

A STUDY OF FASHON BRAND PERCEPTION $\mathbb{N}2021$

DEFINITIONS ARE BLURRING

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1. SUMMARY

1.1 ABSTRACT 1.2 MAIN TAKE AWAYS

A Study of Brand Perception in Contemporary Fashion

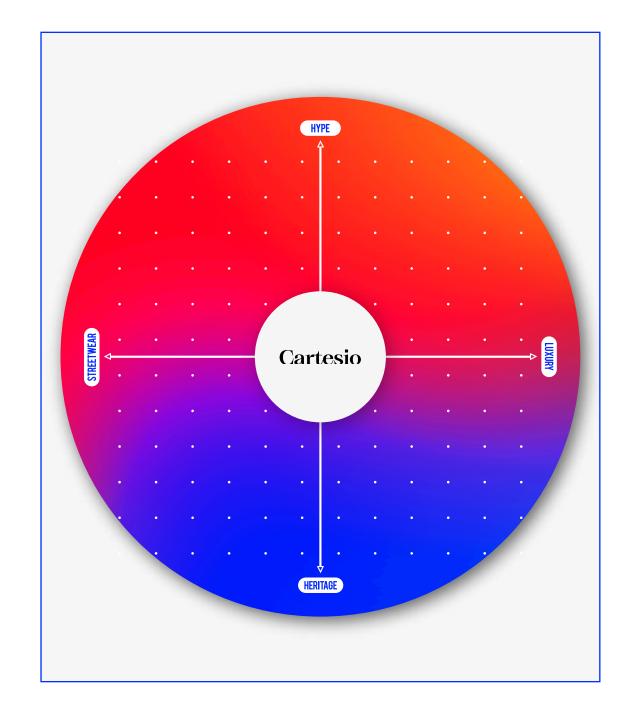
Brand building is a complex exercise, involving notions of loyalty, awareness, brand recognition, and values.

In this study, nss magazine has partnered with Lyst, with the aim of tracking the tandem development and evolution of I) luxury fashion brands and II) streetwear brands. This study will also investigate the dichotomy between luxury fashion and streetwear, and how that division or contrast has become less rigid over time. We will present our findings within the framework of a graphical representation of luxury fashion plotted against streetwear, and hype plotted against heritage.

Primary data was gathered from the Southern European market more specifically from Italy, Spain, and Portugal - on a digital interactive platform open to the public. The interactive page allowed users to create a personal map of the current fashion landscape following the Cartesian model.

The data was analyzed and merged with additional data provided by the vast Lyst database. This paper present the result of data analysis by nss and Lyst with the goal of exploring from a quantitative and qualitative perspective brand perception in the contemporary fashion landscape.

The Cartesio analysis is complemented and enriched by further insights from fashion and streetwear industry opinion leaders.



Cartesio

"Just as Nicolaus Copernicus questioned the certainties of a culture that thought the earth was at the center of the universe, today the marriage between high fashion and streetwear has changed the perception of every brand on the market. The boundaries have fallen and the cross-pollination has generated spaces that need to be more inclusive, more sustainable and decisively less linked to labels and definitions. The product is no longer the focus, replaced by visions that wink at street culture and fast markets.

The perception is influenced by new benchmarks, starting from the brand archive, evolving towards a new luxury, more conscious, unique and sustainable, because this is what will last through time." "As often happens, fashion offers a early glimpse into the future of contemporary culture. The end of the traditional luxury era brought by the streetwear revolution mirrors bigger changes in western societies, observable in politics, entertainment and private life.

The myth of individualism driven by luxury status quo and the promise of never ending wellness is on the fading horizon. Value-based communities are on the rise and the fashion industry was one of the first to get the message: brands were a product of the culture, now the culture has become the main product of a brand"

-WALTER D'APRILE, CO-FOUNDER nss magazine, CEO nss factory

-FILIPPO D'ASARO, nss magazine HEAD OF CONTENT

The most important insights from the research

•	•	•	•	• •	• • • • •	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•		Hermès, Valentino, Burberry are the top 3 fashion houses perceived as "heritage brands".		•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	. 0	Off-White, Supreme and Palm Angeles are the top 3 labels perceived as "hype brands".		•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•3	Italian, Spanish and Portugese consumers present similar opinions on luxury brands, while they have different visions when it comes to heritage.		•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•	· · · · · · · ·		•	·	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	:4	Nike, Off-White and Supreme were among the brands with the greatest variation in how they were perceived.		•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	-5	The perception of a brand is shaped by the stakeholders of the fashion industry: consumers, opinion leaders, and institutions.		•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	• •	• • • • •	•	•	•	•	•	•
•	•	•	•	.6	According to Luca Benini of Slam Jam, Derek Morrison of StockX and Olivia Spinelli of IED Moda Milano, authenticity and archive are two		•	•	•	•	•
					key points to build a solid brand reputation.						

Cartesio

2. LUXURY VS STREETWEAR

2.1 FROM THE RUNWAY TO STREETS AND VICE-VERSA 2.2 WHAT IS BRAND PERCEPTION? WHY DOES IT MATTER?



The enduring bond between luxury and streetwear

Streetwear and **luxury** inherently exist on opposite ends of a spectrum, much in the way that **hype** and **heritage** also represent contrasting values. While both streetwear and luxury can indeed share traits like **exclusivity** and **consumer-tribe mentality**, the two spheres have evolved to co-exist in some ways over the last years.

Streetwear and **sneakers** have infiltrated the once hyper-restricted runways of luxury fashion. As a result, streetwear and luxury fashion now have more in common than ever before.

We examine this trend further below.

Momo Angela Ohta for nss magazine

5 Trends that Define Streetwear vs Luxury Fashion

Aspiration and Circularity of Creative Expression

More than a decade ago, a clear trend emerged whereby streetwear brands chose to imitate luxury designs. SSUR interpreted the Hermès logo to instead read "Homies." Stüssy took inspiration from Chanel's double-C logo and created a double-S logo. When once streetwear brands were aspiring to be like luxury brands (or at least to create irreverent designs that sent a message to the established fashion industry), now some fashion brands are open to taking their inspiration from streetwear.

Dior created a luxe Air Jordan I. Prada made an upscale, made-in-Italy adidas Superstar sneaker. Ralph Lauren collaborates with Palace. But perhaps the biggest indicator of this shift was when Louis Vuitton and Supreme shared the Parisian runway for their collaboration, creating a moment that truly shifted the industry.

The Celebrity Creative Director

In 2005, Givenchy appointed Riccardo Tisci as the house's artistic director. Tisci's "Birds of Paradise" collection re-energized the brand, and made it a fixture in hip-hop styling.

In years to follow, hires like Raf Simons at Calvin Klein, Virgil Abloh to Louis Vuitton, Kim Jones to Dior, and others, helped to cement a new marketing trend in the world of high fashion. These hires introduced new (youthful and streetwear-inspired) design languages and aesthetics to the respective fashion houses they joined.



