

## COLLABORATION WITH ART IN THE LUXURY INDUSTRY AS A MARKETING TOOL FOR VALUE CREATION

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**Abstract:** The paper examines the role of art in value creation in luxury brands and the insights for consumption of luxury items made in cooperation with artists or under inspiration by art heritage. The paper concentrates on artistic collaborations and on collaborations with art heritage in cases where an artist has passed away but their paintings inspire designers and become interpreted and implemented into a luxury brand. These collaborations bring strong emotional and symbolic values for consumers as e.g. aesthetic pleasure, as well as feelings of being an art connoisseur and a part of global cultural elite. Moreover, luxury items with visual artistic elements (LIVAE) can provoke an interest in the arts and create educational value for people. The study was carried out in Moscow and the primary data was collected during March-April 2018 using online in-depth interviews with members of Facebook and Instagram communities devoted to luxury brands. The conducted research allowed the author to find out about the awareness of LIVAE and reveal the motives for their consumption among Muscovites such as 1) expressing individuality and demonstrating understanding and proximity to art and 2) getting an aesthetic pleasure for self. These motives form the two following segments of LIVAE consumers: 1) attention and differentiation seeking individualities and 2) aesthetic connoisseurs.

**Key words:** artistic collaborations, collaborations with art heritage, luxury items with visual artistic elements (LIVAE), emotional and symbolic values

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### Introduction

Euroregions The collaboration between art and luxury is not new (Chailan, 2018). A designer with Italian roots, Elsa Schiaparelli, collaborated with the surrealist artist Salvador Dali from 1936-1938. This collaboration was expressed in such artistic designer artefacts as the “Lobster Dress” and the “Shoe Hat”. These famous items are still exhibited worldwide. Yves Saint Laurent was inspired by modernistic artists and designed the Mondrian Collection in 1965. These collaborations have gone down in history. Collaboration between Louis Vuitton and Takashi Murakami which started in 2003 lasted more than 12 years and brought about the notorious Multicolore monogram collection. In 2013, the brand Alexander McQueen introduced collaboration with Damien Hirst and launched a scarf collection which implemented the aesthetic vision of the artist and the brand.

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Art is able to enhance the perceived value of a product by evoking positive emotions in consumers (Estes, 2018) who are sensitive to art. Art brightens up the lives of people who appreciate visual aesthetics, provokes creativity and imagination and gives moments of joy and happiness.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of art in value creation of luxury brands and find out the motives for the consumption of these luxury items made in cooperation with artists or under inspiration by art heritage. The research was carried out in Moscow as the consumption of luxury brands in Russia is concentrated mainly in this city. There is a small amount of academic work devoted to the subject of collaboration between art and luxury and an evident lack of specific research devoted to revealing the motives for purchasing products from luxury brands which were launched under collaboration with an artist or under inspiration by paintings. In the theoretical part of the paper, the different forms of collaboration between art and luxury are discussed and the role of art in value creation is analysed. In the methodological section, the method and the research design are presented. Online, in-depth interviews via Skype were selected as a method. Managerial implications, limitations and conclusions bring the paper to an end.

### **Theoretical background**

#### ***Collaboration of Art and Luxury - “Artification”***

Historically, companies from the luxury sector use art to create unique consumer experiences (Naletelicha and Paswan, 2018). Moreover, famous fashion designers have always been on friendly terms with artists, musicians, ballet dancers, poets and writers, actors, and film and performance directors. This friendship has given them not only good company, but also creative insights and new ideas. Being highly erudite people, designers get inspired by classical literature and music, as well as ballet and paintings. The French designer Yves Saint Laurent was influenced by the heroines of Russian literature, mainly Natasha Rostova and Anna Karenina (Trifonova, 2016). He also liked the French writer Marcel Proust and admired the paintings of Mondrian, Matisse, Cezanne and Klimt. In addition to being an opportunity for differentiation and added value, various forms of arts are sources for creative imagination and implementation in the luxury fashion industry. Kapferer (2014) introduces the term “artification” and criticizes this phenomenon, mentioning that the “artification process thus is timely for a sector that is becoming increasingly less artisanal”. The researcher refers to the example of Andy Warhol, indicating that luxury brands have learned a lesson from Warhol who considered technical reproduction as art (Kapferer, 2014). Artification is not always reproduction, e.g. the Austrian jewelry brand FreyWille which has enthusiasm for pure art as a core value gives its own interpretations of famous art works and these unique images are painted by professional artists.

