. The 2025 color palette is equally grounded: earthy browns, botanical greens, ocean blues, warm ambers. Lacquer, for instance, has emerged as a sustainable alternative to mined stones, offering vibrancy without the environmental toll. Personalization, too, is on the rise: engravings of initials, dates, or messages turn jewelry into intimate heirlooms. These touches reinforce a growing consumer desire for uniqueness coupled with conscience. Minimalist jewelry has never disappeared, but its new iteration is less about austerity and more about authenticity. Jewelry that feels tactile, organic, and timeless now carries the aura of modern luxury.

Ethical Luxury as Competitive Advantage

Skeptics once dismissed ethical jewelry as a passing fad, or worse, as jewelry market is growing at nearly twice the rate of traditional

luxury jewelry. Bain & Company estimates it will represent 20–25 percent of the sector by 2030. For brands, the incentives are clear. Ethical sourcing reduces reputational risk, builds consumer trust, and opens access to younger, values-driven buyers. And for

consumers, ethical jewelry satisfies a deeper desire: to adorn not just the body, but the conscience.

The Road Ahead

Challenges remain. Verification systems are still inconsistent, and costs remain high. Lab-grown diamonds, while promising, face their own environmental scrutiny around energy use. Recycled metals cannot entirely replace mining. The industry must navigate these complexities carefully, ensuring that “ethical” is more than a marketing slogan. But the momentum is undeniable. What was once niche is now

mainstream. What was once optional is fast becoming mandatory. Jewelry has always carried meaning — love, status, memory. Today, it also carries responsibility. The true sparkle of 21st-century luxury lies not only in brilliance but in integrity.

An abstract painting with a textured, layered appearance. The top half features warm, golden-yellow and light blue tones, while the bottom half transitions into deeper blues, greens, and hints of red. The brushstrokes are visible, creating a sense of movement and depth.

The Center *Asia Redefining the* Global Art Markets

Asia, once a marginal presence in international auctions, has, in just two decades, grown into a powerhouse that rivals — and in some areas, even outpaces the West. Back in 2000, China represented just 1% of the global art trade. By 2021, China and South Korea had pushed that share close to 40%, drawing Christie's, Sotheby's, and Phillips to aggressively expand in the region. The result: Asia is no longer the periphery of the art world. It is the center and the future.

How Asia Became the Art Market's New Epicenter

The 2025 Art Basel & UBS Art Market Report shows global sales fell 12% to \$57.5 billion in 2024, but Asia weathered the downturn better than Europe. The region's democratization (more sales at lower price points) kept activity buoyant. Smaller galleries proved more resilient than top-tier players. Dealers with turnover under \$250,000 saw sales jump 17% — a sharp rebound for a segment that had lagged post-pandemic and rarely thrives in downturns. By contrast, sales of artworks over \$10 million fell 39% at auction, shrinking their share of market value. Sales under \$5,000 rose 7% in value and 13% in volume, helping sustain overall market activity despite weakness at the top.

Art fairs and digital platforms remain central to expanding the buyer base. In 2024, fairs accounted for nearly a third of dealer sales, with major international events driving momentum. Larger dealers gained the most from this channel, while online sales plateaued at close to a fifth of the global market. In Asia, flagship fairs such as Art Basel Hong Kong and Frieze Seoul, together with mobile-first e-commerce, continue to energize collectors. Despite market softening, transaction volume heightens. Despite a 12% drop in global sales to \$57.5 billion in 2024, transactions rose 3% to 40.5 million. This divergence points to a notable shift in market dynamics: activity is increasingly concentrated in the lower and middle price segments, while the top end of the market — traditionally the main driver of value, contracted significantly. Private sales outperformed in 2024, reflecting a familiar pattern in uncertain times as sellers favor discretion and price control — evidence of steady demand shifting to quieter channels. The result is a paradoxical landscape where more works are changing hands, but at lower price points. This trend reflects both a democratization of collecting and a broader resilience in buyer demand, with new and younger collectors fueling sales at accessible levels. If sustained, this shift could rebalance the market away from its heavy dependence on high-value transactions, laying a healthier foundation for long-term growth. Contemporary art softened while older sectors gained. Sales in contemporary art fell in 2024, reversing years of dominance, while Post-War, Modern, and Old Masters held steady or grew. Collectors gravitated toward established names and lower-priced works, reflecting both caution and limited availability of high-value contemporary pieces.