Su Shan Leong for nss magazine

Logomania

This shift towards bigger and bolder branding swept through luxury fashion, as a new trend saw bigger and bolder logos emblazoned across apparel and footwear. Logo-adorned T-shirts and hoodies were now being produced by the likes of Gucci and Burberry. A longtime favorite of New York City Canal Street vendors, one particular bootleg Gucci T-shirt with the interlocking-G logo, was now being sold as an authentic item in Gucci stores. Overall, the trend suggested a new set of consumer values, showing that logos can often mean more than the designs themselves. Branding became a design feature, as consumers decided to let front-and-center logos speak for themselves.

Sneakers Define the Catwalk

Sneakers have typically not been a core part of the luxury fashion vocabulary, although some examples are worth noting, like the Valentino Rockrunner or Gucci 1984. This has changed over the past half-decade, as nearly every major fashion house has introduced its own original sneaker designs, in part to supply an increasing demand for luxury footwear. New luxury footwear models in this space include the Balenciaga Triple S, Maison Margiela Fusion, Dior Homme B22, and others.

Today, sneakers exist on both ends of the fashion-streetwear spectrum, and the two worlds are even merging, in the case of the Dior x Nike Air Jordan I, and the Prada x adidas Superstar.

Zhu Guang for nss magazine





Jeremy Alvarez for nss magazine

Scarcity & Marketing

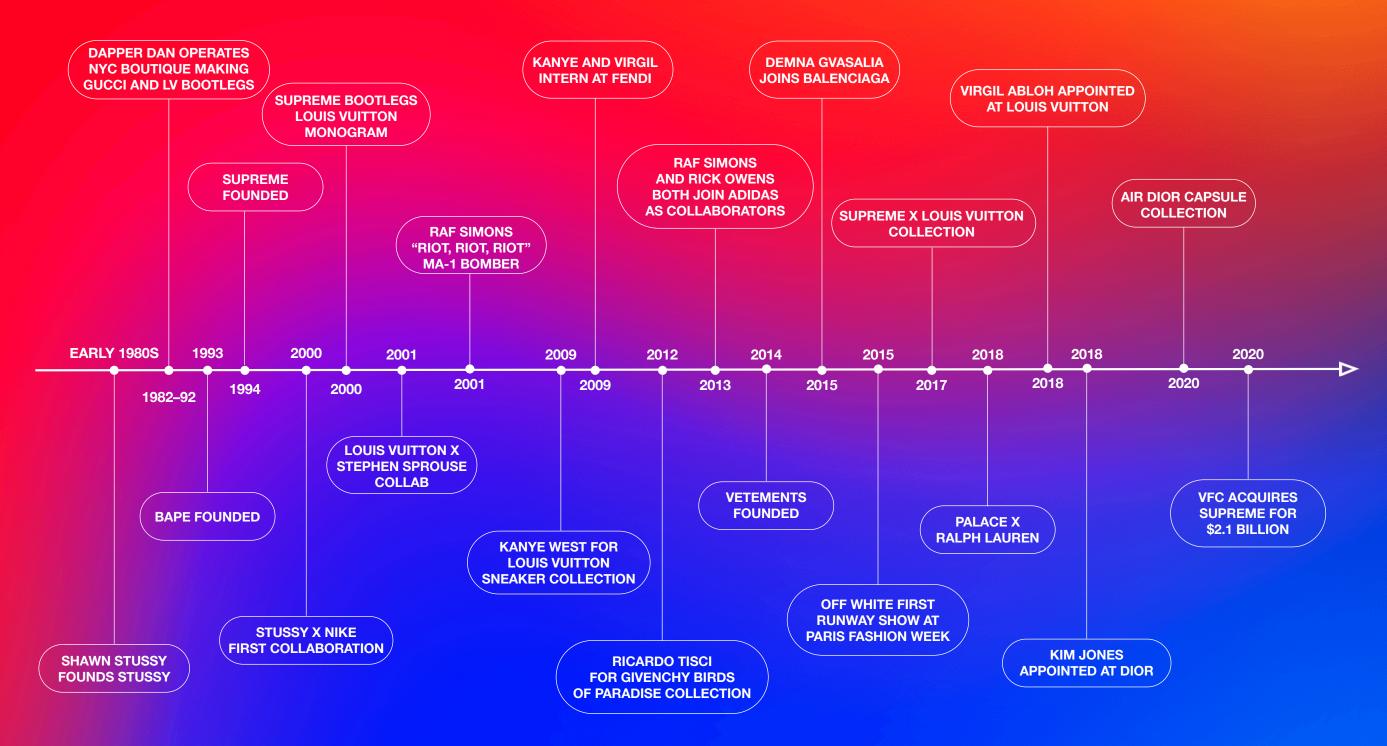
A commonly used marketing strategy when it comes to sneakers and streetwear collaborations, product scarcity can increase the perceived value of a given item. Intrinsically, scarce items become more desirable, whether in a heritage context such as Hermès Birkin bags or in a hype context like Supreme box logo T-shirts. In both aforementioned cases, products are highly scarce, which then contributes to the social status or reputation of the product. Scarcity marketing capitalizes on the consumer's worry or fear of missing the opportunity to purchase an item. If a given product is always available, it becomes a commodity. However, when something is only available for limited times or in limited quantities, it becomes special.

Taking a Social Stand

2020 ushered in an unprecedented wave of social issues. First, a global health emergency threw the world into disarray, against this backdrop, a large civil rights uprising took place, as demonstrations against systemic inequality were staged around the world. This all set the stage for one of the most critical elections the US has ever seen.

Many brands tapped in to these moments for different reasons, some pledging support and others ultimately just virtue signalling. Brands that committed to affecting meaningful change may have gained new consumers, or earned renewed loyalty from their existing consumers. On the other hand, brands that ignored these social moments and failed to take a stand may have missed an opportunity to align with a socially conscious younger audience.

MEANINGFUL EVENTS THAT DEFINED THE STREETWEAR VS LUXURY RELATIONSHIP

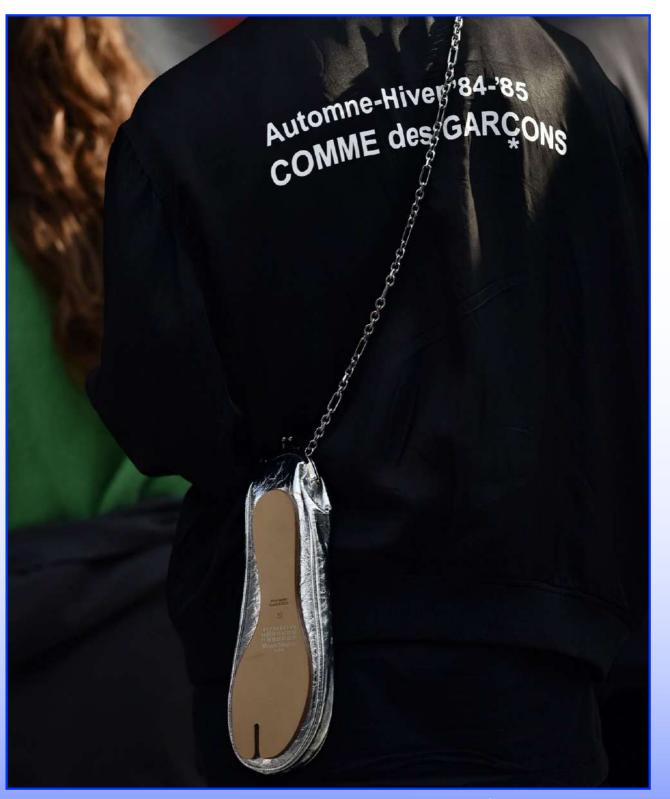


What is brand perception, and why does it matter for streetwear and luxury?

