



# Reference as Authority in Fashion

INTRODUCTION

**3**

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**I** CHAPTER  
REFERENCING VINTAGE AND  
ARCHIVAL FASHION

**4**

---

**II** CHAPTER  
DESIGNERS REFERENCING ART,  
CULTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

**7**

---

**III** CHAPTER  
INTUITION VERSUS CULTURAL  
REFERANCES

**10**

---

**IV** CHAPTER  
THE RISK OF REFERENCING  
PERCEPTION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

**13**

---

CONCLUSION

**16**

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# INTRODUCTION

Fashion as Cultural Dialogue Contemporary fashion emerges through interaction with art, history, archives, and cultural memory. Referencing as Designers reinterpret existing sources to create new meanings and visual languages. Between Reference and Intuition Creative processes in fashion move between systematic referencing and intuitive exploration.

## Aim of the Research

How do designers use referencing?

What role do archives and culture play?

What is the relationship between intuition and research?



# I Referencing Vintage and Archival Fashion

- Fashion archives are important sources of knowledge for designers.
- Designers study historical garments, techniques, and silhouettes.
- Archives inspire new interpretations rather than direct copies.
- Digital archives increase access to historical fashion collections.
- Referencing archives raises questions about authorship and originality.



# I Referencing Vintage and Archival Fashion

**DEMNA GVASALIA**

Fall/Winter 2017



**CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA**

Summer 1958



**DEMNA GVASALIA**

Fall 2021



**CRISTÓBAL BALENCIAGA**

Summer 1958



# Problem

## SOCIAL MEDIA PERCEPTION

Audiences perceive couture. Instead of experiencing the garment as a crafted object, viewers often analyze it only through quick visual comparisons with archival references. This fast and simplified perception can distort the value of couture, which is traditionally based on time, craftsmanship, and material presence.

Reference as Authority in Fashion

## ACCELERATION OF FASHION

Social media encourages fast consumption of images, while couture is based on slow craftsmanship and long creative processes.

## SUPERFICIAL COMPARISON

Online audiences often focus on identifying archival similarities rather than understanding design transformation or craftsmanship.

## DISORTION OF COTURE VALUE

This simplified perception can reduce couture garments to visual references instead of appreciating their material, construction, and artistic impact.



## II Designers Referencing Art, Culture, and Architecture

- Fashion operates within a broader cultural and artistic context.
- Designers draw inspiration from artistic movements, architecture, and historical culture.
- These references contribute to the conceptual development of fashion collections.
- Fashion becomes a medium that reflects and reinterprets cultural and artistic ideas.



# II Designers Referencing Art, Culture, and Architecture

**ALESSANDRO MICHELE**

Gucci Fall/Winter 2022



**STANLEY KUBRICKI**

Shining 1980



**ALESSANDRO MICHELE**

Gucci Spring/Summer 2017



**HIERONIM BOSH**

The Garden of Earthly Delights 1500



# Advantages

## SOCIAL MEDIA AS CULTURAL MEDIATOR

Fashion is a very visible and accessible industry, and because of that it can introduce wider audiences to art, architecture, and cultural history. When designers reference these fields, viewers may become curious about the original sources and start exploring them further. In this way, fashion can function as a bridge between popular culture and more specialized cultural disciplines.

Reference as Authority in Fashion

## EXPANDING ACCESS TO CULTURE

Fashion introduces broader audiences to art, architecture, and historical references.

## STIMULATION AND CURIOSITY

References can encourage viewers to explore artistic and historical sources beyond fashion.

## DEVELOPING AWARENESS

Exposure to cultural references through fashion may increase sensitivity to aesthetics and visual culture.



## III Intuition versus Cultural Reference

- Fashion design can develop through both analytical research and intuitive exploration.
- Research-based referencing provides historical and cultural context.
- Intuition supports experimentation and individual creative expression.
- The balance between these two approaches forms the foundation of contemporary design practice.



# III Intuition versus Cultural Reference

## MUCCIA PRADA

Prada Fall/Winter 2025

“Emotional and immediate, creativity without overthinking, something deeply human.”



