

IN PURSUIT OF LUXURY



**In Pursuit of Luxury 2**

May 6 2016

LIM College, New York

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# Welcome

Welcome to the second international In Pursuit of Luxury conference in New York City. This year's theme is focused on academic and commercial perspectives on luxury with particular attention to craftsmanship, the luxury retail environment, technology and theoretical approaches to luxury.

The aim of the conference is to explore the concept of luxury from a variety of academic and commercial perspectives. Delegates come from a global constituency and bring a correspondingly wide range of perspectives to the subject. The conference also provides an interdisciplinary forum to examine the subject of luxury and delegates come from the disciplines of design, history, cultural studies, retail, architecture, business, communication studies, marketing and economics.

While we know a great deal about luxury management within the creative industries from the corporate standpoint, far less is known about the conditions, experiences and challenges surrounding the creation and production of luxury by designers, crafts persons, and factory workers. Our knowledge of the experiences and constraints placed on those who work in sales and management within retail environments is also largely invisible to those outside this domain. Our delegates will bring these perspectives to life and in doing so we will learn a great deal about how work is structured, the hierarchies in place, and ways in which we may rethink ideas surrounding luxury.

Our international industry and academic delegates from a variety of disciplines and sectors bring a wide range of perspectives to the subject of luxury and will address key questions concerning the history of luxury as a concept, practice and product; luxury as a craft; and, luxury a force in the global economy, taking on forms ranging from the non-profit benefice to

the conglomerate. These questions related to the meaning of luxury, its evolution, the reality of luxury today and its future direction will be explored in the six themes selected for the conference:

1. *Craft and design*
2. *Cultural capital, work and production*
3. *Sustainability*
4. *The luxury retail environment*
5. *Contemporary notion of luxury*
6. *Technology*

For this year's conference, we have deliberately changed the format and kept it small to provide all attendees with the opportunity to have discussions and engage with the presenters and panel members in an open forum. Our goal beyond the conference is to build a network that is sustainable and to continue this important dialogue both in a special issue of a journal, a book with chapters written by the delegates, and new research projects and initiatives which will help shape the form of the third international In Pursuit of Luxury conference.

We would like to thank Jacqui Jenkins, Dean of Graduate Studies for her enthusiasm and kind use of LIM to host the conference. We would also like to thank her for offering her expertise in the subject to host the industry panel on the future of luxury. We hope that you enjoy the conference and that our mutual interests in the subject of luxury will provide a springboard for further debate and research.

[Dr Shaun Borstrock](#) and [Dr Veronica Manlow](#)

# In Conversation with... Maria Grachvogel

*"The journey for me has always been about discovering new ways to cut a garment, to sculpt, enhance and play with shape. I see myself almost as an architect of the female form. I'm inspired by making women feel gorgeous and creating that power and allure a woman has when she feels good about herself."*

[Maria Grachvogel](#)

Maria thinks deeply about the cut and fit of her garments and this almost scientific functionality and strive for perfection has always remained the core of her brand. Through her very personal and uncompromising approach to design, Maria has built a loyal and growing client base of all ages over the years.

Originally mentored by the late Isabella Blow, Maria burst onto the catwalks in the autumn of 1995, where she held her first runway show on the London Fashion Week schedule, showcasing her Spring/Summer '96 collection. It was styled by the visionary Isabella, who had been an early fan of Maria's work and really took Maria under her wing.

Maria's journey had actually started a decade previously, where the self-taught designer started cutting and making clothes after learning the basics of pattern cutting and assembly as a child. Here her fascination for cut, form and drape led her to develop her own blocks and cutting techniques which have remained the basis of her work to date.

*"It's truly hard to put a start date on my life as a creator and designer as I started so young. It was a real passion for me from an early age".*

By the year 2000, after a whirlwind five years as an established designer, Victoria Beckham headlined at the Autumn/Winter show which generated a huge international frenzy and interest in the brand. Since then, there has been no looking back and the brand continues to go from strength to strength, dressing a host of celebrity devotees along the way including the likes of; Angelina Jolie, Emma Thompson, Yasmin and Amber Le Bon, Florence Welch, Kelly Rowland and Jessie J to name but a few.

In September 2001 Maria successfully opened her first flagship store on London's Sloane Street. This was a turning point

for Maria on both a personal and professional level, giving her the chance to communicate with her clients directly, in a way she never had before. It was so much more than a catwalk show, which was a moment in time, she finally had the chance to create her own space as well as offer the level of service she wanted her clients to experience. As the business grew so did the need for more space and Maria's flagship store and head office is now located around the corner in Chelsea's Culford Gardens.

Maria's precise cutting technique is also mirrored in her clever exploration of textiles and print and her approach to this has always been her point of difference since the beginning of her career. Originally introduced to someone who could hand devore by Isabella Blow, Maria had this wonderful idea to enhance and play with the female form by using the technique on finished dresses to follow the line of the dress and sculpt the body. A laborious process but with incredibly beautiful results, these pieces soon became favourites amongst customers and press. By 2004 Maria started working with digital print for the first time, creating digitally printed dresses which are all painted and printed as a garment, not a piece of fabric. A trademark technique which is still used in all collections today, the combination of Maria's impeccable cut and hand painted prints creates a beautiful illusion on the female form, perfectly highlighting the power of innovative print application.

Maria's technical knowhow has also led to the creation of the much hyped about 'Magic Pants' which won their name due to their magical slim lining effect. Guaranteeing longer legs and a smaller bottom, working for everyone, whatever age shape or size. *"I made it my mission to design trousers which fit and flatter, I have dispensed with pockets and side seams, which is why they give the illusion of a slim silhouette."* says Maria. Another Grachvogel staple is the jumpsuit, which is continually presented in an array of flattering cuts and colours seasonally, Maria covets this style so much she actually wore one of her white jumpsuits on her wedding day.

Maria now runs a global fashion business, which has recently celebrated its 20th anniversary and whilst her collections have continually evolved over the past two decades her philosophy and desire to make real women feel sensational and unstoppable in her clothes remains the firm foundation for her business.

The Maria Grachvogel brand can be found on her website and in Flagship stores in London and Singapore as well as at some of the world's most exclusive stores including Harrods and Harvey Nichols and Start.

*"I believe in great cut, fabulous fit and truly beautiful clothes. I see my role as a designer, to create wonderful, desirable pieces that fit effortlessly onto the female form. I also believe great design has an element of functionality – a fabulous garment should not only be beautiful and desirable but should also feel comfortable and have great versatility in your wardrobe".*

[Maria Grachvogel](#)

# Conference Programme

#IPOLNY16

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09.00 – 09:10 **Welcome**  
Shaun Borstock and Veronica Manlow

09:10 – 10.00 **Keynote**  
In Conversation with... Maria Grachvogel

## Theme 1: Craft and Design

10.00 – 10.20 **Yeseung Lee**  
Royal College of Art, London  
The Authentic Surface: Making Garments, Selves and Others

10.20 – 10.40 **Thomai Serdari**  
New York University, Leonard N. Stern School of Business  
Mind and Hands: The 'Ultimate Maker' and the Pursuit of Luxury

10.40 – 11.00 Coffee / Tea Break

## Theme 2: Cultural Capital, Work and Production

11.00 – 11.20 **Nigel Lezama**  
Brock University, Canada  
Beau Brummell, The Original B-Boy? Luxury's Subversive Signified

11.20 – 11.40 **Jessica Clark**  
Brock University, Canada  
Laboring for Luxury: Female Workers in London's Early Beauty Industry

## Theme 3: Sustainability

11.40 – 12.00 **Sue Thomas**  
Herriot-Watt University, Scotland  
Peace of Mind: The Quintessential Luxury

12.00 – 12.20 **Fabian Faurholt Csaba and Else Skjold**  
Copenhagen Business School and Design School Kolding  
Fur and Sustainability: Oxymoron or Key to Deeper Luxury?