For many consumers, brand choices are a way to shape an **identity**, and to form relationships with others that have shared **interests**. Bonding over shared interests in streetwear and luxury fashion has formed brand-loyal **tribes** around the world. The more touch points we have with a brand ecosystem (owning a product from that brand, visiting the brand's retail locations, following brand fan pages on Instagram, seeing a celebrity wear the brand) the more likely we are to invest our time, interest, and our money.

One marketing maxim describes the conditions required for a consumer to make a purchase. "You need to find it yourself. You need to see it yourself. Then you need to see someone you respect talking about it." If all these conditions are met, one is more likely to genuinely believe in that brand or product. This idea illustrates the importance of **word-of-mouth marketing**, which is a foundational, grassroots way of brand building. But while word-of-mouth marketing remains critical, navigating the **digital landscape** is also important for brands to learn. Brands must also join in on that conversation where it is happening on platforms like Instagram, YouTube or TikTok.

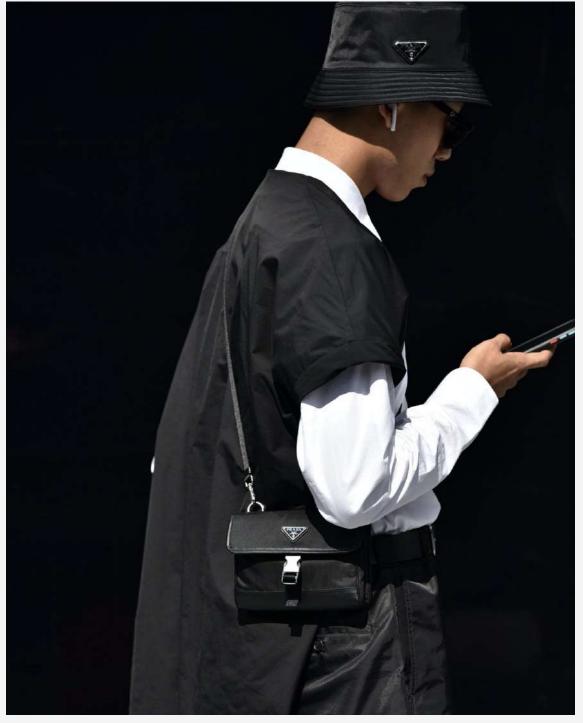
Community building is also a way for brands to become aligned with greater causes, and recently we've seen brands pledge toward supporting social initiatives like climate change, Black Lives Matter, or specifically the recent US election.



Zhu Guang for nss magazine

3. CARTESIO

3.1 CARTESIO OVERVIEW
3.2 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS
3.3 FOCUS ON ITALY, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL
3.4 HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RESULTS



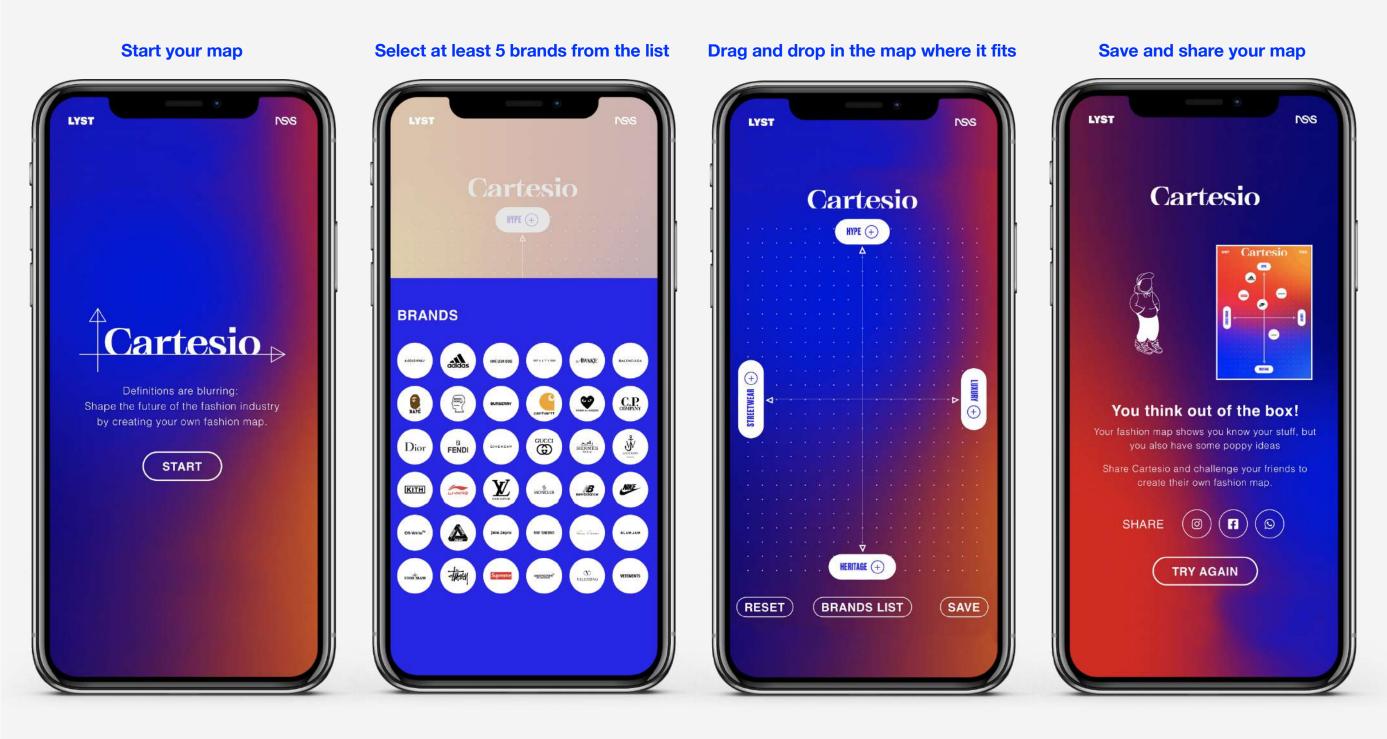
Zhu Guang for nss magazine

Introduction to Cartesio

- **Cartesio** is a digital, graphical tool that allows users to dissect the fashion industry by creating their own brand scatterplot. The results obtained by the research, based on a **user-generated content model**, reflect a multifaceted picture in terms of brand perception and influence in different countries of the world.
- Lyst and nss magazine have identified two variables by relying on the experience and knowledge of users, now true stakeholders in the fashion sector. Each player can generate their own map from Cartesio by choosing the right coordinates for each brand.
- In our analysis, we have focused on three specific markets, all located in Southern Europe: **Italy**, **Spain** and **Portugal**. Despite having different stories and backgrounds, as well as distinct connections with the fashion industry, these three countries have been the theater of both the growth of luxury fashion and the rise of the streetwear phenomenon. Through our research, we were able to identify and establish a ranking spanning four different categories: **luxury**, **streetwear**, **hype** and **heritage**.
- Our findings are based on more than 1000 selected maps created on Cartesio and combined with Lyst data about shoppers from those markets. The average number of brands selected was 11, from a total of 40 choices. Our selection of brands is derived from previous quarterly reports from Lyst, and from the interests of nss readers.

