

Creativity, Fashion, Art and Marketing: The Case of the Miu Miu Brand in the Construction of the Discourse of Contemporary Fashion Brands

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Abstract

This scientific article analyses the link between creativity, fashion, art, and marketing in the construction of the discourse of contemporary fashion brands, with an emphasis on the influence and contributions of the Miu Miu brand. The integration of these areas - art, fashion, photography, film, technology, and design - enables them to exchange and collaborate, diluting borders and expanding horizons. One of the great challenges of this alliance is finding a balance between creative innovation and what the consumer is looking for. Through a literature review and in-depth analysis of a case study, the challenges, and advantages of this strategy in the context of the fashion industry are investigated. The research reveals that the association of creativity, fashion, art, and marketing offers brands the opportunity to differentiate themselves in the market, allowing them to express their identity authentically and create visual impact as well as notoriety. This link also allows them to create unique experiences for consumers and establish lasting emotional connections. On the other hand, however, challenges are identified, such as finding a balance between creative innovation and what the consumer is looking for. In the light of the Miu Miu brand's journey, this research highlights the importance of bringing together fashion, arts and marketing professionals and academics, providing relevant information on how to use creativity and art as optimised tools for building successful contemporary fashion brands.

Keywords: Creativity, Communication, Cinema, Marketing, Contemporary Fashion Brands

Introduction

The link between creativity, fashion, art, and marketing plays a key role in building the discourse of contemporary fashion brands. There needs to be a constructive collaboration between the different areas, as this alliance plays a significant role in culture and the global economy, and creates and is influenced by the trends, values, and aspirations of modern society (Lipovetsky, 2010; Barnard, 2002). In this context, the Miu Miu brand is an example of how these areas merge to create a cohesive and remarkable brand discourse, so much so that it has become an irrefutable reference in contemporary fashion. Founded by Miuccia Prada in 1993, Miu Miu belongs to the Prada

Group, a global leader in the luxury segment, and is characterized by being an irreverent, creative, and innovative brand in its aesthetics and approach. The brand endeavors to match the diverse personalities of the modern woman in a feminine way. With its ability to set trends and influence the global market, Miu Miu is a benchmark brand for understanding the dynamics of the contemporary fashion market (Evans, 2003; McRobbie, 1998). One of the major differentiating factors in the construction of the Miu Miu brand identity is the numerous partnerships with artists, filmmakers, and other creatives that allow the brand to integrate fashion and art, thus highlighting its intersection with various forms of art and culture. Another factor that sets the brand apart is its approach to marketing and communication strategies, characterized by boldness and innovation. Its advertising campaigns, promotional events, and social media presence show us how this contemporary fashion brand has been so successful in engaging with consumers (Schroeder, 2002).

This article analyses the interrelationship between creativity, fashion, art, and marketing in the construction of the discourse of contemporary fashion brands, focusing on the influence and contributions of the Miu Miu brand. The aggregation of these areas - art, fashion, photography, film, technology, and design - allows for an exchange and collaboration that blurs boundaries and expands horizons (Frisa, 2001). One of the great challenges of this alliance is finding a balance between creative innovation and consumer demand. Using a literature review and in-depth analysis of a case study, we investigated the challenges and advantages of this strategy in the context of the fashion industry.

The research reveals that the association between creativity, fashion, art, and marketing offers brands the opportunity to differentiate themselves in the market, thus allowing them to express their identity and create an authentic visual impact, as well as notoriety (Breward, 2003). This connection also allows brands to create unique immersive experiences for consumers, thereby creating much deeper and longer-lasting emotional bonds. However, challenges are identified, such as finding a balance between creative innovation and consumer expectations. Using the journey of the Miu Miu brand, this research emphasizes the importance of the meeting of ideas between professionals from various fields and academics to share fundamental information for building the discourse of successful contemporary fashion brands.

Purpose of the Study

This article aims to answer the following scientific questions:

- How does the integration of creativity, fashion, art, and marketing contribute to the construction of the discourse of contemporary fashion brands?
- What are the specific strategies employed by the Miu Miu brand to blend these diverse areas, and how do they contribute to its market positioning and consumer engagement?

The aim is to explore the following propositions:

Proposition 1: The integration of creativity, fashion, art, and marketing significantly enhances the differentiation and identity of contemporary fashion brands in the market.

Proposition 2: The collaborative efforts between fashion brands and artists or creatives result in unique and immersive consumer experiences that foster deeper emotional connections and brand loyalty.