## Theme 4: The Luxury Retail Environment

12.20 – 12.40 **Robert Reid**  
International University of Monaco  
Democratization of Luxury within the Brand Hierarchy: Perceptions of a Luxury Fashion Brand and Implications for the Design of Space

12.40 – 13.00 **Nessa Adams**  
Regent's University, London  
Luxury Retail: Exploring the Creation of a Luxurious Experience

13.00 – 14.00 **Lunch**

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14.00 - 14.30 The Luxury Retail Environment, Selling Luxury, Panel 1:  
**Veronica Manlow** (Chair)  
Brooklyn College  
**David Loranger**  
Philadelphia University (formerly of Bergdorf Goodman)  
**Yussef El Amir**  
Tailored Clothing Specialist, Bergdorf Goodman  
**Christopher Ferree**  
Lanvin Brand Manager, Bergdorf Goodman (discussing Bergdorf Goodman)

14:30 - 15:00 The Luxury Retail Environment, Selling Luxury, Panel 2:  
**Veronica Manlow** (Chair)  
Brooklyn College  
**Travis Haglin**  
General Manager for Burberry (discussing Ralph Lauren)  
**Louis-Felix Communeau**  
Key Account Supervisor for Montblanc Africa, Middle-East & India (discussing Louis Vuitton)

#### Theme 5: Contemporary Notions of Luxury

15.00 - 15.20 **Dr John Armitage and Dr Joanne Roberts**  
Winchester Luxury Research Group  
Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design, Media

15.20 - 16.00 **Dr Joanne Roberts and Dr John Armitage**  
Winchester Luxury Research Group  
Knowing Luxury

16.00 - 16.20 Coffee and Tea Break

#### Theme 5: Contemporary Notions of Luxury cont...

16.20 - 16.40 **Annamari Vänskä**  
University of Turku, Finland  
Pets and Luxury Brand Extension

#### Theme 6: Technology

16.40 - 17.00 **Ellen Anders**  
Independent Researcher  
Luxury Goods and Gadgets

17.00 - 17.20 **Federica Carlotto**  
Regent's University, London  
Digital Perspectives on Luxury, Conspicuous Products, and Globalized Business Practices

17.20 - 17.40 **Stéphane Houy-Towner**  
Independent Researcher  
Dernier Cri: Continuity and Convergence in Technology and Luxury

17:40 - 17:50 **Shaun Borstrock**  
University of Hertfordshire  
Digital Customisation and Luxury

17:50 - 18.40 In Conversation – The Future of Luxury - Industry Panel  
**Jacqui Jenkins** (Chair)  
Dean of Graduate Studies, LIM  
**Father Andrew More O'Connor**  
Goods of Conscience  
**Patrick Mathieu**  
PATRICK MATHIEU Recherche & Conseil  
**Philippe Soussand**  
SOUSSAND ASSOCIATES, LLC  
**Tom Chin**  
Senior Managing Director, consulting and analytics at TAG  
**Maria Grachvogel**  
Designer

In an effort to look further into the changing realities of the luxury sector, the Industry Panel will discuss the future of luxury with regards to the market perception, consumer expectations, and operating company business models. Jacqueline M. Jenkins, the Dean of Graduate Studies at LIM College, will moderate the discussion with panelists that represent various aspects of the luxury market. Father Andrew More O'Connor, who has earned fans such as Cameron Diaz and Anna Wintour, will be sharing how his line made from wild cotton adds to the richness of high-end apparel. An area of change in luxury is the collaboration of brands to develop new product offerings. To speak on such initiatives, Patrick Mathieu will discuss how firms with radically different cultures and offerings such as Hermès and Apple can successfully work together. Phillippe Soussand, the former CFO of both Christian Dior and Louis Vuitton for North America, will discuss the financial pressures to maintain a profitable luxury offering. Maria Grachvogel, the acclaimed British designer whose clients include Emma Thomson, Angelina Jolie, Yasmin and Amber Le Bon will offer insights into running a luxury fashion business where craftsmanship, materials, skill and the retail environment play a crucial role in defining luxury. Tom Chin, the Senior Managing Director of the consulting and analytics group at TAG, an investment advisory firm, will share an investment outlook on the sector and provide insight about operating challenges and opportunities for luxury companies.

18:40 - 19:15 **Drinks reception**

# Delegate Profiles

Keynote

**Maria Grachvogel**

Designer

Maria thinks deeply about the cut and fit of her garments and this almost scientific functionality and strive for perfection has always remained the core of her brand. Originally mentored by the late Isabella Blow, Maria burst onto the catwalks in the autumn of 1995, where she held her first runway show on the London Fashion Week schedule, showcasing her Spring/Summer '96 collection. By the year 2000, after a whirlwind five years as an established designer, Victoria Beckham headlined at the Autumn/Winter show which generated a huge international frenzy and interest in the brand. Since then, there has been no looking back and the brand continues to go from strength to strength, dressing a host of celebrity devotees along the way including the likes of; Angelina Jolie, Emma Thompson, Yasmin and Amber Le Bon, Florence Welch, Kelly Rowland and Jessie J to name but a few. In September 2001 Maria successfully opened her first flagship store on London's Sloane Street. Maria now runs a global fashion business, which has recently celebrated its 20th anniversary and whilst her collections have continually evolved over the past two decades her philosophy and desire to make real women feel sensational and unstoppable in her clothes remains the firm foundation for her business.

**Dr Yeseung Lee**

Royal College of Art, London

The Authentic Surface: Making garments, selves, and others

At the very core of fashion, as a system based on the dialectic relationship between the high-end consumer and the mass market, is the notion of the 'authentic' as the marker of distinction, the desire for which continuously generates change. Authenticity is a notion inseparable from luxury in fashion. But today it is often associated with an abstract commercial value fabricated by designer idolatry and media-driven marketing using the 'glamour' of celebrity culture. As contemporary consumers increasingly inquire into the provenance of their luxury purchases, luxury companies place ever greater emphasis on the craftsmanship and heritage, while often sourcing labour in lower income countries. Moreover, the frequent association between 'hands' and authenticity is often exploited by both ends of the industry, and therefore the handmade becomes a complex issue in contemporary western fashion. Authenticity and luxury, however, need to be recognized in the mode of production, which subsequently inspires the mode of consumption. The appreciation of the way things are made affects the way things are used, linking the maker and user through the product. This link renders the product an object for keeping, rather than throwing away or replacing, so that the traces of use can be continuously added to the traces of making.

Writing in the 1930s, in 'the age of mechanical reproduction', Walter Benjamin suggested that the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value. With ever-improving methods and speed of making copies today, the notion of authenticity and 'original use value' continue to be compelling issues. Denis Hollier suggests that Benjamin's use value appertains to that which resists displacement and reproduction, and depends on particular, 'jealous', irreplaceable objects. In this paper, I reflect on how a garment maker, by way of putting together garments by hand, might contribute to this peculiar use value. With reference to my own experience of making, I inquire into the ritual aspects of making and using in contemporary fashion. What are the conditions of 'ritual making' that generate usefulness beyond utilitarian function?

Rather than mythologizing the handmade – as is often the case in luxury marketing campaigns – this paper explores the process of making by hand for the sake of the experience (Erfahrung, Benjamin), against the backdrop of contemporary fashion. The process leads me, in re-thinking the notion of luxury, to focus on the individual mode of perception in making and using, foregoing the preciousness of material, or measurable time or labour invested in the product. Incorporating Benjamin's notion of aura and mimesis, and Viktor Shklovsky's notion of estrangement (ostranenie), the handmade is here suggested as a 'poetic device' that triggers the 'overlapping edges' between maker and user, that is, potential social links generated through the product.

KEYWORDS:

*luxury, authentic, handmade, ritual, estrangement, mimesis*

Profile

*Dr Yeseung Lee worked internationally as a designer at the crossover between mass-produced and high-end made-to-measure fashion before completing her PhD (RCA) in 2013. Yeseung continues her critical fashion practice through exhibitions and staged events, while working as a Visiting Academic at the Royal College of Art. Her recent publications include: 'Seaming Hands: The meaning and value of the handmade in contemporary fashion' (2015, *Luxury: History, Culture, Consumption*, 2: 1, pp. 61–80); 'The Ambiguity of Seamlessness: The Skin Ego and the materiality of fashion' (2015, *Critical Studies Fashion and Beauty*, 6: 1, pp. 75–93); 'Seaming, Writing, and Making Strange: Between material and text' (2016, *Studies in Material Thinking*, 14, [www.materialthinking.org](http://www.materialthinking.org)). Her monograph, *Seamlessness: Making and (Un) knowing in Fashion Practice*, will be published in 2016 by Intellect Ltd.*



**Dr Thomai Serdari**

New York University, Leonard N. Stern School of Business

Mind and Hands: Daniel Brush and the Pursuit of Luxury

To straddle the commercial and academic world of luxury is a fine act. It is challenging, precarious, frustrating and time consuming. Daniel Brush, artist and luxury object maker, has explored both sides. His collaboration with Van Cleef & Arpels thrust him in the heart of the commercial world, albeit one vested with the aura of a long heritage combined with an incessant drive to innovate and produce designs that exemplify advanced engineering. His private studio practice shone the world of aspiration to embrace a journey of commitment. Brush, as a practitioner, has shunned the limelight and chosen reflective isolation over celebratory circumstance. He has been a recluse, all mind at times, all hands at other. He is not personally interested in the monetary value of gems and precious materials yet he produces pure luxury, either on canvas, paper, or gold.

To study his work closely and within the context of luxury, its past, present, and future, allows us to observe what truly happens at the level of production, behind the scenes, where practice, craft, and commitment are the drivers of creativity and the true source upon which the mythology of luxury brands is built. In other words, I am proposing to look at the practice of Daniel Brush as the ultimate maker, the practitioner who produces work according to the DAST framework of luxury production, which has been explored and published elsewhere.

Singling out Brush, as the representative practitioner of luxury production, will also clarify “what are the forces that create and fulfil the desire for luxury,” why innovation within established luxury firms will as much preserve their heritage as ensure their continuity, and why true luxury can never be fully democratized.