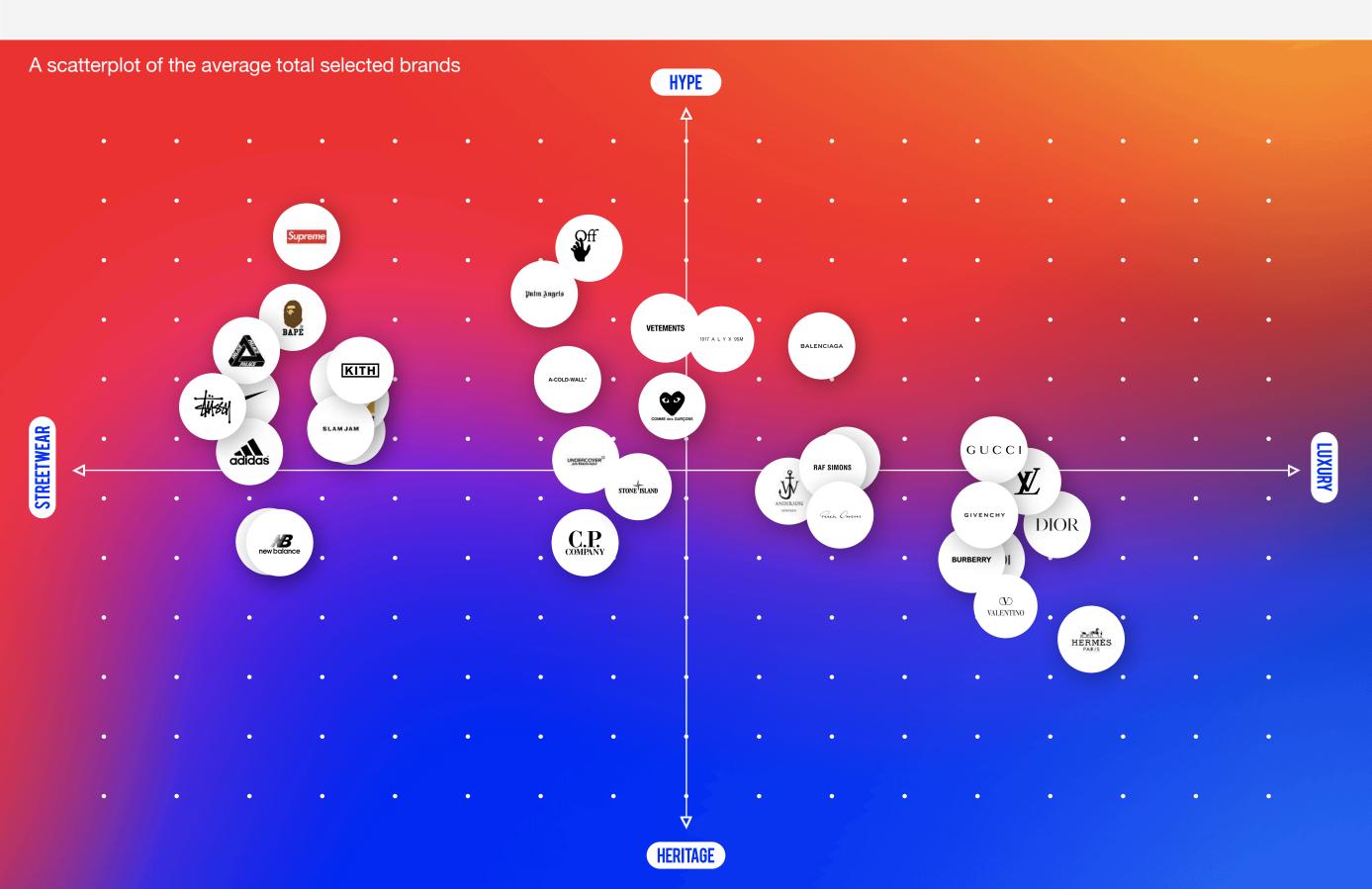
Editor's Note: User information such as age and gender cannot be disclosed