Proposition 3: Balancing creative innovation with consumer demand is a critical challenge for contemporary fashion brands, and strategies that successfully navigate this balance are more likely to achieve sustained market success.

Theoretical Frame

The intersection of fashion, cinema, and media

The digital transformation and consequent reorganization of the media has brought new ways of communicating and capturing information, resulting in the emergence of fashion films as a way of communicating fashion. Cinema is one of the most far-reaching and influential forms of artistic expression (Kuang, 2012); (Ling & Misuk, 2014).

The collaboration between filmmakers and designers allows for a fluid integration between the artistic vision of the creative director and the aesthetic expression of the brand. They strengthen the presence of fashion in cinema through dialogue between the two areas and open horizons for both industries (Bug et al., 2019).

The relationship between fashion and cinema plays a significant role in the construction of film narratives. It is through costumes that characters and their stories are constructed, and it is through costumes that we learn about the period and context of films. The success of fashion films as a strategy proves how closely fashion and cinema are related (Gibson, 2017).

Filmmakers use costumes to create a visual language that communicates subtexts and themes effectively and subtly. This relationship allows for countless possibilities for building narratives and creating immersive and impactful visual experiences for the consumer, thus providing an evolution in the visual narrative and artistic expression of contemporary

fashion brands. The use of fashion films has been fundamental as a strategic marketing tool for brands, at a time when all consumer habits have changed with technological advances and, consequently, their demands and adaptation to the current market (Soloaga & Guerrero, 2016). The difference between fashion and costume design is that one is associated with the real world and the other with fiction (Leite & Guerra, 2002).

Fashion films transformed, redefining contemporary visual culture, and contributing significantly to the definition and strengthening of a brand's identity. They evolved into a dynamic means of communication, adept at adapting to the ever-changing market and the digital age (Wang & Kennon, 2017). The digital era, characterized by the pervasive influence of social networks (Vehmas et al., 2018), has revolutionized consumer behavior. Brands have had to pivot toward omnichannel strategies and establish a robust online presence (Barreto et al., 2022). Fashion communication has been forced to continually evolve to keep pace with shifting consumer culture (Lee et al., 2011).

Fashion films have proven to be a creative platform for expressing brand identity, engaging audiences, and effectively conveying a brand's essence (Soloaga & Guerrero, 2016). These films artfully leverage storytelling, cinematography, art direction, and music to create immersive visual experiences that resonate deeply with viewers (Kim, 2020). In response to the rise of digital media, fashion films have gained prominence, distinguishing themselves with their unique narratives and captivating visuals (Serrano & Cachero, 2009). They stand apart from traditional advertising by placing a strong emphasis on artistry and emotional connection, leaving a lasting impact on their audience (Needham, 2013). It is worth noting that fashion films, while a powerful component of brand communication, should be viewed as part of a broader marketing strategy, harmoniously aligned with the brand's core identity (Kim, 2020). These films can be categorized into distinct types, including promotional, editorial, collaborative, and independent fashion films (Buffo, 2017).

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, where consumers seek instant gratification online (Kotler et al., 2017), brands are continually adapting, and leveraging digital platforms and innovative approaches to engage their audiences effectively (Gibson, 2017). Contemporary fashion brands recognize the importance of maintaining a consistent visual identity, which encapsulates their personality, values, and purpose (Aaker, 2007). This identity should manifest consistently across various elements, encompassing graphic design and branding materials (Oliveira, 2015).

The existence of several collections in the fashion world inspired by various successful films has been proven. Therefore, films influence the development of seasonal fashion. However, this is a link created by both industries. Through collaboration between the two industries, the boundaries between costume designers and fashion designers become blurred. What is more, nowadays, fashion does not come naturally to the

public, but is promoted through cinema, fashion films, and their wide reach (Bug et al., 2019).

Fashion brands also exhibit a remarkable ability to balance current trends with their unique aesthetics, exploring new forms, materials, and creative approaches (Puls et al., 2015). Visual aesthetics play a pivotal role in shaping the consumer's experience across physical and digital touchpoints.

