

When Art & Fashion Combine & Collide

Defining what exactly is art has become quite arduous. Traditionally it may have been defined according to its medium, albeit oil on canvas or classical sculptures. Though one thing that history has made crystal clear is that both art and fashion continuously overstep boundaries and collide in various combinations.

STORY BY Deborah Iskandar

Sergei Diaghilev, the founder of the Ballet

Russe in Paris in 1909, was renowned for commissioning contemporary artists to collaborate on the set design and costumes for his performances. He was instrumental in bringing art, music and dance together. A young Picasso was one of his earliest partners starting in 1917, with his cubist sets and costume designs for Diaghilev's "Parade". Continuing on to 1926, Juan Miro, together with fellow surrealist artist Max Ernst designed the sets of "Romeo and Juliette"; Ernst painted the curtains and Miró painted the front cloth. Many other famous artists of that period, such as Marie Laurencin, Andre Derain, and even Matisse also influenced this genre. The combination of art and costume and set design was considered very progressive for that day and time and could be considered as the forerunner of combining art and fashion.



Deborah Iskandar

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In this Art in Design section of Indonesia Design, **Deborah Iskandar** shares her knowledge and love for art. Regarded as a pioneer in the auction world in South East Asia, she knows how to navigate the current evolving market trends of the Art World.

After more than 20 years' experience collectively, within the art world, she founded her own advisory firm, ISA Art Advisory® in 2013. Being widely respected in Indonesia and Singapore, ISA Art Advisory® aims to aid buyers, sellers and collectors to approach the art world with ease and to build collections that will retain value over time.

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WHEN ART & FASHION COMBINE & COLLIDE
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

— Peau D'ane Gown by Vik Muniz

— Mickalene Thomas' Elle dress

— The Organza Dress With Painted Lobster (1937), Elsa Schiaparelli's work with Salvador Dali

— Satin hooded gown by Yue Minjun

Perhaps one of the most early and notable collaborations between artists and fashion designers was by Salvador Dali. Dali was an artist, illustrator, filmmaker, and performance artist and true man about town. Starting from 1935 and onwards, Dali was a frequent contributor for Harper's Bazaar. To celebrate the opening of the Fantastic Dada and Surrealist art exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, in 1930, Bonwit Teller commissioned Dali to design the window display. Dali dressed a mannequin in a negligee of green feathers. It was so outrageous for its day that the management of Bonwit Teller had to alter the display and replaced it with traditional mannequins dressed in suits. Dali was so outraged that his "art" was tampered with, that he entered the window to protest, and accidentally barged through the window. He was briefly taken into police custody for "malicious mischief" in support of his art.



Dali's most famous contribution to fashion was his collaboration with Elsa Schiaparelli. This partnership bred some of the most iconic garments of the 1930s. The "Organza Dress With Painted Lobster" in 1937 was a silk creation with a giant red lobster painted on the front. For Dali, the lobster was a sign of erotic tension. Wallis Simpson was famously photographed in the lobster dress, by Cecil Beaton, on the eve of her wedding to the Duke of Windsor. Beaton's intention was that it would "soften up" Simpson, as she had a very hard "look" about her. But the location of the fiery red lobster crawling up her leg, with his pinchers landing in the soft "V" created quite a stir. The suggestive "placement" summed up Wallis Simpson's skills that caused the King to abdicate.

Following in Dali's footsteps, there has been frequent overlapping between fashion and art. Andy Warhol began as a shoe designer before he made the leap to the art world. Warhol's passion for fashion led him to found Interview Magazine, which regularly featured the top designers in the 1960s. Warhol's artistic legacy has been immortalized by notable fashion designers. Both Diane Von Furstenberg and Caroline Herrera have incorporated Warhol's iconic flowers in their fashion designs.

Louis Vuitton at the behest of Marc Jacobs has been featuring contemporary artists on their bags and accessories. LV has been working with several Asian artists, such as Takashi



Murakami, Yayoi Kusama, and closer to home, Eko Nugroho. In 2013, Eko collaborated with Louis Vuitton for its fall/winter 2013 scarf collection. This was the first time an Indonesian artist's works have been utilized by an international fashion house.

The trend of combining art with fashion has undeniably reached the Asian shores with the debut "Art Capsule" series in Hong Kong in May 2014. Curated by Stacy Engman it explores the intersection and the

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CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT

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From left: Josephine Meckseper, Yue Minjun, Zhang Huan and Nan Goldin garments for Art Capsule Launch at Joyce Hong Kong

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“Republik Tropis”, Eko Nugroho’s design for Louis Vuitton

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Opus 1 (Babydoll Parka) by George Condo

—
White cape gown by Zhang Huan

—
Energy clothes by Marina Abramović



IMAGES COURTESY OF JOYCE HONG KONG AND EKO NUGROHO (LEFT).

similarities between art and haute couture. The first presentation of Art Capsule showcased works by seminal artists like Marina Abramović, George Condo, Terence Koh, Vik Muniz, and Yue Min Jun. The concept is simple, artists were asked to create a garment that represents their artwork inspired by haute couture. The artists could explore the garment the same way they are exploring their art. This simple idea of giving a garment to artists to explore then became a complex exploration in five different primary art mediums: George Condo is mostly known for his paintings, Vik Muniz for his photographs, Marina Abramović for her performance work, Mickalene Thomas for her multimedia work, and Terence Koh for his sculpture and installation works.

The artistic exploration between artists and fashion designers seem to break the confines of their respective disciplines, and erase the divide that exists between their fields. It has become profoundly adamant that the cross-pollination between art and fashion has almost been inevitable and is undoubtedly here to stay. **id**