HOW TO USE CARTESIO



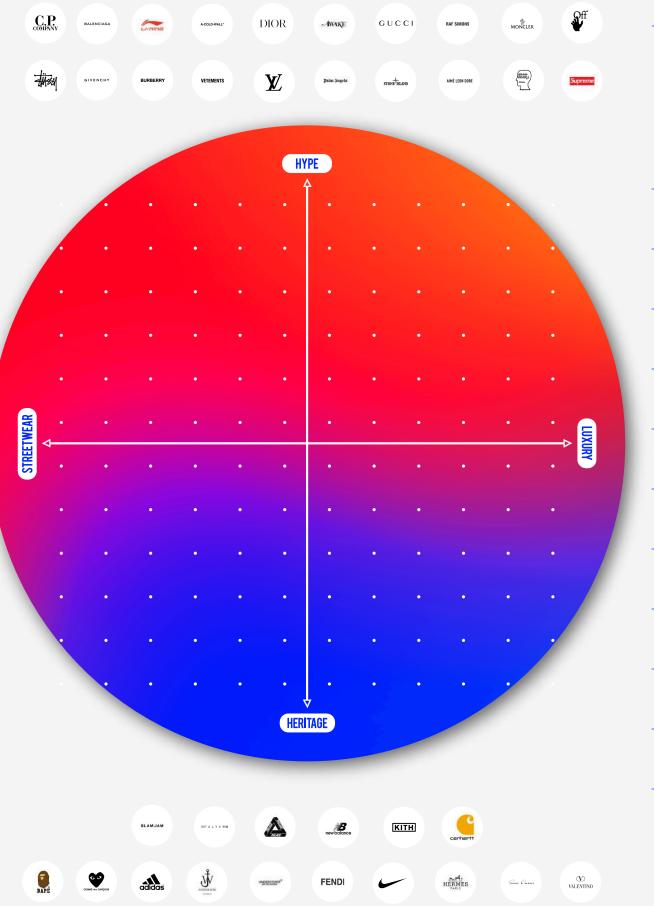
Cartesio

TOTAL AVERAGE



3.2 RESULTS ANALYSIS

Cartesio

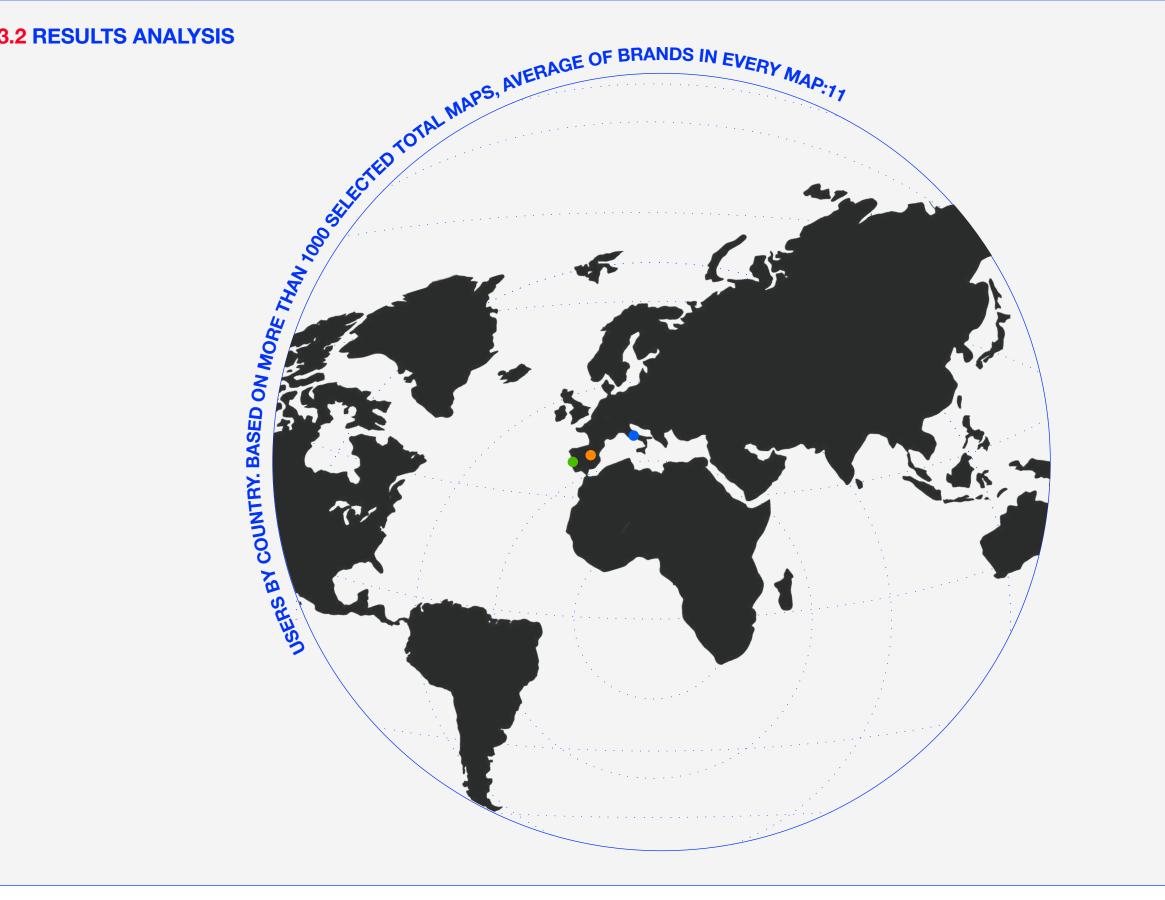


MOST USED BRANDS

Nike	
Dior	DIOR
Gucci	GUCCI
Louis Vuitton	X
Off-White	₽ ff
Supreme	Supreme
Balenciaga	BALENCIAGA
adidas	adidas
Hermes	HERMES
Burberry	BURBERRY

3.2 RESULTS ANALYSIS

Cartesio



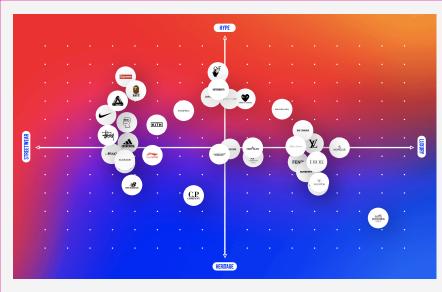
• Italy 69%

• Spain 10%

• Portugal 9%

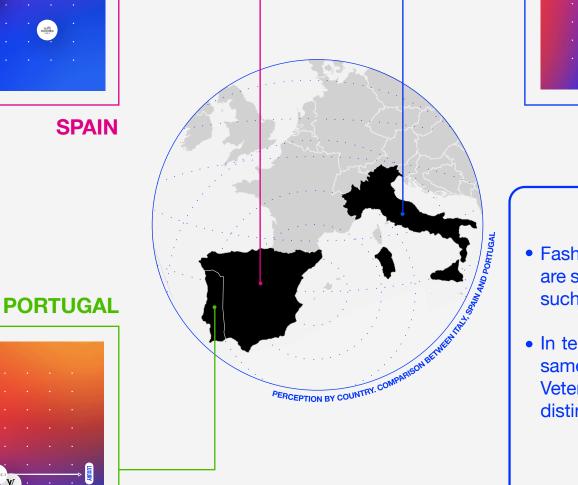
• Other 12%

3.4 FOCUS ON ITALY, SPAIN AND PORTUGAL

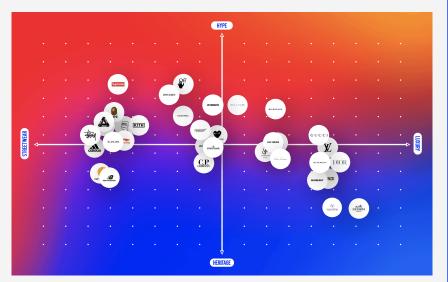


HYPE

HERITAGE



ITALY



SIMILARITIES

- Fashion houses that have shaped the history of luxury are still perceived as the bearers of those values, brands such as Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Valentino and Dior.
- In terms of hype, all three countries have indicated the same names, like Off-White, Palm Angels and Vetements, brands with a strong identity and a distinctive aesthetic.

DIFFERENCES

- Unexpectedly, users in Spain indicated Moncler as the most representative luxury brand.
- In Spain, unlike Italy and Portugal, is where C.P. Company seems to have better portrayed and enhanced its heritage





