

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Fashion risks over-commercialization via artist collaborations

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*Art and fashion have a large cultural overlap of which brands can take advantage. Image credit: Fashionbi*

By DANNY PARISI

The art and fashion worlds have been intertwined for decades and luxury brands are able to leverage the high-class market of art to drive business from the overlap of affluent people who love both.

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In a new [report](#), Fashionbi took a look at some of the many ways that fashion brands have collaborated with the art world over the years, noting some specific examples that serve as barometers for the relationship between the two. Fashion brands need to be careful in striking a balance between comparing their products to art without overly commercializing the art that people love.

"Both fashion and art create a parallel, imaginary worlds using 'creativity' as a language to spread the ideas to the world," said Yana Bushmelva, chief operating officer of [Fashionbi](#), Milan. "Fashion items can be pieces of art and some pieces of art can be trendy during the specific period.

"Both industries, art and fashion, can set up and dictate the local and worldwide trends," she said. "No surprise that we can witness new and new collaborations between the artists and the fashion companies.

"Art and fashion feed each other with the ideas and serve as an inspiration. Modern designers often refer to the art, cinema, music of the past when creating new collections and some modern musicians. Art performers also play with fashion brands."

### Key milestones

High-fashion has cultivated a reputation as synonymous with high-art.

Big name designers are often treated and present themselves as artists in their own right, and collaborations between the worlds of art and fashion are copious.

To determine some of the ways that fashion has used high-art as a branding tool and as a way to acquire more customers, Fashionbi cataloged some exemplary instances of collaboration between art and fashion.

Fashionbi marks a few key milestones in the evolution of fashion and art's relationship.

These milestones range from the rise of pop art, which often used high-fashion and personalities from the fashion world as the subjects of art, to conceptual fashion, which are pieces that are designed more to be viewed on the runway and appreciated for their aesthetics rather than actually to be worn.



*Alice + Olivia x Jean-Michel Basquiat. Image credit: Fashionbi*

In terms of more recent examples, Fashionbi points to a few notable cases. Recently, Alice + Olivia teamed up with the estate of late American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat for a collection themed around his work.

The collection was met with mainly positive reception, with many customers responding positively to the incorporation of Mr. Basquiat's art. However, there was some backlash to the idea that the brand was commercializing Mr. Basquiat's art, which was seen as disrespectful to his memory.

### **Art and fashion**

This collaboration between art and fashion has taken on many forms over the years. For one example, the art and fashion worlds often come together at the annual Art Basel show.

One of the world's largest contemporary art shows, Art Basel Hong Kong, inspires various brand initiatives that sees luxury marketers get involved in different ways to further align their images with the art scene, as luxury and art go hand-in-hand ([see story](#)).

Some brands have used collaborations with artists as a way to raise awareness for a good cause such as Fortnum & Mason's partnership with David Bailey.



*Artist David Bailey. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason*

Mr. Bailey created 400 small bronze tigers modeled after the real-life Sumatran tiger, of which only 400 live in the wild today. Each was available for sale with proceeds going to help conservation efforts of the specific subspecies of tiger ([see story](#)).

Others have opened whole spaces devoted to the intersection between art and fashion.

Spanish fashion house Loewe is opening a pop-up shop in Ibiza's Museum of Contemporary Art in celebration of an exhibit of vintage pieces from the iconic Paula's Ibiza boutique.

The fashion house will be hosting the pop-up shop for the months of July and August, allowing customers to buy

products related to the Paula's Ibiza exhibit and pieces from Loewe's collection. The partnership shows how the luxury and art worlds can come together to jointly service the large overlap of patrons between the two ([see story](#)).

Fashionbi's report shows that the art and fashion worlds' relationship is as close as two industries can be and the potential benefits for fashion brands dabbling in the art world are considerable.

"I do believe that fashion and luxury brands can think about more complex and long-lasting campaigns," Ms. Bushmelva said. "They can involve not only the artists but also the customers into a creative process.

"You won't have a wow effect if you just show to your client the 'final' result, but you reach this wow if you create the product together or make a common story," she said.

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