Art has the power to impart elitism to luxury items and increase their perceived value in consumers' eyes. At the same time, collaborations with artists are able to bring a breath of fresh air and indicate that a luxury brand is developing and not standing still. As some pieces of art are immortal, they can give timelessness to the items in which they are integrated, e.g. the Mondrian dress from Yves Saint Laurent as well as the Lobster dress from Schiaparelli and Dali have both become imperishable. Controversial stars of con-temporary art such as Jeff Koons, Takashi Murakami and Damien Hirst who are involved in the artification process, bridge their own notoriety with the fame of global luxury brands causing a so-called love-hate relationship. The term art is rather abstract and multifaceted. There are endless debates of what does or does not comprise art. The Oxford dictionary gives several definitions for art: 1) the expression of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power; 2) the various branches of creative activity, such as painting, music, literature and dance; 3) a skill at doing a specified thing, typically one acquired through practice. Taking into account the third definition, luxury items might be viewed as art. The luxury industry has thrived on *“an ideological storytelling based on craftsmanship, rarity, uniqueness...”* (Kapferer, 2014). Historically, the luxury industry has supported art, helping talented and outstanding artists. This support gives luxury *“a moral and aesthetic endorsement, noncommercial connotations, and a paradoxical legitimization of its high prices”* (Kapferer, 2014).

There are different forms of collaboration between the arts and the luxury industry. Chailan (2018) singled out 4 arts-related forms of collaboration: 1) artistic mentoring, 2) foundations, 3) patronage, 4) artistic collaboration (Chailan, 2018). The researcher defines an artistic collaboration as a classic business relationship between the artist and the brand where the painter agrees to create a product or a line for the brand during a limited period of time and receives remuneration in return. Louis Vuitton had a 13-year successful collaboration with the Japanese contemporary artist Takashi Murakami who designed the Multi-color monogram collection from 2003 to 2015. The classification did not take into account the bridging of art and luxury when an artist is no longer alive but a designer has become inspired by his paintings. The French designer Yves Saint Laurent was inspired by abstractionist art and created his famous Mondrian dress in 1965. The Dutch painter Piet Mondrian passed away in 1944, so he could not take part in creating this collection. The paintings of Monet, Klimt, Mucha, Kandinsky, Malevich, Andy Warhol, Stephen Sprouse and other artists who have died are continuing to inspire designers and become interpreted and implemented into products. Knowing this fact, it is important to add *“collaboration with art heritage”* for the cases when artists have passed away but their immortal paintings have continued to inspire people who stand behind brands. The different forms of art e.g. painting, music, dance or performance might be integrated into marketing-mix ingredients. Music and performance can be used to promote luxury items. Famous

film directors are invited to make short commercial movies about luxury brands. In 2016, the British filmmaker Asif Kapadia released a short film devoted to Burberry about key events that have shaped the brand's history. In the same year, Spike Jonze did a movie for Kenzo with a plot that revolved around a rebellious, wild, young lady (Sauer, 2016). Some designers from the luxury and fashion industry very often use pieces from classical music during their fashion shows. Aside from the products and packaging, visual arts are also implemented in the design of retail stores. *"The window panels are designed by artists, and the construction of flagship stores has been assigned to famous international architects, who make audacious, artful statements visible to all, similar to cathedrals and museums in the past"* (Kapferer, 2014). Although this collaboration can be expressed in three elements of marketing-mix - product, place and promotion - the author has been investigating the creation of values through products which have been made in cooperation with an artist or under the inspiration of a painting.