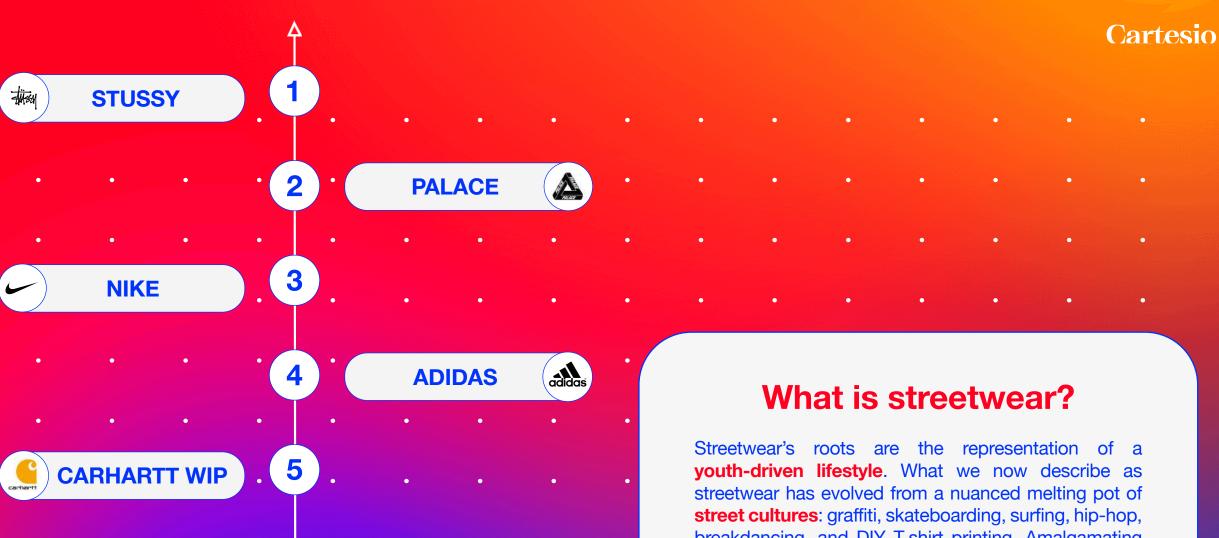
Cartesio

BAPE

SLAMJAM

BAPE

SLAM JAM



B

6

7

NEW BALANCE

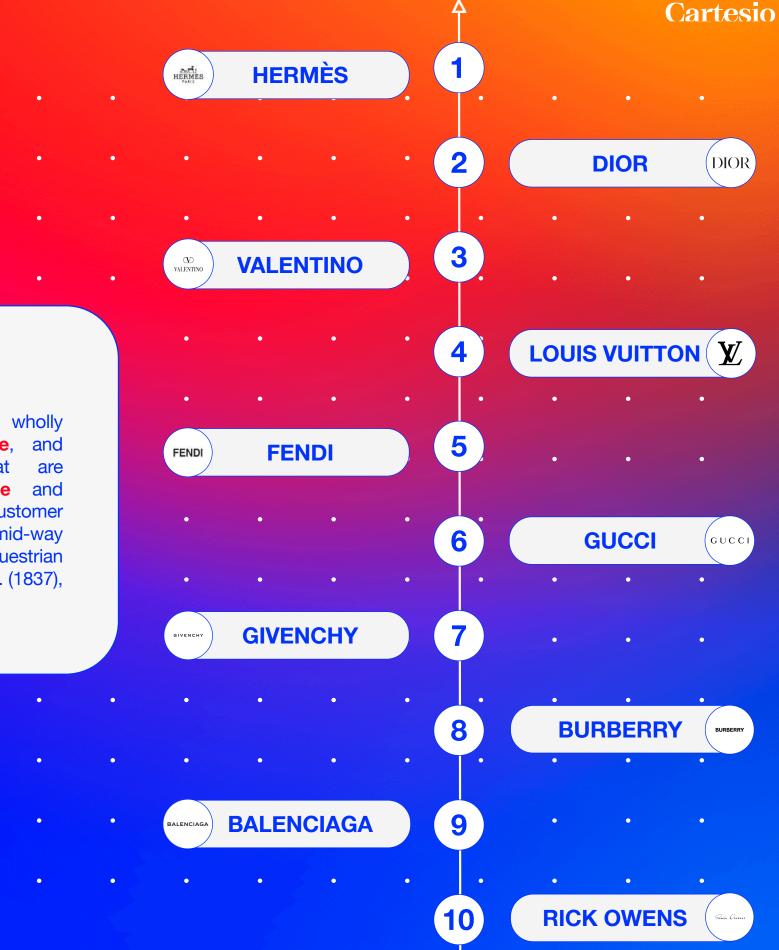
Streetwear's roots are the representation of a **youth-driven lifestyle**. What we now describe as streetwear has evolved from a nuanced melting pot of **street cultures**: graffiti, skateboarding, surfing, hip-hop, breakdancing, and DIY T-shirt printing. Amalgamating since the early '90s, streetwear is now a globally prevalent trend, however its main pillars are based in New York hip-hop fashion, California surf-skate culture, and Japanese street fashion.

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8	3	SUF	PREME	Supreme								
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9		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
1	0	BRAII	N DEAD	(BRAIN- DEAD)))								



What is luxury?

Luxury fashion is traditionally defined by a wholly different set of criteria, by **extravagance**, and sumptuously **high-quality** products that are comparatively (to streetwear) **unattainable** and **expensive**, as well as retail experiences and customer service. Luxury brands started to emerge mid-way through the 19th century, the first being equestrian specialists Hermès (1837), jeweller Tiffany & Co. (1837), and watchmaker Cartier (1847).



₽ff

Palm Angels

VETEMENTS

1017 A L Y X 95M

A-COLD-WALL*



10



KITH

КІТН

What is hype?

Cartesio

Hype is generally understood to be created by a combination of conditions, including **cultural credibility** achieved by building an authentic and genuine brand, **product scarcity** achieved by limiting production, and lastly a balanced dash of novelty in the form of products that are new, original, or unusual.

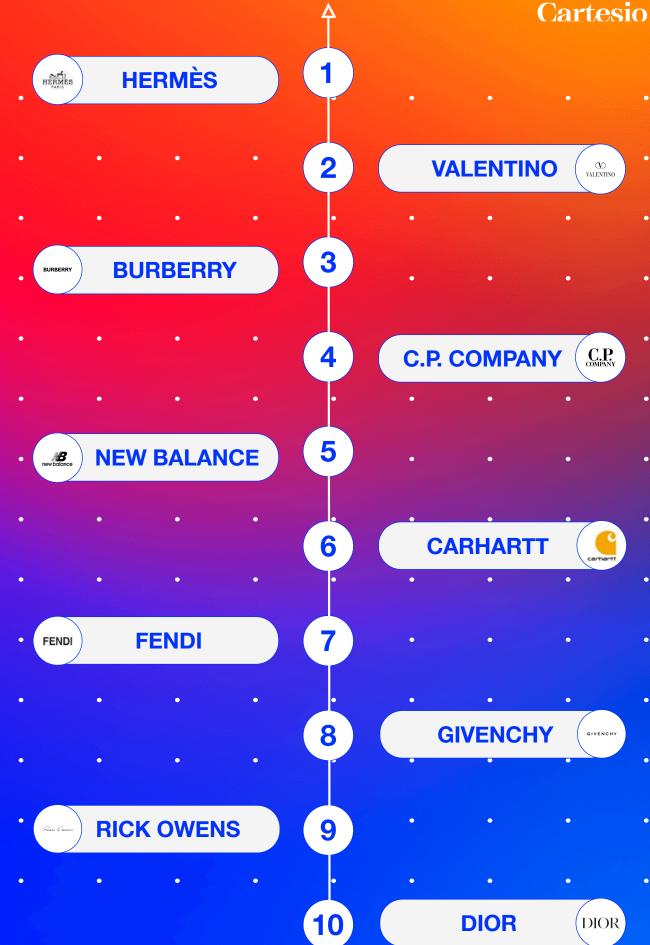
Hype is closely associated with conspicuous consumerism, as hype is a trend that encourages consumers to stay abreast on new and ever-changing trends. In this cycle, the lifetime of a hyped product can sometimes only last a number of weeks, before a new product takes its place. With this, we can grasp hype as an inherently **non-permanent concept**.