Film festivals as an exhibition of art and culture

Film festivals have been springing up all over the world, with the Fashion in Film Festival in London in 2006 being recognized as the first of its kind. This festival, created by Marketa Uhlířová, Christel Tsiiliaris and Roger Burton, promotes academic discussions and exhibitions that bring fashion and art together (O'Neill, 2015; van der Linden, 2017; Seixas, 2017). The Aesthetica Short Film Festival (ASFF), created by Aesthetica Magazine in 2011, introduced a fashion and

advertising category in 2014, referring to fashion as digital advertising content using an aesthetic narrative. Fashion was seen as an emotional experience that accompanies the product. That same year, other festivals were created, showing a significant growth in the popularity and relevance of Fashion Films (O'Neill, 2015).

A film festival is an event organized to show films in various genres and categories, acting as a platform for sharing information, content, and interaction for filmmakers, producers, distributors, and the public. This current concept, which fulfills various functions within the film industry, has been moving away from the traditional festival model that only focuses on exhibitions (Iordanova, 2015). The interest in peripheral cinematographies was itself at the origin of festival cinema studies (Vallejo & Leão, 2021).

Table 1 shows the functions and characteristics of a film festival, according to (Iordanova, 2015).

FUNCTION	CHARACTERISTICS
Film Screenings	Screenings of feature films, shorts, documentaries, animations, and other new and innovative genres.
Production Promotion	Promoting the production of new film projects through talent programs or film academies.
Pitching Sessions	These sessions allow filmmakers to present their projects to potential investors and distributors to finance their works.
Distribution	Many Festivals have their distribution channels or partnerships with streaming platforms and TV channels to promote and distribute the films screened at the event.
Film Markets	Festivals such as Cannes, Berlinale, and Busan organise markets where buyers and sellers in the film industry negotiate film distribution rights.
Networking and Social Events	These events function as a space for filmmakers, producers, critics, journalists, and other professionals in the field to network and form partnerships in the future.
Awards	Several festivals have competitions with awards recognizing quality in various categories, with prizes awarded that give visibility and prestige to the winning films and filmmakers.
Cultural and political support	Addressing cultural and political issues, providing a platform for discussion of relevant social issues and cultural transfers.
Education and Development	Organization of debates, lectures and workshops for the development and education of filmmakers and film fans.

Table 1 - Functions and Characteristics of a Film Festival. Source: Authors, adapted from Dina Iordanova (2015)

At film festivals, an event where everyone involved in the film industry is present, a prominent part of the event is the red carpet. The looks chosen by the celebrities attending the event often become highlights of the year in the fashion industry and are closely followed by the public and industry professionals, becoming future fashion trends (Ling & Misuk, 2014).

This type of rapid digital dissemination and the different festival models emphasise the role and power of celebrities who become influencers for

brands. These celebrities or influencers promote and popularise contemporary fashion brands such as Miu Miu, boosting their profile. Brands have taken great advantage of celebrities, leveraging their brands on their recognition (Gibson, 2012). According to Marketa Uhlířová, film festivals, through fashion films, contribute to reflection and the promotion of consumer awareness about the impact of various fashion-related topics (Seixas, 2017).

The digital age has democratized the production and dissemination of fashion films, allowing amateurs to create films and connect with specific audiences globally, and film festivals help with this dissemination (Ling & Misuk, 2014).

Nowadays, in a new digital age, information technologies allow consumers to be an integral part of the process at previously unimaginable speeds, and they can be both consumers and producers of content (Oliveira, 2015).

We can say that film festivals are events that aim to negotiate cultural hierarchies and legitimacies, contexts for discussion and conversation about film standards. They are also cultural intermediaries and places of glorification that establish relationships, both in the production of cinema and in the creation, in audiences, of interest and specific desires for the consumption of cinema. They must therefore be maintained as part of a critical exercise that does not dispense with an in-depth, multi-perspectival analysis of the event (Leão, 2021)

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative discourse analysis approach to examine the integration of creativity, fashion, art, and marketing in contemporary fashion films. Discourse analysis allows for an in-depth exploration of how visual and textual elements in films construct specific narratives and social realities. This method is particularly suited for analyzing the complex interplay between visual imagery and social context, making it ideal for this research (Rose, 2016; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001).

This work focuses on contemporary fashion brands, more specifically on the contributions and influences of the Miu Miu brand. Through the analysis of three films from the 'Miu Miu Women's Tales' series ('The Powder Room' from 2011, 'The Woman Dress' from 2012, and 'Les 3 Boutons' from 2015), the collaborations with costume designers in films such as 'The Great Gatsby' from 2013 and 'A Single Man' from 2009, and the autumn/winter 2017 and spring/summer 2018 campaigns, this research seeks to discuss how the integration of these areas has helped Miu Miu to create innovative narratives and promote the unique characteristics of its brand.