#### ***Art as a Marketing Tool for Value Creation***

Art enhances consumer perceptions of products and brands. Naletelicha, Paswan wrote about such factors as aesthetics, functionality and symbolism which are inherent in products with elements of visual arts (Naletelicha and Paswan, 2018). Koronaki et al. (2018) stated that art integrated into brand result in emotional value for luxury brands connoisseurs. They suggested that this emotional value positively affects brand attachment and brand loyalty (Koronaki et al. 2018). The study of Hagtvedt and Patrick demonstrated that the presence of art has a positive influence on brand image (Hagtvedt and Patrick, 2008). The researchers examined the role of art on inexpensive non-luxury products, e.g. soap dispensers with artistic visual images. Moreover, these artistic images were not provoking in comparison with some pieces of contemporary art (e.g. Hirst and McQueen, 2013) and nowadays they are considered beautiful without any big debates, e.g. "Palazzo da Mula" by Claude Monet, "The Burning of the House of Lords and Commons, October 16, 1834" by J.M.W. Turner. The presence of art is able to strengthen the perceived prestige, no matter the price of the product (Lee et al., 2015). Luxury brands bring emotional and symbolic values. The emotional value deals with the emotions which the consumer experiences buying and possessing the luxury brand. The symbolic value is about other people's opinion and serves to translate information about one's personality into the outer world (Ochkovskaya, 2015). Luxury brands are a set of symbols allowing their consumers to define their identity and social position (Chadha and Husband, 2006). Bastien and Kapferer (2013) wrote about two types of luxury: luxury for self and luxury for others. Luxury for self is about "my luxury" which is most often about a moment, rare experience or items which are for private non-demonstrative use, e.g. artistic toothbrushes Montcarotte. "Luxury for others" is publicly consumed products and often might be identified by other people, e.g. LV or Gucci bags with their easily recognized monograms. Artistic collaboration and implementation of visual artistic elements take place

in all types of luxury – “for self” and “for others”. Artistic elements might add intellectual and cultural constituents to luxury brands which in this case are perceived as meta-luxury. Meta-luxury is not afforded exclusively from an economic point of view, but also from an intellectual perspective. Meta-luxury embodies excellence as a culture to both the maker and the customer (Ricca and Robins, 2012). The artistic elements in luxury items might signal to the environment the high intellectual and cultural level of those who possess them. Consumption of luxury items with visual artistic elements (LIVAE) is not motivated only by their symbolic values. The artistic elements might bring strong emotional value for those who are open to the arts, as well as feel and adore it. It is not necessary to have a degree in visual arts to appreciate the collaboration between arts and luxury brands. People who are open to arts, feel it intuitively, and might choose appropriate products with artistic elements. Although majorities of luxury clients are rather wealthy, luxury brands are not only about money, they are also about values, individuality and the ability to appreciate the arts, when it comes to LIVAE. When people are involved in deliberate consumption, they estimate all material and non-material ingredients about the brands they purchase.

A previous research about luxury brand consumption in Moscow revealed that one of the motives for purchasing luxury items is a desire to be a part of the environment to which a consumer would like to belong (Ochkovskaya and Airapetian, 2017). As a result, younger generations might follow the rule “dress for success”. According to some research, Moscow and St. Petersburg societies have passed the stage where people were focused on bling and expressly demonstrated their status and wealth with easily recognized luxury items (Kulikova and Godart, 2014.). Having said that, there is still a so-called “parvenus” segment who *“possesses significant wealth but not the connoisseurship necessary to interpret subtle signals”* (Young et al., 2010). The choice of this segment are well-known luxury brands which might be easily recognized even among those who do not consume them e.g. Gucci and LV items with their monograms and logos on the outside of the products. Limited awareness brands focused on an exclusive niche market (Nueno and Quelch, 1998) are not the object of their interest. People from the “parvenus” segment crave status (Young et al., 2010). The author presumes that Jeff Koons’ Louis Vuitton bags might be highly appreciated by these consumers. LV bags with famous reproductions and names of great painters such as Rubens, Monet, Da Vinci, Van Gogh, etc. written on them in big gold letters are easily identifiable and announce both the famous luxury brand and artists. The ability to value artwork and taste does not demand these conspicuous signatures.