Jacopo Pontormo 1525-1528



# JONATHAN ANDERSON

Dior: Couture 2026

Fall/Winter 2026



Christian Dior "New Look" 1947



Christian Dior "Junon" dress Fall/Winter 1949-50 haute couture

Reference as Authority in Fashion

## IV The Risks of Referencing Perception and Social Media

- Rapid circulation of fashion images through social media can simplify the perception of complex designs.
- Focus on identifying references may overshadow craftsmanship, materials, and garment construction.
- Overexposure to online opinions can reduce critical thinking and individual aesthetic judgment.
- Influencer-driven narratives may shape public perception of collections more than personal interpretation



# MICRO TRENDS

## QUIET LUXURY



## MOB WIFE



## CLEAN GIRL



## BLOKE CORE



# SUSPENDED BETWEEN

This photoshoot presentation is part of my Master's thesis titled "Reference as Fashion Authority." The aim of this session is to illustrate a creative practice in which creative direction is strongly reference-based. Through this project, I explore how visual references function not only as inspiration, but as authoritative frameworks that shape aesthetic decisions, styling, composition, and overall visual narrative. The shoot serves as a practical demonstration of how contemporary fashion imagery is constructed through intentional referencing and reinterpretation.

# INSPO



One of the main inspirations for this photoshoot is the work of Edward Hopper. His atmospheric depictions of urban spaces, strong contrasts of light and shadow, and sense of stillness strongly influenced the visual direction of this project. The city is treated not just as a background, but as an active narrative element, reflecting Hopper's exploration of solitude and architectural tension.

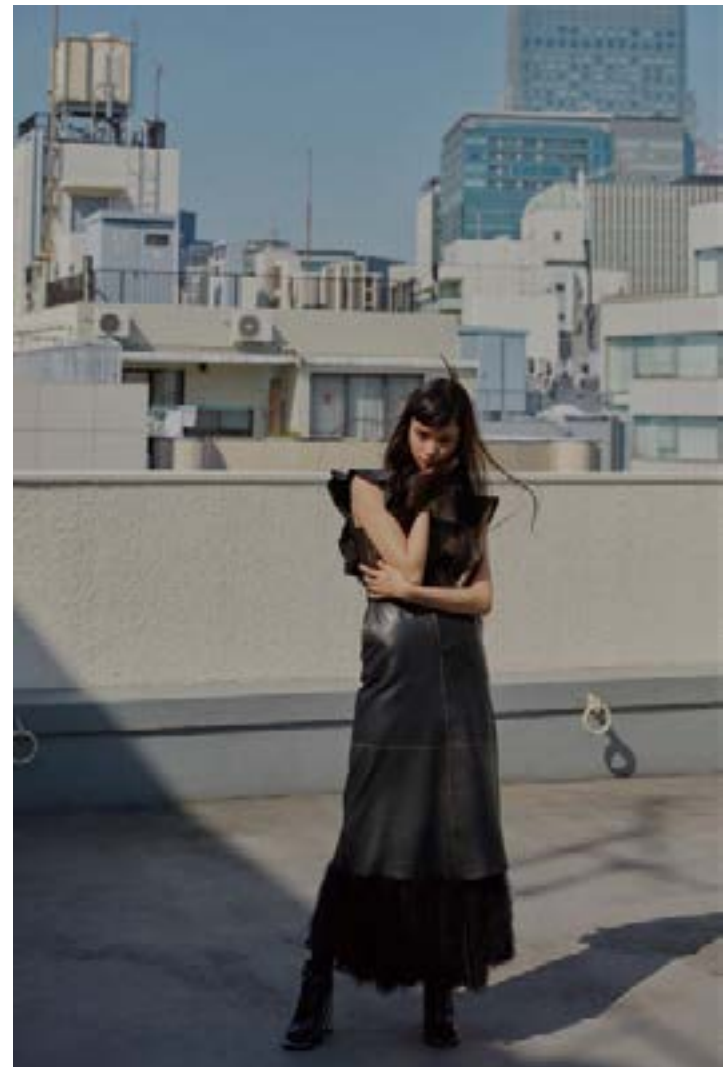


The second major inspiration for this photoshoot is *Woman on the Balcony* by Caspar David Friedrich. The painting presents an intimate, contemplative moment a figure absorbed in thought, suspended in quiet stillness. There is no clear action or narrative, yet its calm intensity creates a powerful emotional presence. This photoshoot aims to evoke a similar atmosphere: introspective, meditative, and gently detached from the noise of the outside world. Like the painting, it seeks to create a space of reflection a visual pause that contrasts with the overstimulation of contemporary life.



*Atmosphere*

*Poses*



*Suspended*

*Classicism*





*Brutalism*

*Baroque*



*Garments*

*Jewellery*







THANK YOU!