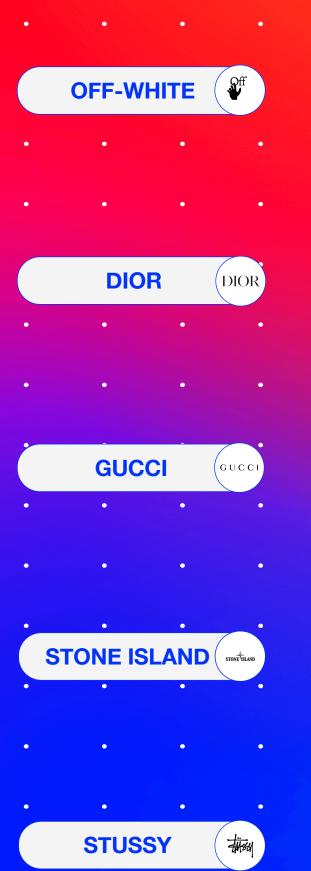
What is heritage?

Values, traditions, and culture sit at the nucleus of heritage as a concept. In particular, the value of heritage leans heavily on maintaining emphasis on tradition, and the notion of doing things the same as they have always been done. Consistency is important for heritage brands, which rely on established expectations built over many years of steady and healthy growth. The concept of heritage also pertains to the intended use of luxury products.











Cartesio

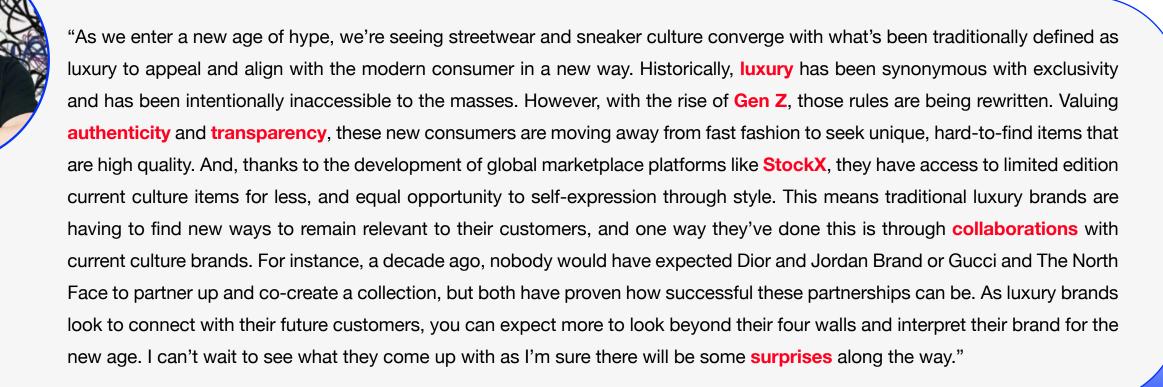
The brands that experienced the greatest **variation** in how they were perceived.



4. VOICES

4.1 QUOTES AND COMMENTS FROM GUEST SPEAKERS

Derek Morrison Senior Director Europe, StockX



Herbert Hofmann Creative Director and Head of Buying Commerce, Highsnobiety

"As a self-aware consumer, this kind of exercise is important. I wonder how the **perception** changes to actually see it visually where a brand is positioned in this map. You might feel fooled figuring out that you buy certain brands because it's a hyped brand. Brands like Carharrt, Stüssy or Stone Island are really becoming more and more special to me cause they show a **rich heritage** and don't change their direction all the time. Trends and Innovation are fun and exciting but shopping in a considered way is the first step into **sustainability**. Buying a product which is built to last and which won't get on your nerves after a few times wearing it will make you more happy. Worst case is also to buy very loud fashion pieces and to feel 'ashamed' of wearing dated designs a few weeks later."



Cartesio



Olivia Spinelli Coordinator and Creative Director, IED Moda Milano

"Cartesio visually places us in front of a fundamental evidence: the perception of fashion brands varies from person to person and, even more, according to historical moments. Today, more than ever, the boundaries between these quadrants of values are fluid and the movement of a brand along the Cartesian axes that define them can occur suddenly, due to a change of **creative direction** or an **effective branding strategy**. This constant flow and this oscillation between one definition and another constitutes the great beauty of this 'aquarium of fashion', in which there are no absolute truths, but a continuous exchange in which those who teach often learn and those who learn sometimes teach."

Massimiliano Giornetti Director, Polimoda Fashion Institute

"We are experiencing a time of great social, political and economic changes. Fashion, the liveliest of art forms, finally has the possibility of reinventing itself and becoming a **multidisciplinary language**. Globalization has emptied the fashion collections of content, impoverishing them to the point of generating homologation and repetitiveness. I believe this is the ideal scenario for outlining new strategies and looking for opportunities in a market that is being redesigned at a geopolitical level. I am fascinated by the idea of a **neighborhood**. The possibility of rediscovering the creative flow away from the big cities. Create an independent and unique cultural metissage in which different and distant elements blend together. It is from this human-centered and independent vision that I think fashion schools can start again. Looking for a dialogue between nature, art, architecture, politics, music and technology. A **sensory research** that takes into account the past, impetuously projects itself **into the future**."





Luca Benini Founder, Slam Jam

"The change was huge. When I started working with brands like Stüssy (1992) for example, there were few realities that understood its value in Italy. Today, thanks to a gradual process of **breaking down of boundaries** and **accelerated exchange** in the mid-2010s, what is called streetwear is a consolidated category and on a par with others, **destined to remain**."

> Angelo Flaccavento Fashion journalist and writer

"I think that mapping, defining, pigeonholing aren't very useful actions for fashion in itself. Certainly useful in terms of marketing and market movements. I'm averse to categories and believe that fashion doesn't live in pre-set shelves. I prefer the vitality of the undefined."



Cartesio

Chris Morton CEO, Lyst

"Since impace this co emponent

"Since Lyst was founded 10 years ago, we've been part of some of the most fundamental changes in the industry, from the impact of streetwear, the digitalisation of luxury brands, and the rising importance of transparency and sustainability. During this decade our purpose has been to accelerate changes in fashion that put the customer at the centre of everything. By empowering over 150 million shoppers to make the best choices, and by closely analysing our rich data, we have a unique ability to identify upcoming cultural and consumer shifts early. The Lyst x nss partnership takes these insights deeper and gives fashion lovers an essential voice in shaping the future of fashion. We hope this partnership will help both consumers and industry players to reflect on what luxury means today, as well as what's next for brands."