Russian people are a favourable audience for luxury brands. They are less focused on the future and prefer to spend money today for “small pleasures”, rather than save and invest (Kulikova and Godart, 2014). The presence of Museums of Fine Arts with both national and foreign masterpieces in Moscow and Saint-Petersburg contributes to the fact that some Russian people have an appetite for art and appreciate the items with visual artistic elements from the paintings of Van

Gogh, Kandinsky, Monet, etc. These artefacts are not necessarily initiated by luxury brands. Generic bags, scarves and other accessories based on famous paintings handmade by local craftspeople are spread through the online social networks (e.g. livemaster.ru). The author made an attempt to single out the emotional and symbolic values given by LIVAE to consumers (Table 1). Both emotional and symbolic values have 4 appropriate ingredients.

**Table 1. Experiencing emotional and symbolic values as applied to LIVAE**

Emotional values	Symbolic values
Aesthetic pleasure	Translation not only social status but intellect
Defining individuality for yourself and experiencing a kind of joy from possessing luxury items with artistic elements	Expressing individuality to the outer world and attracting attention
Inner satisfaction feelings of being art connoisseur	Showing that you are among global cultural elite
Experiencing higher level of creativity and imagination	Demonstration of passion and competence in art

A consumer who possesses the LIVAE can have a so-called luxury-artistic experience incorporating a mix of emotional and symbolic values.

### Methodology and Results

The primary data was collected during March-April 2018 using online in-depth interviews (via Skype) with members of Facebook and Instagram communities devoted to luxury brands. The sample contained 20 female respondents from Moscow whose age lies in the 23-43 y.o interval. Obviously, the respondents are not indifferent to luxury brands. The author assumes that following luxury brands online on different social networks gives the respondents good knowledge about the luxury industry. The following research questions were asked:

*RQ1: What examples of collaboration between art and luxury brands are you familiar with?*

*RQ2: What luxury items with artistic elements do you have?*

*RQ3: What are the insights for consumption of luxury items which were made in cooperation with artists or under inspiration by paintings?*

As art is constituted of many forms and might be integrated into the different elements of marketing-mix, we limited our research with artistic collaborations (including collaborations with art works in cases where the painter had passed away) aimed at product creation. The respondents were familiar with historical and contemporary examples as:

1. Lobster Dress by Schiaparelli and Dali,
2. Mondrian Dress by Yves Saint Laurent,
3. Kandinsky/Malevich/Mondrian Toothbrushes from Montcarotte,
4. FreyWille Hundertwasser/Claude Monet/Gustav Klimt/Alphonse Mucha collections,
5. Takashi Murakami and Jeff Koons Louis Vuitton Bags,
6. Matthew Porter Lady Dior Bags.

Regarding the possessions, the respondents mentioned:

1. Louis Vuitton Monogram Multicolor Speedy City Bag from Murakami (1 respondent),
2. Louis Vuitton Wallet from Murakami (2 respondents),
3. Louis Vuitton Speedy Bag Monet from Jeff Koons (1 respondent),
4. FreyWille Gustav Klimt set (1 respondent),
5. Montcarotte Kandinsky and Mondrian Toothbrushes (2 respondents).

In this sample the LIVAE from LV are the most popular (4 items). Items from the Murakami collections for LV are considered vintage now and presented on the secondary market. Although Montcarotte toothbrushes are much more affordable in comparison with bags and other items from luxury brands, they are considered and perceived as luxurious in their product categories. Not all respondents possess the luxury items which were made in cooperation with artists or inspired by paintings. Although a majority of mentioned items represent notable luxury items for public use, the Montcarotte toothbrushes are from the category “luxury for self”. Two insights/motives for the consumption of LIVAE were revealed among the respondents:

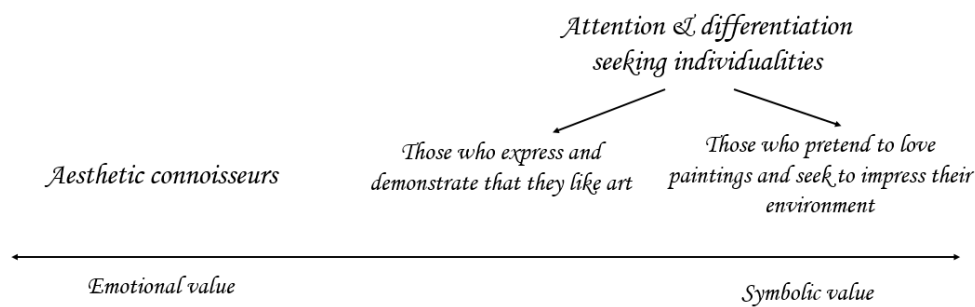
*M1: To express individuality and demonstrate understanding and proximity to art.*

*M2: To get an aesthetic pleasure for self.*

The first motive is about symbolic value and is directed to the outside world. The second motive represents mainly emotional value and does not have a goal to be noticed or admired by the «important people» from the outer world. People, seeking aesthetics, appreciate these items with artistic elements, primarily for their beauty or emotional power. Taking into account these insights, two segments of luxury art-integrated items consumers might be singled out (Figure 1):

S1: Attention and differentiation seeking individualities who would like to express and demonstrate that they like art or maybe just pretend to love paintings and are aimed to impress their environment, especially people whose opinion matters to them. They flaunt their LIVAE possessions to signal to society about their intellectual level. It is important for them when their artistic erudition is visible.

S2: Aesthetic connoisseurs. It is important to add that aesthetic connoisseurs also might express their individuality, but do it for themselves unlike attention and differentiation seeking individuals who desperately want to attract attention to their personalities. Aesthetic connoisseurs are rather deliberate in their consumption and consume LIVAE with the key purpose of gaining aesthetic pleasure.



**Figure 1. Segments of LIVAE consumers**

The author suggests that for those from the segment who are self-made, wealthy and hard working but lack education, the purchase of LIVAE might give the feeling of ennobling and being closer to the culturally educated elite. Moreover, these items can provoke an interest in the arts. So the LIVAE have strong educational value for people. As Kapferer (2014) writes: “*Art takes people to a higher level of meaning*”. Sundie et al. (2011) mentioned that those who flaunt luxury goods are seen as more sexually attractive by women. In case of LIVAE people who possess them might feel or be perceived as more intellectual as it deals with the mastery of exclusive and complex artistic codes (Chailan, 2018)

### **Managerial Implications**

Kapferer mentions that art is capable of giving luxury a moral and aesthetic endorsement, noncommercial connotations and a legitimization of its high prices (Kapferer, 2014). Artification is utilized not only in luxury brands items, but also takes place in brands of lower level, e.g. bridge and mass-market brands. Art has an inspiring power and "aims for the elite features of all people, regardless of their wealth" (Kapferer, 2014) and that is why the pieces with artistic elements might be so magnetic. Arts bring not only differentiation to material items and their owners, but also aesthetic pleasure and positive emotions. There is a successful example with the St. Friday brand specializing in “artistic” socks with elements from different paintings, including the works of Malevich, Andy Warhol, etc. These affordable items allow their consumers to express creative and non-conformist individuality. The St. Friday brand originated in Saint-Petersburg in 2015. Nowadays, the brand has established collaborations with the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and Tretyakov Gallery and launched limited edition collections based on masterpieces from permanent museum expositions. The artistic St. Friday socks belong to so called affordable meta luxury. The usage of visual art in brands of different levels and no-name products contributes to the development of erudition and increases the cultural level of people. Carlucci and Schiuma (2017) stressed that individuals through arts can feel better, inspired and more passionate. According to Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), merely viewing artwork may enhance cognitive flexibility.