The West Turns East

Asia's influence now stretches far beyond the region, with young audiences in Europe and the U.S. drawn to manga, K-pop, and Asian cinema. This

“Asia’s influence now stretches far beyond the region, with young audiences in Europe and the U.S. drawn to manga, K-pop, and Asian cinema. This cultural wave has boosted tourism, raised the global profile of Asian artists, and shifted the focus of major auction houses.”

cultural wave has boosted tourism, raised the global profile of Asian artists, and shifted the focus of major auction houses.

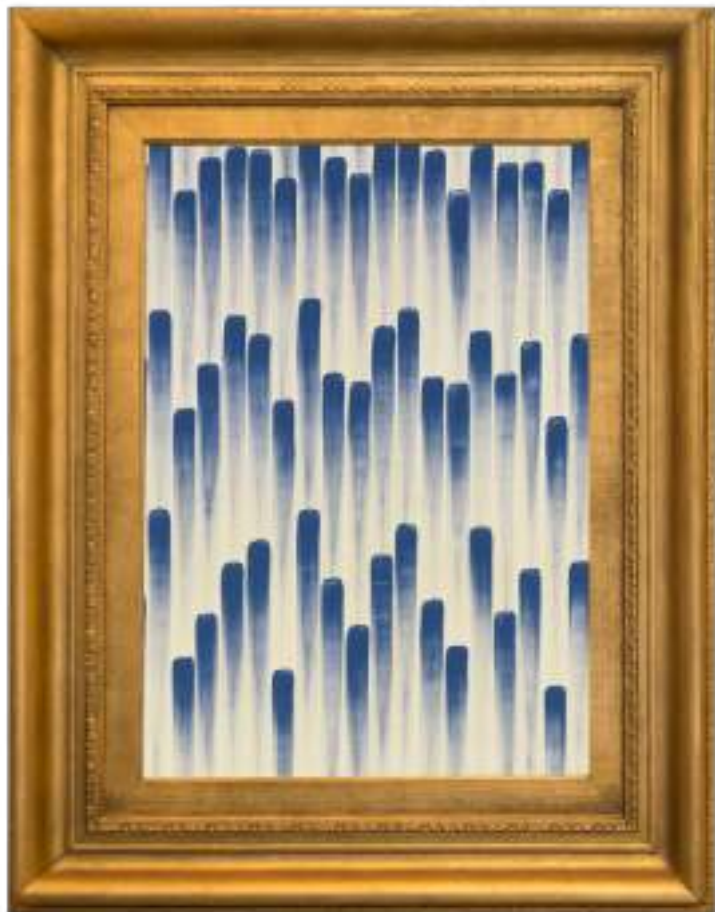
BTS leader RM exemplifies this crossover: as an avid collector of artists like KAWS and Takashi Murakami, he uses his platform to bridge contemporary music and art on the global stage. transformation. Founded in 2009, the brand melts down steel from decommissioned AK-47 rifles — weapons that have fueled violence across Africa — and forges them into luxury jewelry and timepieces. Each purchase contributes to funding the destruction of additional weapons. To date, Fonderie 47 has helped eliminate tens of thousands of rifles. In a market often criticized for