More of a philosophical enquiry therefore rather than a blueprint for commercial success, this paper will develop by combining art historical methodologies with the DAST business framework that explains luxury production. It will also include insights from an interview with the artist.

**KEYWORDS:**

*luxury; production; creative process; philosophy; commercial endurance*

Profile

*Dr Thomai Serdari is a strategist in luxury marketing and branding. She helps clients launch, grow, and successfully manage luxury brands & creative businesses. She actively studies, values, and reports on companies or funds that operate and invest within the luxury goods market. She teaches “Luxury Marketing,” “Advanced Luxury Marketing,” and “Retail Strategy” at the Leonard N. Stern School of Business, New York University as well as “Advanced Research Seminar,” “Cultures of Excess,” and “The Art, Design, and Fashion Press: History and Practice,” at Parsons The New School. Prof. Serdari is the founder and editor-in-chief of PIQLuxury, the first online, thematic subscription publication that analyzes, interprets, and visualizes content that has appeared on various academic platforms to make it immediately applicable and relevant to professional challenges all brand professionals face every day. In addition to her work as brand strategist, Prof. Serdari is the co-editor of *Luxury: History Culture Consumption* the first interdisciplinary, academic journal devoted to luxury published by Taylor & Francis. She is one of the main contributors to the LVMH *Fundamentals in Luxury Retail: A CPC/Parsons Collaboration*, an education program designed to provide a wide range of retail skills to Chinese-Americans. Originally trained as an architect at the National Technical University of Athens, Prof. Serdari received her doctorate in Art History & Archaeology from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University in 2005. She also holds an MBA from the Leonard N. Stern School of Business, New York University, with a specialization in corporate and quantitative finance (2009).*

Beau Brummell, The Original B-Boy? Luxury's Subversive Signified

In "The Forms of Capital," French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu stratifies capital into three discrete forms: economic, cultural and social. While each of the three guises has its own modality and "currency," Bourdieu does not allow capital to originate or circulate outside of the dominant classes. Luxury, then, (which Bourdieu considers cultural capital) is the sole apanage of the already empowered. Moreover, cultural and social capital can be distilled into economic capital, which carries a seemingly one to one exchange rate with money; "capital," following Bourdieu's logic, is a mystification of power that seems both sui generis and self-perpetuating. However, the sociologist also recognizes that institutional mechanisms conserve capital in the dominant classes and function to demobilize, depoliticize and isolate dominated agents, who are condemned to a Sisyphean punishment of repeated powerless (consumer or electoral) acts. Bourdieu's perspective is a bleak one that provides very little room to manoeuvre for those not circulating in lofty spheres.

Nevertheless, while Bourdieu paints a faithful picture of modern capital – a representation he does critique or problematize – there exist pockets of resistance that show that capital (particularly in the guise of the object of luxury) can be converted from a hegemonic tool to a tool of subversion. In my paper, I will present the model of the 19th-century dandy – that elegant urban figure – whose pursuit of luxury cannot be considered conservative. I will invoke both historical and literary dandies to determine a function of luxury (cultural capital, in Bourdieu's thinking) that subverts the social power structure as opposed to supports it. I will conclude my paper with a more contemporary example of a similar accumulation and subversion of luxury's signified meaning: hip-hop's b-boys, whose gold "fronts" and ultra-high-end clothing surprisingly trace a lineage of the subversive potential of luxury back to the dandies of the 19th century.

KEYWORDS:

*luxury, dandyism, hip-hop, bourdieu, cultural capital*

Profile

*Dr Nigel Lezama is an Assistant Professor in the modern languages, literatures and cultures department of Brock University. He works on the figure of the dandy and the prostitute in 19th century France. His recent publications include "mo' money, mo' problems. Hip hop and luxury's uneasy partnership," which will be published by Oxford University Press and "Le Travesti rachildien : une phemme comme il faut," which was published in December 2015 in the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's études francophones. He is co-organizing, along with Jessica Clark, Alison Matthews David and Robert Ott, the conference nouveau riche, the past, present and future of luxury in the Canadian context, which will be held in Toronto, Canada, in May 2017.*

Labouring for Luxury: female workers in London's early beauty industry, 1870-1914

In 1874, a female correspondent from *Women and Work* visited Eugène Rimmel's London perfumery manufactory. Rimmel (1820-1887) guided her through rows of female workers who filled bottles of scent, sifted toilet powder, and affixed labels to delicate glass bottles. Following an exhaustive tour, the reporter concluded, "The rich man's luxury it is truly said is the poor man's bread, and if scent is a luxury, it is one that gives work to thousands."

The leading representative of a small group of high-end London perfumers, Eugène Rimmel drew back the curtains on luxury production for the British reading public. This transparency reflected more general efforts amongst this small group of manufacturers to compete with their Parisian counterparts just across the Channel. Indeed, through the late nineteenth century, British beauty businessmen emphasized local modes of production to compel consumption of specifically British-made luxury perfumery. In this way, they appealed to national pride, but also the advancement of local workers as reasons to purchase their luxury goods over foreign items.

However, Rimmel's female workers were not the skilled artisans we typically associate with luxury production. Their work involved repetitive, semi- to un-skilled labour performed on the factory floor rather than in the workshop. And yet, according to *Women and Work*, the labourers' gender instilled the work with a degree of feminine craftsmanship superior to goods produced by men under the same conditions. According to them, the workers' "neat and eminently feminine work" enhanced the goods, transforming them from mass-produced wares to luxury items. Rimmel relied on "the delicacy of touch, the nicety of taste, and care employed by [the] girls" to firmly designate his wares as luxury productions.

This paper uses the historical example of nineteenth-century perfumery to ask broader questions about the role of labour in the contemporary creation of luxury. Relying on periodical press reports, individual firm records, and photographic evidence, it charts the gendered makeup of beauty labourers in a period of growing scale of production. It reveals that the late nineteenth century saw a move away from small-scale artisanal craftsmanship so often associated with the luxury trades. In the wake of such growth, perfumers like Rimmel relied on a feminized labour force to preserve the human element—via a woman's touch—in luxury perfumery production. But did British perfumery retain its status as a luxury good under these changing conditions of production? Ultimately, this case study reveals the centrality of production to definitions of luxury, not to mention the importance of gender and class in understandings of artisanship.

**KEYWORDS:**

*history, labour, production, gender, beauty*

Profile

*Dr Jessica Clark (B.A., Trent; M.A., York; M.A., Ph.D., Johns Hopkins) teaches British history at Brock. Before joining the department, she taught at McGill, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Maryland Baltimore County. Her interests include British cultural and social history, urban space and the lived environment, empire, and women, gender, and sexuality. Her research explores intersections of gender, class, and ethnicity in the modern British world via the history of beauty and appearance. Clark's work appears in the *Women's History Review* and the forthcoming *Gender and Material Culture in Britain after 1600* (Palgrave 2015). She is currently revising a manuscript on the role of Victorian entrepreneurs in developing England's early beauty industry. She is also working on a new project, "Imperial Beauty," which investigates transnational commodity and cultural flows linking London-based beauty brokers and imperial markets in British India, the West Indies, and Australia.*

Peace of mind: the quintessential luxury

Phoenix-like the luxury sector renews itself, whether by innovation in design or in response to social changes and consumer psychographics. It is an intriguing anomaly: enacting sustainability methodologies and practices like 'slow make' (production), low waste and careful garment care. But it excludes customers due to the price and availability of the product, which could be perceived as opposite to the perceived holistic inclusive tenets underpinning sustainability. International luxury fashion corporations and labels like Kering (2014) who own Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Saint Laurent, Alexander McQueen, Balenciaga, Brioni, and Stella McCartney, and Prada (2015) have begun to refocus their priorities, and lead change with their published sustainability goals via reports and website. Inherently luxury is about the highest quality fabrication, design, make and service. Yet across the fashion industry consumers are experiencing unease or cognitive dissonance fuelled by media reporting ethical dilemmas. In the luxury end of the market understandably client/customer will desire both the luxury product and the confidence an ethical of a supply-chain. Logically, the luxury sector interpretation of sustainability, responsibility and ethics: would offer to their clients the quintessential luxury: peace of mind.

In the past the sustainability discourse has been predominately located around fast fashion in middle and lower markets. Whether a recent addition, or a deeply embedded (previously un-marketed) inherent value, the ethical intent of a sustainable supply-chain presents a strategic facet of future luxury. In this paper both the relationship and proximity of luxury and sustainability will be explored by focusing on both the impetus and the outcome of the strategy: ethics. Specifically, applied ethics within the luxury supply-chain the highly desirable outcomes of absence of concern by their clients will be discussed. In the light of the Paris Agreement (2015) from COP 21 and the UK Modern Slavery Bill (2015) ethics are no longer only the playing field of the enlightened. It is timely as there are lessons to be applied and methodologies to be modelled and shared. Undoubtedly there is a potentiality for courageous concepts of ethics within luxury, thus it is vital to speculate on a future of ethics in the luxury sector.