### Limitations and Conclusions

The research entails some limitations. The investigation covered only a limited numbers of respondents from Moscow and was focused only on paintings as art and its implementation into product. Despite the limitations, the author found out about the awareness and relevance of LIVAE and got some insights about their consumption among Muscovites such as 1) expressing individuality and demonstrating understanding and proximity to art and 2) getting an aesthetic pleasure for self. In future, we are planning to cover more respondents and carry out an online survey to check the results we got from the interviews. Moreover, it seems very interesting to cover Asian consumers who buy luxury brands not to differentiate themselves but to avoid being perceived socially below others (Kapferer, 2014). Chen et al. (2014) mention such cultural specifics peculiar to Chinese mentality as “face consciousness” which is about the individual’s desire to avoid losing face when engaging in social interactions and maintain a certain status or pretend to be on the same level of luxury brand consumption as the individual’s environment. Thus, social pressure combined with the desire to make an impression of being an art lover and connoisseur might provoke consumption of these luxury items with visual artistic ingredients. This hypothesis needs to be checked with further study. As art is not only about paintings, the author is going to explore the role of other forms of art, e.g. ballet and classical literature, in the luxury industry.

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### WSPÓLPRACA ZE SZTUKĄ W PRZEMYŚLE WYROBÓW LUKSUSOWYCH JAKO NARZĘDZIE MARKETINGOWE W TWORZENIU WARTOŚCI

**Streszczenie:** W artykule autorka podejmuje problematykę analizy roli sztuki w kreowaniu wartości marek luksusowych i wgląd w konsumpcję przedmiotów luksusowych wykonanych we współpracy z artystami lub inspirowanych dziedzictwem sztuki. Artykuł koncentruje się na współpracy artystycznej i współpracy z dziedzictwem artystycznym w przypadkach, gdy artysta zmarł, ale jego obrazy inspirują projektantów i są interpretowane i wdrażane do luksusowej marki. Współpraca ta przynosi konsumentom silne emocjonalne i symboliczne wartości, np. przyjemność estetyczna, a także poczucie bycia koneserem sztuki i częścią światowej elity kulturalnej. Co więcej, luksusowe przedmioty z wizualnymi elementami artystycznymi (LIVAE) mogą wzbudzić

zainteresowanie sztuką i stworzyć wartość edukacyjną dla ludzi. Badanie przeprowadzono w Moskwie, a dane pierwotne zebrano w okresie od marca do kwietnia 2018 r. za pomocą internetowych wywiadów pogłębionych z członkami społeczności poświęconych markom luksusowym na portalu społecznościowym Facebook i Instagram. Przeprowadzone badania pozwoliły autorce uzyskać informacje na temat świadomości LIVAE i ujawnić motywy ich konsumpcji wśród moskwian takich jak: 1) wyrażanie indywidualności, demonstrowanie zrozumienia i bliskości sztuki oraz 2) uzyskanie estetycznej przyjemności dla siebie. Motywy te składają się z dwóch następujących segmentów konsumentów LIVAE: 1) uwagi i różnicowania w poszukiwaniu indywidualności i 2) estetycznych koneserów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** współpraca artystyczna, współpraca z dziedzictwem artystycznym, przedmioty luksusowe z wizualnymi elementami artystycznymi (LIVAE), wartości emocjonalne i symboliczne

#### 与奢侈品行业的艺术合作, 作为价值创造的营销工具

**摘要:** 本文探讨了艺术在奢侈品牌价值创造中的作用, 以及与艺术家合作或在艺术遗产的启发下对奢侈品消费的见解。在艺术家去世的情况下, 该论文集中于艺术合作和与艺术遗产的合作, 但他们的画作激发了设计师的灵感, 并被解读并实施为奢侈品牌。这些合作为消费者带来了强烈的情感和象征价值, 例如: 审美愉悦, 以及成为艺术鉴赏家和全球文化精英的一部分。此外, 具有视觉艺术元素的奢侈品 (LIVAE) 可以引起对艺术的兴趣并为人们创造教育价值。该研究在莫斯科进行, 主要数据是在2018年3月至4月期间通过对Facebook和Instagram社区成员的在线深度访谈收集的。进行的研究使作者能够了解LIVAE的意识并揭示其在莫斯科中消费的动机, 例如1) 表达个性, 展示对艺术的理解和接近度;

2) 为自己获得审美愉悦。这些动机形成了LIVAE消费者的以下两个部分: 1) 注意力和差异性寻求个性和2) 审美鉴赏家。

**关键词:** 艺术合作, 与艺术遗产的合作, 具有视觉艺术元素的奢侈品 (LIVAE), 情感和象征价值。