indulgence, the brand offers an alternative story: adornment that actively makes the world safer. It is radical, poetic, and emblematic of a broader truth: jewelry is no longer only about the wearer. It is about the world we share. At the same time, Asian collectors themselves are broadening their tastes. While earlier generations focused on traditional ink paintings or ceramics, today's buyers are just as likely to pay record prices for Western artists. In 2021, for instance, Jean-Michel Basquiat's Warrior sold for \$41 million at Christie's Hong Kong — the most expensive Western artwork ever auctioned in Asia. Artists remain the true drivers of the market. Zhang Daqian and Qi Baishi continue to dominate historical sales, while Yayoi Kusama and Yoshitomo Nara headline among living

artists. Kusama alone reached nearly \$166 million across 670 lots, making her the highest-grossing living Asian artist. Liu Ye, Zhou Chunya, and Zhang Enli reflect the growing breadth of Chinese contemporary art, even as younger names gain traction.

Millennials & Gen Z: The Fuel Behind Asia's Boom

Christie's and Sotheby's report that Asian buyers now account for about one-third of global sales, most of them are Millennials, global-minded digital natives eager to look beyond traditional boundaries. China's early adoption of online sales proved crucial during the pandemic, making art more accessible and keeping the market resilient. Millennials now fuel demand for both classical and contemporary works, with digital platforms and social media becoming key spaces for discovery. Gen Z is quickly joining in, pushing the market toward inclusivity and experimentation, where emerging artists, installations, and NFTs share the spotlight with established masters. Prints have become especially popular with Gen Z.



Abstract art by Lee Ufan



Middle finger in Red" art print, Ai Wei Wei

Art Basel notes that in 2022, many of these collectors devoted over 30% of their net worth to art, with 72% buying through digital platforms. Unlike older generations focused on blue-chip names, they seek works tied to identity, activism, and cultural hybridity. With strong commitments to social consciousness and environmental awareness, Gen Z's growing wealth and influence are set to steer the market toward works that embody their ideals, ensuring a future that is diverse, dynamic, and globally connected. Asian collectors tend to focus on three leading categories: modern Chinese painting, ceramics and decorative arts, and 20th–21st century works. Prices for many pieces, especially by Chinese masters, have multiplied over the past 10–15 years, yet buyers in the region typically hold works for only six to eight years, compared with decades in the West. First-time collectors often begin with art tied to cultural heritage, such as ink paintings, porcelain, or works by figures like Zao Wou-Ki and Zhang Daqian. Their philosophy emphasizes seeing and learning widely before buying, purchasing only within one's means, keeping works they love, and selling when tastes or circumstances change, ideally at the right time for the best return.

Asia's Art Market: The Next Chapter

Asia's art market is rapidly maturing, fueled by internationally trained artists and a new generation of collectors who are wealthier, more global in outlook, and deeply engaged with both traditional and contemporary art. Korean artists, such as Lee Ufan, are achieving record prices, while

auction houses are adapting quickly — Phillips reported a 30% rise in Asian client interactions during the pandemic. Hong Kong remains the region's beating heart thanks to its free-trade status and dense ecosystem of museums, galleries, and auction houses, while new art fairs from Seoul to Mumbai highlight Asia's growing centrality. With under-40 collectors driving global demand, the region is no longer a rising market but an epicenter reshaping the future of art, much as America did in the mid-20th century. Still, challenges loom. Years of speculation-driven flipping have cooled, exposing inflated prices and unsellable works, though many see this as a healthy correction. Forgery continues to pose risks, making authentication and reputable intermediaries vital. Meanwhile, the digital boom — online auctions, social media, NFTs, has expanded access but also heightened concerns over transparency and volatility. With contemporary and experimental art on the rise, saturation is another risk as countless artists compete for visibility. These pressures are pushing Asia's art ecosystem to evolve: balancing innovation with authenticity, expanding digital platforms while protecting buyer confidence, and ensuring the market grows sustainably amid global attention. Powered by new generations of collectors, internationally recognized artists, and the region's embrace of digital platforms, Asia has redefined how art is bought, sold, and valued. Asia is not just keeping pace with the West — it is setting the pace.

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