KEYWORDS:

*ethics, luxury, sustainability, supply-chain, peace of mind*

Profile

*Dr Sue Thomas is a lapsed English woman. For just over a year she has been Assistant Professor in Fashion at Heriot-Watt University, Scotland. Previously, she taught in New Aotearoa Zealand and Australia at Massey University, NZ, Holmesglen Institute, RMIT University respectively. Earlier she taught at the City of Birmingham University. In Australia she began researching and teaching fashion design for sustainability. A public speaker, commentator and broadcaster (still a regular on ABC Radio); she is an advocate for ethics and sustainability within fashion the supply-chain. Her doctorate at RMIT; Situated Empathy was submitted in 2012. She has presented research in the USA, UK, Hong Kong and Australia, and wrote a section of Sustainable Fashion – a handbook for educators in 2009. In 2014 she contributed a chapter to the Routledge Handbook of Sustainability and Fashion. Currently, she is finishing a book for Routledge on Fashion Ethics due in 2016.*

Fur and Sustainability: Oxymoron or Key to Deeper Luxury?

Since ancient times, the material of fur has played a prominent role as an object of luxury. As clearly visible and institutionalized markers of class distinction and status aspirations, fur arguably epitomizes the concept of luxury as 'conspicuous consumption'. As such, fur has long been the subject of desire as well as debate and censure. While recent criticism of fur has focused mainly on the moral right of humans to make use of animal pelts for adornment, attitudes towards fur echo long-standing, broader moral concerns about luxury. This paper explores fur in the context of sustainable development in the luxury industry, particularly calls for a 'deeper' and considered, rather than conspicuous, luxury.

Anti-fur campaigns have fundamentally challenged the legitimacy of commercial use of fur, but ironically also contributed to revive a sense of fascination with fur in fashion. It has been argued, that the anti-fur movement tapped into and gained force from the unfashionable connotations of middle-class, middle age femininity, fur acquired after the mid-20th century. As the use of fur declined and the anti-fur position was incorporated into mainstream values, wearing fur could gradually take on new meanings – even an element of rebellion and edginess. Still, the status of fur is highly contested and the fur industry's future and license to operate very much in the balance.

Contemporary moral problematization of luxury is increasingly framed in terms of sustainability and prominent luxury-fashion businesses have been called out as laggards when it comes to adopting environmental and socially responsible business conduct. Critical observers have advanced visions for a new type of luxury embracing sustainability throughout the value chain, making it the hallmark of genuine luxury goods to deliver the greatest positive contributions to all affected by their creation. However, sustainability, or sustainable development, is an ambiguous, contested concept revolving around the achievement human development considering present and future generations while acknowledging interconnections among the environment, the economy and social well-being. While moral critique as well as justifications of luxury in Western thought has traditionally addressed economic (waste, growth) and social (order, relations, equality) concerns, environmental issues are of more recent interest.

Our paper explores how different dimensions and measures of sustainability are negotiated and applied to establish benchmarks for luxury products of the future. In our case, this means considering to what extent the use of fur can be morally justified in terms of sustainability. We relate the assessments of fur to current practices in the garment sector at large.

We first review debates on the morals of luxury in the light of the history of fur from medieval European courts to 20th Century celebrity culture. This serves as a backdrop for an analysis of recent reports, research projects as well as industry initiatives seeking to establish, whether the material of fur can be deemed as sustainable or not. Our research demonstrates, that there is no simple answer – as assessments must weigh factors ranging from animal farming, dressing and dying, designing, using to discarding fur constitute parameters of sustainability.

**KEYWORDS**

*fur, 'deeper' luxury, sustainability, fashion, industry*

Profiles

*Dr Fabian Faurholt Csaba is Associate Professor of Corporate Communication and Branding at the Department of Intercultural Communication and Management at Copenhagen Business School and affiliated with the Imagine... Creative industries research center. He received his PhD (Marketing and Consumer Theory, American Studies) from Southern Denmark University in 2000. He was a Fulbright visiting doctoral candidate at University of Minnesota and assistant professor at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey.*

*His has published in journals such as Culture Unbound and Advances in Consumer Research and volumes such as Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing, Brand Culture and Imagining Marketing. His current research examines transformations in Danish fashion after the financial crises with particular emphasis on the experiences of fashion entrepreneurs and 'ecosystems' in which they exist. He has conducted case studies of leading Danish luxury fashion companies, including recently the illustrious fur brand Birger Christensen A/S. At present he is working on a piece that considers the place of Werner Sombarts work in the canon of classics on consumer cultural theory.*

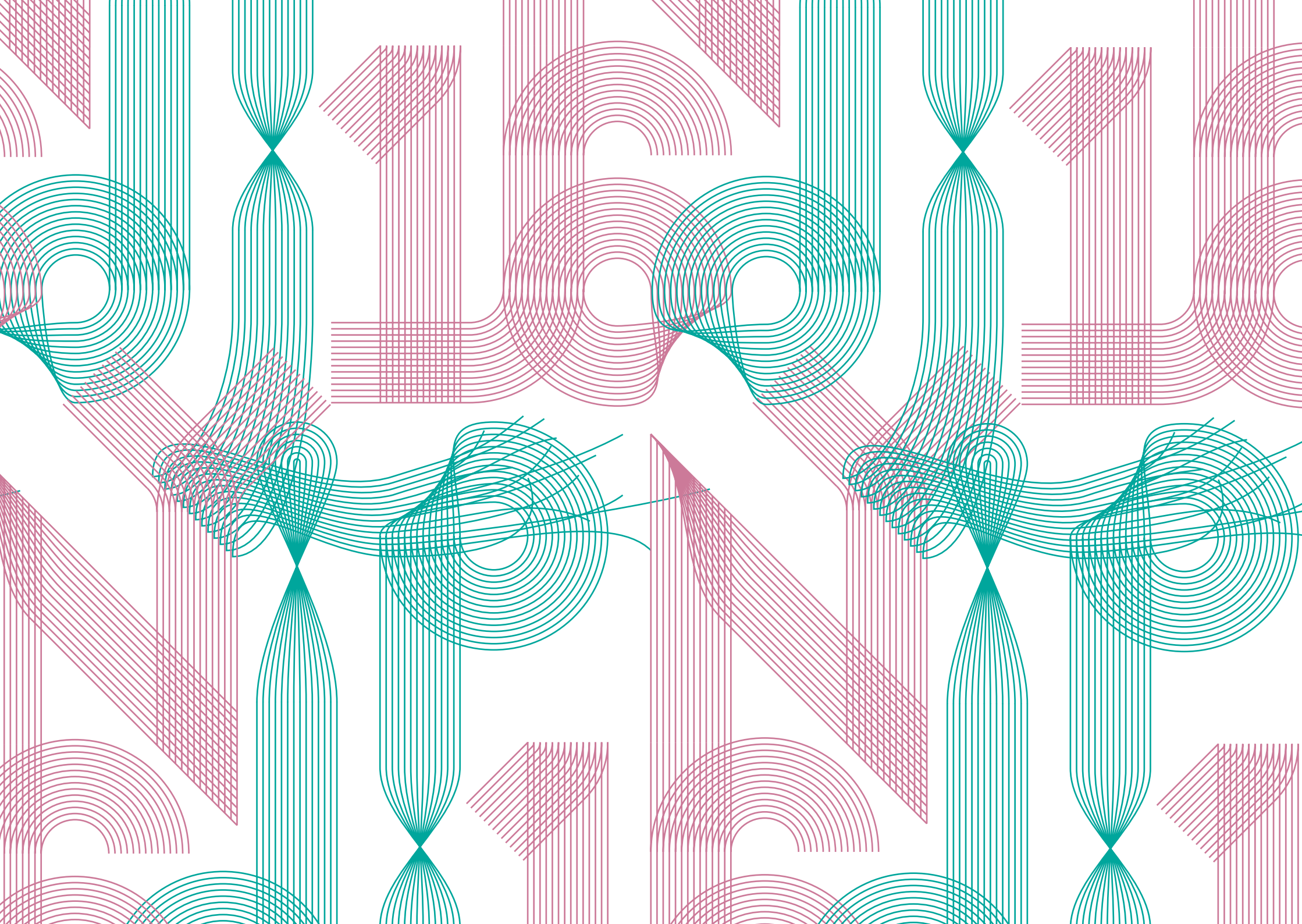
<http://linkedin.com/in/fabian-faurholt-csaba-b5a360>

<http://www.cbs.dk/en/research/departments-and-centres/department-of-intercultural-communication-and-management/staff/fcicl>

*Dr Else Skjold holds an MA in Culture and Communication (2003) and a PhD from the Doctoral School of Organization and Management Studies at Copenhagen Business School and Design School Kolding (2014). Prior to doing her PhD, she worked as a fashion journalist for various Danish fashion magazines and as a research assistant at Design School Kolding, where she produced the report Fashion Research at Design Schools (2008). While developing her PhD thesis The Daily Selection, she was actively engaged in developing the so-called wardrobe method together with a group of fashion and dress scholars from Scandinavia, Britain and Holland forming the Wardrobe Network funded by NorForsk and NOS-HS. In her research, she is working with ways of understanding dress practice as both symbolic discourse and physically embedded practice, and as such her research must be seen as a hybrid between cultural studies, user-anthropology, and design research. She is currently working on a joint project between Design School Kolding and Copenhagen Fur, where she investigates fur and use experiences in a sustainable perspective - in particular, how her approach to dress practice and temporality might advance the idea of fur as a long-lasting material. She was recently received tenure as an Assistant Professor in the area of design management, user studies and sustainability at Design School Kolding.*

[www.designskolenkolding.dk/Linkedin](http://www.designskolenkolding.dk/Linkedin)





## Robert Reid

International University of Monaco

Democratization of luxury within the brand hierarchy:  
perceptions of a luxury fashion brand and implications for the design of space

The experience of fashion happens in a physical context beyond the retail storefront: the fashion brand exists on the runway, in workrooms, factories and corporate facilities. While current research examines individual elements associated with sensory experiences relative to the brand on the sales floor (music or scent, for example), the study of branded environments has been predominantly focused on generic environmental considerations and consumer behavior, neglecting the experience of the stakeholders contributing to the brand's success.

