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When Streetwear Meets Luxury Fashion

Streetwear has always been loved by people interested in fashion. Since the 1970s, more and more streetwear brands have been created. Some of these brands are still hot today, and some are only in the short term, and then they are forgotten. Today, mainstream streetwear styles can be divided into two categories: American trends and Japanese trends. For the American trends, brands that can be called ancestors are, for example, Supreme, Stussy, and some brands which are very hot in recent years like Off-white, Vlone, etc. For the Japanese trend, the representative brands are Bape, CDG, Fragment Design, etc. Some of these brands are well known by people and some are not that famous. For luxury brands, such as Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Burberry, Chanel, etc. are all centuries-old brands, almost no one does not know them. Interestingly, the founders of these centuries-old brands must have never thought that their brand will be associated with the trend of streetwear a hundred years later, but this is happening now.

At the beginning of June 2017, a message bombed the entire fashion circle. The collaboration between Louis Vuitton and Supreme, which has been rumored, has been confirmed. Louis Vuitton then officially showed a series of joint products to be launched, including clothes, shoes, bags, and so on. One of the most expensive items in this category: a denim parka, even with a price of up to four thousand dollars. And this is just the original price. High-priced resale is a normal phenomenon for streetwear brands. Due to the small number of goods, the resale price of this series of products is even too high to believe. Luxury brands are doing changes that

everyone can see, they are “increasingly drawing inspiration from streetwear and skateboarding trends, and incorporating more urban aesthetics of sports and leisure into their designs” (“Luxury meets Streetwear”, 2018). They are adapting to the changing times, trying to attract and connect with younger, more diverse customer bases, and nurturing the next generation of loyal luxury customers. This cooperation not only brings them huge sales but also greatly enhances their brand influence. Of course, it’s not just these luxury brands that benefit. Streetwear brands have also got a lot of benefits from it.

It turns out that the cooperation between luxury goods and streetwear brands is going very smoothly, and more and more people are paying for them. This win-win cooperation model makes the gap between the two styles smaller and smaller. Not long ago, Virgil Abloh, one of the off-white main designers, joined the team of Louis Vuitton and immediately joined the Louis Vuitton 2018 fall/winter design. The departure of the main designer did not reduce the heat of off-white, but even more, people began to pay attention to this young brand. People will gradually discover that “there is no more division between luxury and streetwear” (Milnes, 2018). And the designers are turning the definition of luxury on its head. While propped up on the same set of values and motivations, streetwear and luxury truly converged as streetwear designers began to cross over to luxury brands. The community aspect of streetwear has infused itself into high-end fashion to take it down a few notches and make it more about the people.

In recent years, more and more young fashion brands have been born. Like Raf Simons, A-Cold-Wall, these brands have positioned themselves as high-level brands when they came out. The price of their products can reflect this. Of course, their products, whether it is design, materials, or the stories behind them, make consumers feel value for money. Their teams are full of young people from all over the world, everyone has a high design, management level, and

talent. If these brands belong to luxury brands, they still can't reach the level like Gucci and Louis Vuitton. But if they are streetwear brands, the price of their products is not very acceptable to people who love streetwear. Nowadays, “the definition of ‘luxury’ has become an elusive concept” (Sulima, 2018). The most characteristic aspect of streetwear, and an aspect that high fashion brands are now attempting to emulate, is the model of the “drop.” Streetwear brands will release a limited collection of items with little to no notice, and people will wait in line for hours—sometimes overnight—to get their hands on the products.

Working with streetwear brands is just one-way luxury brands can attract younger buyers. On the other hand, they need to change themselves. More than just changing the business model, many brands have begun to try to change the overall style of their products. On August 2, Burberry officially announced the replacement of the logo that has been in use for 20 years. This is the second time, the brand which has been created for more than 160 years changes its logo. The classic logo of a knight who riding on the horse with a shield and flag is gone, replaced by a modern style of striking "Burberry" font. Burberry's most well-known and most iconic element, the plaid, was also replaced by a pattern of "T" and "B" that was cross-woven on behalf of "Tomas Burberry". Take a look at the new t-shirts and sweatshirts that Burberry launched this year. Each one is full of strong street style, changing the aging of the past. The changes made by Burberry also achieved the effect it wanted. Under the leadership of some young trend stars, young people have all put on the new fashionable Burberry sweatshirts.

The explosion of street clothing is a broader cultural shift: the rise of rap music and the mainstreaming of street culture. The rappers are no longer being held underground. More and more young people are starting to skateboard and street dance. On the street walls, more meaningful, creative graffiti is emerging. Millennials are creating new worlds. Their values and

consumption habits are inconsistent with the business models of many traditional luxury brands, which they see as uncool. And “luxury brands have found tremendous success with millennials by breaking the traditional luxury template and embracing a streetwear-inflected approach” (BOF team “How Streetwear Took Over Luxury” *The Business of Fashion*, March 30, 2018).

It may be that in some people, streetwear or luxury goods are derogatory terms. They may think that those who like to wear streetwear "do not look like good people." Perhaps streetwear is not a mainstream style, and perhaps there still are not that many people who like streetwear now. But this culture is very positive. At the beginning of this month, Kanye West traveled to Uganda in eastern Africa and sent hundreds of pairs of Yeezy sneakers to local children. For those who like trendy clothing, the better news is that Kanye West canceled the limited sales model of Yeezy sneakers, greatly increasing the volume and fulfilling its promise of “making everyone can wear Yeezy”. This also makes it easy for people who have been blocked by the previous high resell price to buy their favorite shoes.

For me, I love streetwear, not simply spending money on it. Streetwear is a cool lifestyle for me, and I enjoy the process of matching these clothes. And luxury is something I don't touch at the current stage. But I think I'll think about them in the future. Whether it's streetwear or luxury, I hope that they can always show their positive side for people.

Annotated Bibliography

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luxury brands have increasingly been taking style inspiration from streetwear and skateboard trends and incorporating more sporty and casual urban aesthetics into their designs. They are adapting to changing times and striving to attract and connect with a younger and more diverse customer base, grooming the next generation of loyal luxury customers.

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There’s no more division between luxury and streetwear. And the designers are turning the definition of luxury on its head. While propped up on the same set of values and motivations, streetwear and luxury truly converged as streetwear designers began to cross over to luxury brands. The community aspect of streetwear has infused itself into high-end fashion to take it down a few notches and make it more about the people.

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The definition of “luxury” has become an elusive concept. The most characteristic aspect of streetwear, and an aspect that high fashion brands are now attempting to emulate, is the model of the “drop.” Streetwear brands will release a limited collection of items with little to no notice, and people will wait in line for hours—sometimes overnight—to get their hands on the products.

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The values and consumption habits of millennials are at odds with the business models of many traditional luxury brands, which they see as uncool. Streetwear explosion is a wider cultural shift: the rise of rap music and the mainstreaming of street culture. Controlled releases of new products at a clip that's far faster than the traditional fashion cycle and designed to drive consumer excitement with a constant stream of newness that's more in sync with a world where expectations and trends are shaped at the speed of Instagram. Luxury brands have found tremendous success with millennials by breaking the traditional luxury template and embracing a streetwear-inflected approach.