Jordan Anderson

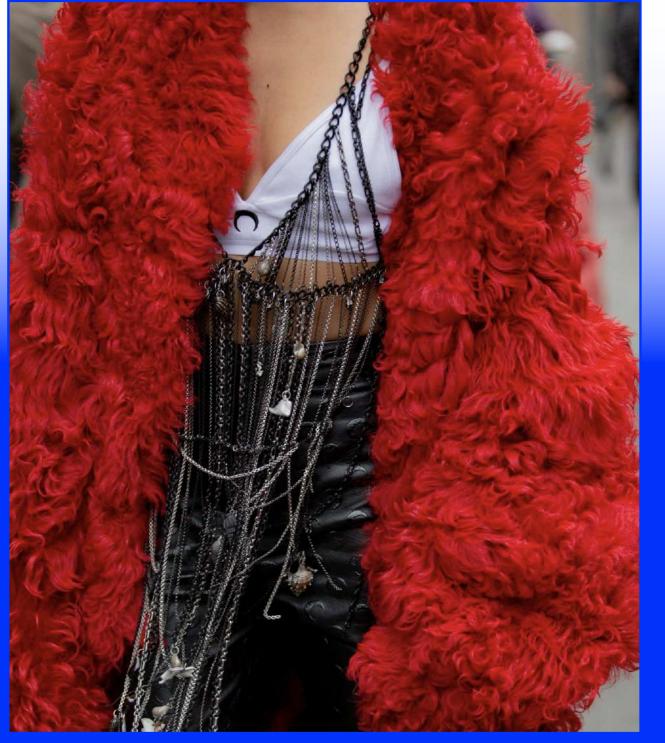
"The biggest irony of the moment is that while five years ago, there was a straight line between streetwear and "high fashion", today that line is nearly non-existent. **Streetwear is high fashion and vice-versa**, the shift was led by the industry having to open up and cater to a **new generation of customers** who have become more and more diverse throughout the years. This is something that I expect to increase in the coming years. In order to not get left behind, brands will need to keep up and continue to evolve towards the vision being built by the new generation of customers, and that vision simply doesn't include any lines or boundaries, whether that's regarding tailoring, gender or anything. It's a vision that's more so led by a fantasy or aesthetic that can potentially appeal to the different tastes of the myriad of identities which exist today."



5. WHAT'S NEXT?

5.1 TOPICS THAT WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY

Cartesio



Momo Angela Ohta for nss magazine

Themes that will change brand perception and marketing strategy in the next five years

Digital Landscape

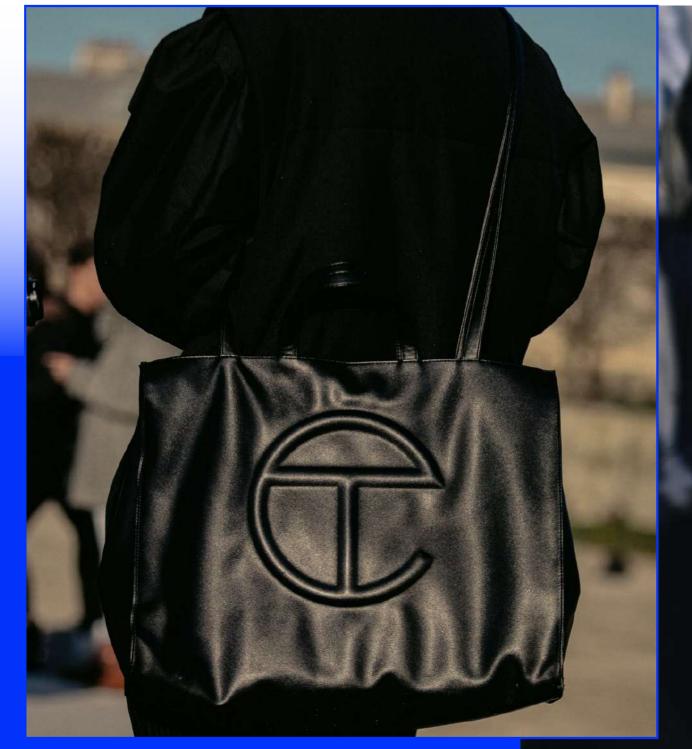
The balance between a digital and physical presence will become increasingly important for brands to maintain in coming years. Digital touchpoints are in many ways replacing physical ones. Not only are luxury and streetwear brands compelled to open new communication channels on social media platforms, but they also must adopt and learn about online solutions like video streaming and digital marketing. A curated Instagram has become as important as a beautifully merchandised flagship store. Digital products and NFTs are supplementing the physical products that we purchase and own. Maintaining a robust brand image through both digital and physical channels is critical for brand perception.

Social Causes

In the last few years, critical social causes like LGBTQ+, Black Lives Matters, climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and more, have forced brands to ask themselves whether to speak up, or stay silent.

Additionally, consumers are also rejecting performative gestures made by brands, and instead demanding real, measurable change. A vague promise written on a billboard is considered an empty gesture, in contrast to grassroots organizing or community building. This also affects what brands look like inside, on a corporate level. Brands will need to ensure a diverse corporate makeup, fair hiring and employment practices, and an inclusive environment.

How brands react to these social issues today, will likely decide the purchasing decisions of younger generations tomorrow.



Su Shan Leong for nss magazine



Jeremy Alvarez for nss magazine

Community First: Local Over Global

We live in a global economy of multinational corporations, where almost any product can be obtained from almost any location in the world. This model fails to recognize what makes one local community different from the next. By returning to local thinking, brands can address the needs and wants of these individual communities on a tailored basis.

Although we are indeed connected digitally from New York to London to Tokyo, locally minded thinking is still a more effective method for engaging the interests, tastes, and trends of local communities.

The Importance of the Archive

The set of trademarks, models, samples, researches, sketches, prints and design make up the genetic heritage of every fashion house. The accurate portrayal and narration of the past and of the founding elements of a brand will be increasingly important in the definition of its identity and perception. The renewed attention towards the archive is further boosted by the expansion of a digital movement that goes under the name of archival fashion, a new ecosystem of online profiles, showrooms, Instagram pages and personalities of the industry that have revived the appreciation and meticulous knowledge of the archive of the most important fashion brands.



Martyna Mierzejewska for nss magazine

6. APPENDIX

6.1 METHODOLOGY6.2 MORE ABOUT NSS & LYST

NSNS

Cartesio is a study on brand perception presented by nss magazine in collaboration with Lyst. The project has been divided into two main phases in order to collect data both from users and from industry insiders. In the first phase, nss & Lyst have developed an virtual open platform where users can create their own map, following the UCG (user content generator) approach. The brands available on the platform were selected by nss magazine team and Lyst.

All the data gathered is 100% compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

In the second phase, nss editors have mined and analyzed data from the platform. The editorial team then merged those data with a series of additional insights from Lyst, world's biggest fashion shopping platform which is used by more than 100 million shoppers a year. Data considered included Google search value, queries that associate brands or items with the keywords "hype" "streetwear" and "luxury". Therefore, nss editorial team has interviewed a series of industry insiders with different roles and positions in the contemporary fashion market in order to add human experience and qualitative insights to finalize our study.

nss magazine

nss started in 2009 as a streetstyle blog, evolving soon into a magazine and digital platform with nssmagazine.com. After a fast grown that lead nss to work as a communications agency, thanks to its extensive experience and expertise in the field of fashion, digital and new media, in 2014 nss created nss factory, a creative media agency born with the aim of chasing stories before they become reality and reality before they become phenomena.

FIND US AT:

LYST

Lyst is the definitive fashion shopping platform, used by over 100 million shoppers each year to find the items they love and decide what to buy. More than 8 million products can be accessed through Lyst's single search bar and app, offering shoppers convenience and unparalleled choice. From emerging trends to worldwide fashion movements, Lyst is a unique source of global fashion intelligence. The Lyst Index quarterly ranking of fashion's hottest brands and products has become a source of authority in the industry.

CREDITS

Editorial direction: Filippo D'Asaro <u>Words</u>: Christopher Danforth Editor: Cecilia Caruso <u>Graphics</u>: Caterina Novaro & Martina Ruffinelli <u>Production</u>: nss factory <u>Image Credits</u>: nss factory



THANK YOU FOR WATCHING