Where research explores the democratization of luxury through consumer access to lower price point luxury goods, the implication of accessibility to luxury brands for all stakeholders and their attitudes toward the brand is under-developed. The democratization of luxury need not only apply to aspirational consumerism, but also to architectural and interior design solutions enhancing the stakeholder experience, emphasizing corporate values and the luxury brand narrative regardless of location and facility.

This paper, part of a larger body of research examining luxury brand strategy and the built environment, advocates alignment of the luxury brand experience in all forms of built space, using strategic physical design solutions for the creation of cohesive, multi-sensory triggers as antecedents for stakeholders' perceptions of brand. The democratization of luxury within the brand hierarchy is proposed as an important experiential consideration related to differentiation, perception, acceptance and promotion of the luxury fashion brand by its stakeholders, and future consequences for brand management and facility design.

### KEYWORDS

*luxury, brand strategy, experience, atmospherics, corporate values*

### Profile

*Robert Reid is a practicing design professional with completed work across the globe, covering a broad spectrum of architectural and interiors projects, product, graphic design, and media ventures. He is a contributor to a variety of shelter and design journals, with a particular interest in architecture, interior design, automobiles and motorsports. He previously taught at a major Middle-Eastern university in the architecture program, while contributing expertise to senior marketing courses in the business school. A graduate of Pratt Institute and currently pursuing a DBA at the International University of Monaco, his research examines atmospherics, servicescape and the strategic implementation of brand in the built environment, with specific attention on luxury brands.*

Luxury retail staff in mixed brand department stores: Exploring the creation of a luxurious experience

Luxury brands are well known for creating a luxurious experience within stores. What determines a luxurious experience has been highly debated by scholars in the field. Some have identified that luxury retail strategies differ from other forms (Dion and Arnould, 2011; McCracken, 1989; Waeraas, 2007). For instance, Delphine Dion and Eric Arnould (2011) believe that luxury retail strategies are dependent on the charisma of the creative director and use Alexandra McQueen to exemplify the risks of using one persona to promote a brand in retail stores. However, less attention has been paid to the actual luxury retail staff who are the face of the brand on the shop floor. Within this paper, I explore the implications of selling luxury brands in department stores that also sell high street brands. This is potentially problematic as it is common practice within department stores to alter staff between different brands and this ultimately has implications on the expectations consumers have for a luxurious experience.

In considering this problem, the main research question this paper asks is 'how do luxury retail staff create a luxurious experience in mixed brand department stores?' The data for this paper was collected through semi-structured interviews with twenty-two luxury retail staff in one of the world's most well-known department stores, based in London, UK. This paper meets the conference theme by providing a new insight into current debates on the culture of the luxury retail environment and examining this phenomenon through academic frameworks. The paper firstly examines what luxury retail staff classify as a luxurious experience. This importantly highlights the differences between how the brands and retail staff differentiate a luxurious experience. The data shows that the staff interviewed do not receive training on the luxury brands or products they work with. This lack of training is further complicated when staff move between departments, causing a second issue as there is then even less expertise on the products being sold.

This paper also considers the role of female luxury retail staff, and finds that they are pressured into "wearing red lipstick" (Interviewee 12) and "high heels over 2 inches" (Interviewee 3). I consider the equality issues of this visual expectation, but also how this supposedly adds to the luxurious experience and considered as a replacement to staff training. I relate the findings of this paper to Max Weber's (1996) work on charismatic legitimacy, arguing that luxury retail workers help to create the brand ideology (Floor, 2006; Borghini et al, 2009). The charismatic personalities of retail workers are relied upon to build relationships with consumers. However, I argue that there are long-term implications for how the consumer develops their relationship with brands outside of the store. It is evident that there is a relationship between consumer desires for a luxury product and the relationship they build with luxury retail staff. The paper concludes by suggesting that the role of luxury retail staff is crucial to the connection consumers build with the luxury product. The retail environment is therefore inevitably an important element of current debates on luxury.

KEYWORDS

*luxury retail staff, experiential, relationship, charismatic legitimacy*

Profile:

*Nessa Adams is a Lecturer in Marketing and Strategy and Pathway Leader for BA Global Marketing Management at Regent's University London. Nessa has a range of experience in marketing and communications, from consulting with small independent PR agencies, to working in global communications agencies with high profile clients. Her research interests lie in the areas of marketing strategies, social/cultural production and the management of diversity within organisations. In particular, her current research focuses on how culture is reproduced in global, local and luxury marketing agencies. With both a practical background and experience of field research within the industry, Nessa's research knowledge brings an in-depth perspective of current industry organisational processes for cultural production and constructs a complex, yet crucial element of research that is limited within literature.*



**Dr Veronica Manlow**

Brooklyn College

**David Loranger**

Lecturer of Fashion Merchandising & Management at Philadelphia University

**Yussef El Amir**

Tailored clothing specialist at Bergdorf Goodman

**Christopher Ferree**

Brand Manager for Lanvin at Bergdorf Goodman

Panel Profiles

**Dr Veronica Manlow**

*Dr Veronica Manlow is an associate professor at Brooklyn College in the Koppelman School of Business, Department of Business Management. She wrote Designing Clothes: Culture and Organization of the Fashion Industry in 2007/2009. In 2014 she co-edited a book entitled Global Fashion Brands: Style, Luxury, History. She is an associate editor for the journal Fashion, Style and Popular Culture. She teaches fashion marketing and is the faculty advisor to the Fashion Marketing Society at Brooklyn College. Areas of interest are the organisation, culture, leadership and the creative process of fashion design and branding. Fashion is of interest to Veronica Manlow from a social and cultural perspective as it relates to both applied and theoretical questions concerning the individual, industry, modernity and the global economy. She is currently doing research on the career of luxury salespersons and is considering the structural and interactional dynamics mediated by salespersons who must balance corporate directives, relationships with store management and the culture of the selling floor with their own notions of expertise and personal agency. She is teaches a course on the Business of Fashion at the Graduate Centre's Masters of Liberal Studies program in Fashion Studies and has been invited to be a visiting faculty at the Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology where she will teach a course on luxury branding.*

**David Loranger**

*David Loranger is a Lecturer of Fashion Merchandising & Management at Philadelphia University, and is also a PhD Candidate in the Apparel, Merchandising, and Design program at Iowa State University. His research streams focus on cultural apparel products and consumer behavior. Currently, Mr. Loranger is researching the transfer of indigenous knowledge of Scottish kilt makers as a qualifier for Protected Geographic Indication protection. He is also working on projects with his Iowa State colleagues to investigate promotional- & delivery-type effects on consumers' usage of discounts, as well as brand love and positive word-of-mouth outcomes related to consumers' experiences at retail. Previously, David spent 20 years in retail and design studio management capacities, and was most recently a Merchandise Manager for Bergdorf Goodman men's store. He has also taught as an Adjunct Professor at LIM College and the Graduate School at the Fashion Institute of Technology.*

**Yussef El Amir**

*Yussef El Amir is a tailored clothing specialist at Bergdorf Goodman. He holds a Master's degree in International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. Before joining Bergdorf Goodman he held positions at the IMF, started his own clothing boutique and worked at Barneys New York for 13 years as the Kiton Brand Manager.*

**Christopher Ferree**

*Christopher Ferree is Brand Manager for Lanvin at Bergdorf Goodman. He has been working in fashion retail for more than 25 years. After working as a manager, seller and trainer at GAP, he left to pursue acting and directing for the theatre. Christopher joined Bloomingdale's flagship in NY and quickly found himself the DSA for Theory men's. Since 2013, he has been the DSA for Lanvin Homme at Bergdorf Goodman. Prior to that, from 2006 to 2013, he was known as the Jeans Doctor, a distinction conferred upon him because he could effortlessly and instantly recommend a fit and size of a pair of jeans for his customers. He now calls himself the Jeans Doctor Emeritus, having retired from the Denim business (but he will always love his Denim). On his days off from work, he can be found visiting the great museums of New York City. Look for him at MoMA, the Met, the Noguchi Museum, P.S.1, or the Whitney. He is also a member of WNYC, New York's public radio station.*

**Dr Veronica Manlow** (Chair)

Brooklyn College

**Travis Haglin**

General Manager, Burberry – discussing Ralph Lauren

**Louis-Felix Communeau**

Key Account Supervisor for Montblanc Africa, Middle-East & India (discussing Louis Vuitton)

**Louis-Felix Communeau**

*Raised in Orleans in the Loire Valley in France Louis-Felix's first experience in luxury was attained over two summers working in a management training program at the Hotel du Palais, Biarritz, France. While studying business at ISG in Paris he studied for one semester at Institute of Management Technology, one of the most prestigious Indian universities. He started an internship at Louis Vuitton Middle East as an Assistant Press Officer which led to one full year experience where he dealt with the press, managed a showroom, and gained an understanding of the retail side of luxury. He graduated in 2014 and was directly hired by Louis Vuitton, where he enrolled in the Louis Vuitton Talent Program as acting Sales Manager. He learned about the Louis Vuitton Retail approach in Paris, and had two experiences at the Bon Marche and the Champs Elysees Flagship store. The program brought him back to the Middle East and to Dubai within the Mall of Emirates Boutique (second largest boutique within UAE & third one within Middle East). He now works for Montblanc (Richemont group) as a Key Account Supervisor for Africa, Middle-East & India. He currently oversees training, visual merchandising, sales, and the Brand Ambassadors training and team management program, including the operation of 52 dedicated staff plus a generic staff from smaller accounts in 20 points of sales.*

Panel Profiles

**Travis C. Haglin**

*Travis C. Haglin is currently a General Manager for Burberry on Madison Avenue and teaches retailing related courses at LIM College in NYC. Previously, Travis spent eight years at Ralph Lauren as a Divisional Retail Director and four years at Thomas Pink as a Store Manager. Travis holds a MBA in Luxury Brand Management from ESSEC business school in Paris, France and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Minnesota in Retail Merchandising. One of his interests is in how the branded retail narrative forms a sensory experience which the consumer experiences in the physical form of a global flagship and how this impacts consumer choice and retail culture. One of his interests is in how the branded retail narrative forms a sensory journey for which the consumer experiences is curated. Manifested in the physical form as a global flagship these spaces quietly and profoundly impact consumer purchase decisions, driving our global retail culture.*

**Dr John Armitage** and **Dr Joanne Roberts**

Winchester Luxury Research Group,  
Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton

### Critical Luxury Studies: Defining a Field

In this paper, a critical approach to contemporary luxury studies focusing on aesthetic, design-led and media practices is introduced. Exploring the new field of critical luxury studies, the lecture will present an examination of the relations between historical and, crucially, contemporary ideas of luxury with a view to comprehending the socio-economic order with novel philosophical tools and critical methods of interrogation that are re-defining the concept of luxury in the twenty-first century.

**Dr Joanne Roberts** and **Dr John Armitage**

Winchester Luxury Research Group,  
Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton

### Knowing Luxury

This presentation will engage in an examination of the epistemology of luxury. The purpose is to explore how luxury is known. By employing philosophical understandings of knowledge to analyse present day luxury, I will argue that the prevalence of market valuation and digital technologies are leading to the objectification of knowledge about luxury to the detriment of the more subjective, socially constituted, practice of what I call 'knowing luxury'.

### Profiles

*Dr John Armitage is Professor of Media Arts at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, United Kingdom. He is co-director of the Winchester Luxury Research Group and is a member of the editorial board of the journal *Luxury: History, Culture, Consumption* (Taylor & Francis). John is currently writing *Luxury and Visual Culture* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming) and, with Joanne Roberts and Jonathan Faiers, he is co-editing *The Luxury Reader* (Bloomsbury, forthcoming). He is also the co-editor, with Joanne Roberts, of *Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design, Media* (Edinburgh University Press, 2016) and the co-editor, with Joanne Roberts, of *The Spirit of Luxury*, a special issue of the journal *Cultural Politics* (Duke University Press, 2016). His main research interests are in luxury culture and luxurious forms of consumption, luxury and visibility, luxury and art, photography, cinema, television, social media and new media. His books and articles have been translated into Dutch, German, Korean, Mandarin, and Spanish.*

*Dr Joanne Roberts is Professor of Arts and Cultural Management at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, United Kingdom. She is co-director of the Winchester Luxury Research Group and is a member of the editorial board of the journal *Luxury: History, Culture, Consumption* (Taylor & Francis). Joanne's research focuses on the role of knowledge and ignorance in the field of luxury, including questions concerning how knowledge and ignorance shape the production and promotion of luxury goods and services, and how luxury consumption draws on knowledge and ignorance. She is also pursuing research on the role of knowledge communities and networks in shaping the meaning of luxury and the forms that it takes in various spatial, sectorial, and socio-cultural contexts. Joanne is co-editor with John Armitage of *Critical Luxury Studies: Art, Design, Media* (2016, Edinburgh University Press) and the co-editor, with John Armitage, of *The Spirit of Luxury*, a special issue of the journal *Cultural Politics* (Duke University Press, 2016). She is currently co-editing *The Luxury Reader* with John Armitage and Jonathan Faiers (Bloomsbury, forthcoming).*

Pets and Luxury Brand Extension

This paper investigates luxury from the perspective of lap dog fashions. It aims to expand understanding of the concept of luxury and to provide a new context for debating the subject from the theoretical perspective provided by posthumanism.

In the world of humans, luxury has become mass-luxury; a common commodity sold to any middle-class consumer. This has eroded the traditional status of luxury as means of differentiation, and helped frame it as a mere multibillion business that focuses on growth, visibility, brand awareness, advertising, and profit. This has led some to argue that luxury is dead.

In contrast: in the 2000s, luxury has found new markets, consumer groups and consumers in pet dogs. In the United States alone, spending on pet dogs increased over 70 % in 2004–2014, from 34 billion dollars to 58 billion dollars. Currently, all major luxury fashion brands from Burberry to Louis Vuitton offer fashions for pet dogs: coats, pullovers, leashes, beddings, food bowls etc. The high-end dog-services, on the other hand, include e.g. gyms, spas, beauty salons, hotels with skypping possibilities, and specialized diets from low carb to paleo diets.

In the world of pet dogs, many, if not most, traditional definitions of luxury as wasteful, immoral, unnecessary and as added value to show wealth and status prevail and become heightened. Indeed: pet dog luxury is by definition unnecessary: the pet dog does not need fashionable outfits or specialized diets. Pet dog luxury consumption is not about rational choices or satisfying needs, it is about emotions, pleasures and hedonism. In this sense pet dog luxury is unsustainable: it is based on a business model that is based on creating ever-new segments of consumption and consumers.

Simultaneously, pet dog luxury is also about forming and negotiating an emotionally charged attachment between the human and the pet dog. This opens up space for discussing the largely neglected qualities of luxury. These include, e.g. the emotional value of luxury and its position in rethinking and deconstructing the human–pet relationship. In the world of pet dogs, buying luxury is an emotional act with an aim to connect with the pet, to appreciate it, to add value to it, and to define it as an individual with qualities of a person.

Pet dog luxury thus also opens up space for a posthumanist critique of consumption, consumer, fashion and luxury. The human is not the only consumer in the pet–human relationship. Pet dog fashions construct the pet as a co-consumer. Through luxury, the pet dog and the human form an entity that consumes together and has mutual consumer experiences. Pet dog luxuries materialize the conceptual overlapping between dogs and humans. As such they are, this paper proposes, instances of posthuman luxury. They pose questions about the very structures of consumption, humanness, dogness, and their shared identities as luxury co-consumers.

KEYWORDS

*luxury, fashion, pet dogs, emotions, human-pet relationship, posthumanism*

## Ellen Anders

Independent researcher

### Luxury: Goods and Gadgets

How do new forms of digital goods and gadgets affect the traditional luxury system? Will fashion-tech innovations challenge the traditional essentials of luxury such as: rarity, artisan, hands on workmanship and personal expertise to guide and educate the client to the mandatory qualities of luxury goods? Case in point: sustainability and timing contain the essence of the trustworthiness of the luxury company. Making sure the product has been vetted and properly appraised is necessary for the client to remain loyal to the brand. With the fast pace communication of the Internet and media, buyers and advertisers pressure the couture industry to move to quickly from the showing of the collection to the distribution so not to lose the excitement and energy that the collection has on sales. These are not modern questions, for they have been asked for centuries and led to “The Great Luxury Debate,” in 1731 by the French philosopher, Voltaire. At the time the question was: Is luxury necessary? Philosopher Voltaire stated: “Ancient man, seeing a need and seeking a solution to the problem, met the first requirement for luxury. “He took a risk, created a transformational concept of clothing that allowed man to develop diverse, lifestyles.”

This paper will explore the behaviour, the thinking and history that lingers in the questions that appear to divide the worlds of luxury, fashion and technology. Perhaps there is more of a fusion than division taking place in the luxury trade as modelled in the new Apple Watch. Two luxury companies joined together to create the new digital luxury gadget/good. Hermes provided leather watch bands, and Apple Co. provided digital workings. If so, the real innovation may be: improved human relations and more innovative goods and gadgets that “can change the world” and “develop new diverse lifestyles. “

#### KEYWORDS

*luxury gadgets digital innovation diversity fusion*

#### Profile

*Ellen retired from teaching high school for nearly forty years at Homestead High, Cupertino, CA. Cupertino also happens to be the home of Apple Computer and the school, now famous entrepreneurs, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak attended. Since retirement, she has taken the opportunity to rekindle her interest in fashion history studies. Ellen is currently examining the new wave of digital coding that is having an impact on the fashion and luxury industry. Being a resident of the Silicon Valley, she has had the opportunity to witness the rise of scientific investment in the Valley that has given rise to more ventures in unexplored options such as the textile industry.*

**Federica Carlotto**

Regent's University, London

'PURE' LUXURY: Digital perspectives on luxury, conspicuous products, and globalized business practices

Over the past 40 years, globalization and the development of the Information Communication Technologies have both expanded and compressed the time-space dimensions. This has offered companies the possibility to geographically segment their goods' production. In addition, companies have been provided with the Internet as an additional commercial space with its own marketing and retail channels.

As other sectors, the luxury goods business has been actively engaging in multi locational sourcing - still retaining the genius loci at the core of its branding and stylistic discourse. By contrast, brands and operators have been generally struggling to acclimate to the Internet habitat. With the benefits of a corporate e-presence becoming increasingly evident, and the measured influence of official websites, chats, social networks, and blogs in informing the customers' approach to conspicuous products, the digital environment is currently the ultimate territory deluxe enterprises need to annex to their business dominion.

Against this backdrop, the paper focuses on the digital environment as a proper 'socially produced space', and aims to explore, describe, and model the perspectives on luxury products as circulating within the web. More specifically, the paper is meant to provide an interpretive account of a 6-month (December 2014-June 2015) netnographic study conducted on purposively selected digital platforms - Forum Groups, Blogs, Q&A websites.

The analysis of textual and interactional artefacts reveals that, when referring to luxury goods, online users rely on a clear set of assumptions, constructs and categories about the same notion of luxury. From a cognitive perspective - as theorized, amongst others, by Douglas, Lévi-Strauss, Berger & Luckmann, Durkheim, Schutz - this represents a 'pure system', i.e. a classified conceptual and perceptual framework against which online users situate luxury products within the world of objects. During the e-fieldwork, 3 main dimensions defining the 'pure luxury' framework have been identified: manufacturing, resonant, and corporate purity.

The 'pure luxury framework' is put to the test when online users are called to discuss ambiguous or anomalous issues related to the globalised luxury goods business - delocalisation; M&A, and other forms of hybrid ownerships/ventures; commoditization of the luxury mythology; brand extension. In confronting ambiguity and anomaly, the sampled online individuals take action either by stigmatizing impurity, or by embracing it. In this latter case, normalisation occurs to varying degrees, from individuals loosening or stretching their criteria, up to those who completely reshape the contours of their framework. As a consequence, the German-ness of BMW is unlikely to be affected by the offshore production in South Africa, as online users 'purify' delocalisation through the assumed reliability of BMW's quality control; a watch by Cartier, instead, might be perceived as 'impure' because of the brand's sectorial identity in jewellery making.

In its business application, the 'pure luxury framework' adds to the customer-based brand equity analytical tools. It also highlights the importance for the operators in the field of luxury brand management of profiling consumers' perceptual 'maps of purity' in relation to goods, brands, or categories of interest, as well as of monitoring these maps' flexibility against potentially disruptive factors.

#### KEYWORDS

*conspicuous goods; netnography; 'purity/impurity'; luxury concept; globalisation*

#### Profile

*Federica Carlotto has 10 years' experience in the analytical research of the social meanings and practices related to material objects within different cultural contexts. She has extensively worked on "Made in Italy" country branding in Japan, Westernization of Japanese fashion, social and anthropological history of fashion and luxury, material culture and hybridity. She has appeared as a guest speaker at conferences and workshops - addressing a general audience as well as a specialised one - in Italy, UK, France, Australia, Canada, and Japan. Many of her talks have been published on academic journals and conference proceedings. In 2012, she has published a peer-reviewed monograph on the Japanese political rebranding in 19th century through the adoption of the Western fashion. She has been also contributing to a scholarly volume on the U.S. Legacy in Japan with a chapter on the massification of the modern fashion industry.*

*Scholarship grantee of the Japanese Ministry of Education (MEXT) from 2005-2010, Federica has received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Environmental Clothing Science (Fashion Sociology) from Bunka Gakuen University (Tokyo). She has also gained a corporate understanding of the luxury fashion industry by working in B2B Sales and Event Organisation for 3 years. In 2015, she received an MBA degree in Luxury Brand Management from Grenoble Graduate Business School.*

*Federica is a lecturer at Regent's University, where she currently serves as Deputy Programme Director of the Master Programme in Luxury Brand Management.*

Dernier Cri: Continuity and Convergence in Technology and Luxury

Luxury lives on novelty but it relies on technology. This presentation begins with the juxtaposition of a painting of Mademoiselle Caroline Rivière painted by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres in 1806 and the Apple Watch Hermès released in 2015. Thirteen to fifteen years old Ms. Rivière wears a palatine boa (made of swans-down) draped around her delicate gloved arms and wrists. This exorbitantly precious accessory would have in today's standards cost thousands of US dollars. Displaying such an atypical luxurious accessory for her age is a surprising assertion of agency and style, which sets her apart as a "ravishing daughter" trend maker. Today, she might wear an Apple Watch Hermès –the watch being the latest Apple archetype, like the iPhone or iPad, and in its collaboration with Hermès, a new point of reference for the melding of luxury and technology.

Historically, luxury represents the highest quality worthy of a deity or a ruler. What is important to understand is that the connection between luxury and technology is not new. I will show ancient archaeological and architectural treasures and will discuss how mining, advanced construction and soldering techniques and the transformation of bronze alloy, for example, represented an integration between the highest levels of taste, craftsmanship and scientific technology. Luxury is modernity and in antiquity we see it as a forward moving force at the highest levels of development.

The ritualistic element has been present in luxury from the beginning. Byzantine Emperor Theophilus (r. 829-842) is shown surrounded by dignitaries on a throne said to be an automata marvel, likely quipped with hydraulic lifts. This mechanized throne, with the orchestrated sound of birds chirping and moving lion heads, enveloped with a cloud of incense released in the Emperor's presence would have conveyed the sense that he is an all-powerful ruler –a conduit to God himself. When the Siamese ambassadors of King Narai presented gifts to Louis XIV at Versailles in 1686, the ritual of presentation was elaborated in a complex manner using signs and symbols. This dramaturgical performance where awe is created is compared to the creative visual, tactile and olfactory symbolism of N°5 Chanel perfume today, elevated in its box on its own stage so that one must open the box as a jewellery box, thus engaging in an extraordinary performance between brand and consumer.

Other examples will illustrate how ritual, wealth, science and technology are embodied in luxury. When we think of haute couture, there seems to be nothing in common with say, for example, Hipsters. But when we think of technology as a common node, we find that concern with artistry, provenance, the importance of the maker, as well as science, are common denominators.

KEYWORDS

*luxury, technology, interpersonal, meme, ritual*

Profile

*A native of France, Stéphane Houy-Towner is a New York-based fashion consultant, researcher and curator, with an encyclopaedic expertise that spans the world of fashion and history, jewellery, and the decorative arts. He has collaborated on innovative projects with fashion labels, filmmakers and leading cultural institutions. A graduate of The Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum / Parsons The New School for Design in New York, Houy-Towner spent 14 years as a special projects researcher at the Costume Institute, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he served as the departmental specialist for French fashion, menswear, jewellery and furs, and, notably curated Rara Avis: Selections from the Iris Barrel Apfel Collection.*



## Dr Shaun Borstrock. FRSA

Associate Dean of School, Head of Design, Innovation and Business.  
Head of the Design Research Group / Digital Hack Lab

### Digital Craftsmanship and Luxury

It could be said that true luxury products are defined through skill, connoisseurship, rarity, craftsmanship and innovation. Luxury brands on the other hand are defined by illusions of luxury, fashion, authenticity, lifestyle, aspiration, the global market and profit.

Increasingly luxury brands have introduced options to customize their products to enhance their offer and thereby creating the perception that the customer is purchasing something individual. However, customisation options within the realms of the luxury brand, do nothing more than offer variations on a theme. Component pieces within an existing product range are produced and offered for sale as part of an existing product category.

Offering a customised product changes the perception of the consumer. They believe they are buying something different but this is far from the reality. Luxury brands offer customisation to attempt to diversify and add value to their product offer. If one considers craftsmanship and innovation as core components in creating differentiation between luxury and luxury branded products, it could then be argued that traditional crafted products and the integration of digital technologies challenge the status quo.

This paper sets out to explore how technology is changing the perception of the hand made and considers traditional hand production methods, hand stitching, and limited production and craft skills. In addition, mass production is considered in the context of how luxury brands have grown as a result of being able to supply historically hand crafted products en masse through technological innovation.

3D printing, for example, is already occupying a place of growing significance and viable modes of industrialised production and is being used to manufacture a range of different products, including bespoke clothing, rather than mass production. But what are the challenges and opportunities when designing and developing garments which use these new technological processes?

#### KEYWORDS

3D printing, technology, customisation, fashion, luxury

#### Profile

Shaun's remit in the School of Creative Arts includes the BA (Hons) Product Design, BA (Hons), BA (Hons) Architecture, Interior Architecture and Design, BSc Industrial Design, BA (Hons) Graphic Design and Illustration, BA (Hons) Fashion and BA (Hons) Fashion and Fashion Business. He teaches on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the School. He also supervises postgraduate research at Masters and PhD levels, including projects on branding, fashion, product and graphic design and illustration. He also works as an independent consultant to luxury brands and associations around the globe. They have included Unity PR, Ford, Finpro, The Cape Town Fashion Council, Thomas Pink, Fortnum and Mason, Dolce Gabbana, Gucci, The British Luxury Council and Alessandra Gradi, former Creative Director at Asprey. He is a regular Keynote speaker at government, corporate and education events around the world as an authority on delivering design education as well as a on subjects that include luxury branding and fashion, consumerism, branding and brand strategies. His success in the design industry, collaboration with global corporations and personal viewpoint make him a valued contributor to industry and education.

Shaun's research evaluates notions of luxury that seem far removed from today's world of excessive consumption. He considers and establishes how notions of luxury, designer, consumerism and manufacturing have played a role in determining the emergence of the 'designer luxury' market. Shaun sets out to explore how technology is changing the perception of the hand made and considers traditional hand production methods, hand stitching, and limited production and craft skills. In addition, mass production is considered in the context of how luxury brands have grown as a result of being able to supply historically hand crafted products en masse through technological innovation.



**Jacqueline Jenkins** (Chair)

**Father Andrew More O'Connor**

Goods of Conscience

**Patrick Mathieu**

PATRICK MATHIEU Recherche & Conseil

**Philippe Soussand**

SOUSSAND ASSOCIATES, LLC

**Tom Chin**

Senior Managing Director, consulting and analytics at TAG

**Maria Grachvogel**

Designer

Panel Profiles

**Jacqueline M. Jenkins**

Jacqueline is the Dean of Graduate Studies for LIM College. Jacqueline leads the development and execution of the College's graduate-level programs. These programs include the MBA and the Master of Professional Studies (MPS) programs in Fashion Merchandising & Retail Management, Fashion Marketing, Visual Merchandising, and Global Fashion Supply Chain Management.

Jacqueline was the Program Executive for the University of Pennsylvania Wharton Small Business Development Center. Prior to joining Wharton, Jacqueline was the COO for Milligan & Co., a regional accounting firm. In 2000, Jacqueline founded Add Value Day 1, an advisory business. The firm developed business strategies and raised capital for early-stage companies. Jacqueline also held corporate finance and sourcing positions with Ann Taylor, Inc. Jacqueline began her career with the First National Bank of Boston. Jacqueline held the following board appointments: Pennsylvania Private Investors Group (investment fund), the Ben Franklin Technology Partners Enterprise Growth Fund (micro-loan program); and the Philadelphia 100 (business conference). Jacqueline was a Philadelphia Business Journal Forty Under Forty honoree. Jacqueline is also a Philadelphia Business Journal Women of Distinction honoree. She earned her B.A. in economics from Spelman College and her MBA in finance from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

**Father Andrew More O'Connor**

Father Andrew attributes his recognition in the world of luxury fashion not only as an unexpected success but as "an act of God." In 2009 when the actress Cameron Diaz wore a pair of shorts from Goods of Conscience on the cover of Vogue, Anna Wintour referred to the shorts as her personal favorite." Father Andrew founded the not for profit Goods of Conscience in 2005 as a parish based workshop or benefice. A small line of women's and menswear is made to order on the Lower East Side from "social fabric" which is grown and processed in Chicacao, Guatemala from indigenous cotton using sustainable methods. It is handwoven and made into what Father Andrew describes as garments "cut for movement and poise" and "meant for a conscientious life." Father Andrew believes that trade can fit into a "cycle of charity" and believes that fashion can promote social good. He describes the mission of Goods of Conscience as "creating solidarity through craft — Mayan weaving and rare cotton meets considered design."

**Patrick Mathieu**

PATRICK MATHIEU Recherche & Conseil was created in Paris in 1999 and has 12 employees. It operates in the French and English language with worldwide clients in luxury and other sectors (finance, FMCG, services, robotics, building industry, telecom). Patrick spends a considerable amount of his time researching and developing breakthrough methodologies to help brands characterize and value their

singularity. He has recently published a book entitled "L'Imaginaire du Luxe" (2015) (co-authored with Frédéric Monneyron) in which he discusses his method of research in luxury consulting.

**Philippe Soussand**

Philippe Soussand established his consulting firm, SOUSSAND ASSOCIATES, LLC in 2002. Most of his clients belong to the fashion and luxury goods industry. They are based in the USA or Latin America as well as in Europe or Asia. They come to Philippe and his team to improve their businesses in the USA or in Latin America and at times to review their worldwide approach to an important issue. His projects range from defining a market strategy to reviewing a subsidiary's operations (Retail operations, design team and organization, administrative and marketing team). Some of his clients are owners of brands who use Philippe's background to help improve their growth strategy and organizations or firms who need an understanding of brands to improve their business such as investors in the fashion and luxury goods industries or mall developers. Philippe also advises a number of designers in their contract negotiations. Philippe's work has involved him with mostly ready to wear, leather goods accessories (shoes and handbags) as well as jewellery. Prior to starting his consulting firm, Philippe had held for 11 years senior executive positions with LVMH, Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. At LVMH, Philippe served as CFO of both Christian Dior and Louis Vuitton for North America, President of Louis Vuitton for Latin America, and President of Christian Lacroix, Loewe and Kenzo for the Americas. In this capacity, Philippe has developed financial, marketing organizations as well as retail networks in many parts of the world. Previously Philippe served as Treasurer of the United Nations Development Programme. Philippe holds an MBA from The University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and graduated from ESCP EUROPE. Philippe is also on the Advisory Board of Mad Network, a luxury retail consulting leader based in Paris.

**Tom Chin**

Tom Chin is the Senior Managing Director of the consulting and analytics group at TAG. Tom has over fifteen years of experience working with consumer companies. Prior to joining TAG, Tom worked in the corporate finance groups of Bear Stearns, J.P. Morgan, and Alex. Brown. He has executed numerous merger and acquisition and financing transactions, primarily for retail, apparel, and restaurant companies. His career also includes operational and private equity experience with Unilever, Transpac Capital, and Bradford Capital Partners. Mr. Chin earned a BS in commerce from the University of Virginia and an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. He holds the Series 7, 24, 63, and 65 licenses.

**Maria Grachvogel**

Maria thinks deeply about the cut and fit of her garments and this almost scientific functionality and strive for perfection has always remained the core of her brand. Originally mentored by the late Isabella Blow, Maria burst onto the catwalks in the autumn of 1995, where she held her first runway show on the London Fashion Week schedule, showcasing her Spring/Summer '96 collection. By the year 2000, after a whirlwind five years as an established designer, Victoria Beckham headlined at the Autumn/Winter show which generated a huge international frenzy and interest in the brand. Since then, there has been no looking back and the brand continues to go from strength to strength, dressing a host of celebrity devotees along the way including the likes of; Angelina Jolie, Emma Thompson, Yasmin and Amber Le Bon, Florence Welch, Kelly Rowland and Jessie J to name but a few. In September 2001 Maria successfully opened her first flagship store on London's Sloane Street. Maria now runs a global fashion business, which has recently celebrated its 20th anniversary and whilst her collections have continually evolved over the past two decades her philosophy and desire to make real women feel sensational and unstoppable in her clothes remains the firm foundation for her business.

## Lucas Rubin

The In Pursuit of Luxury conference and associated events is unique as it brings together industry and academic participants in a collaborative manner around the theme of luxury. The working brunch hosted by Lucas Rubin, Assistant Dean for Academic Programs at the Graduate Center for Worker Education (GCWE) to facilitate academic and industry collaborative research is a unique opportunity for all delegates to come together to reflect on the conference and how we may continue to work together in the future. We hope to use the brunch as a means of mapping out projects that will lead to a variety of global initiatives.

We have already started to work individually on a variety of projects and will be publishing an edited book and a special issue of a journal focused on the conference.

Together with Lucas and the GCWE we look forward to continuing our debates and discussions in the not too distant future.

### Credits

Programme Design

Nick Lovegrove

Conference Administrator

Nick Thomas