Data Collection

Miu Miu is a brand known for their artistic collaborations and innovative marketing strategies (Kawamura, 2005). Films and campaigns selected for this study were chosen based on criteria such as brand representativeness, films and campaigns that mirrored the brand's identity and values; innovation, examples that showed innovation in the fashion sector; creative collaborations, examples that involved partnerships with filmmakers and costume designers, so that the association between fashion, cinema, and other art forms was perceptible. The 'Miu Miu Women's Tales' fashion films were analyzed:

The first video is 'The Powder Room' (2011), available at <https://www.pradagroup.com/en/news-media/stories/miu-miu-womens-ales.html>. This film, directed by Zoe Cassavetes, analyses intimacy and femininity in a women's bathroom. This research investigated how the visual narrative and aesthetics of the film reflected the values of the Miu Miu brand, highlighting feminine elegance and mystery.

The second video chosen is 'The Woman Dress' (2012), available at <https://www.pradagroup.com/en/news-media/stories/miu-miu-womens-ales.html>. Directed by Giada Colagrande, this film uses fantasy elements to tell a story about transformation and identity. The analysis investigated how the narrative and art direction contributed to the construction of an innovative and charming image for the brand.

The third film is 'Les 3 Boutons' (2015): Available at <https://www.pradagroup.com/en/news-media/stories/miu-miu-womens-ales.html>. This film, directed by Agnès Varda, mixes reality and fantasy to explore themes of youth and discovery. The analysis highlighted how the film's playful narrative and unique aesthetic helped reinforce the irreverent and creative identity of the Miu Miu brand. To complement these films, we included other branding and marketing activities from the Miu Miu brand that reaffirm their discourse in the fashion and film narrative:

(i) Collaborations with Costume Designers:

- *The Great Gatsby* (2013), available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4w8IohkQtbY>. The collaboration with costume designer Catherine Martin resulted in costumes that captured the opulence and glamour of the 1920s. The analysis took into account how this partnership helped position Miu Miu as a brand synonymous with luxury and sophistication.
- *A Single Man* (2009), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIl2a6o_6lY. The costumes for this film, created by Arianne Phillips, reflected the elegance and minimalism of the 1960s. The analysis investigated how the collaboration contributed to the brand's sophisticated and timeless image.

(ii) Fashion Campaigns:

- *Miu Miu Autumn/Winter 2017*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AUjpXGzZGY>. This campaign highlighted the brand's boldness and innovation through a futuristic and daring aesthetic. The analysis highlighted how the campaign used visual elements to communicate the brand's identity and connect with the public.
- *Miu Miu Spring/Summer 2018*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNvWpFKOg64> with a lighter and more playful approach, this campaign celebrated youth and fun. The analysis investigated how the campaign managed to create an emotional connection with consumers and reinforce the brand's vibrant and creative identity.

Gathering Related Texts and Materials:

In addition to the films, a variety of related texts and materials were collected to provide a comprehensive context for analysis. These included:

- Film scripts and transcripts.
- Promotional materials and advertisements.
- Interviews with filmmakers and brand representatives.
- Reviews and critiques from fashion and film journals.
- Social media content related to the films.

Analytical Procedure

Intertextual Reading: The selected films and related texts were subjected to multiple readings to identify underlying themes, assumptions, and contradictions. This iterative process helped uncover implicit narratives about fashion, creativity, and consumer engagement (Rose, 2016).

Contextual Analysis: Each film was analyzed within its broader social and institutional contexts. This involved examining how the films were marketed, received by audiences, and situated within broader cinematic and cultural trends. The role of production and distribution entities, such as fashion brands and studios, was also considered (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001).

Attention to Visual Details: A detailed analysis of the visual elements in the films was conducted, focusing on the use of color, lighting, spatial organization, and other formal aspects. This step was crucial in understanding how visual styles contribute to the films' overall narratives and themes (Rose, 2016).

Examination of Power Relations: The analysis also focused on how the films portray and reinforce social hierarchies and power relations. Particular attention was paid to representations of gender, race, and class within the films. This involved identifying and interpreting symbols, motifs, and visual metaphors related to these themes (Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001).

Reflexivity: Throughout the analysis, the researchers maintained a reflective stance, considering how their perspectives and assumptions might influence the interpretation process. This reflexivity ensured a more nuanced and critical analysis of the films (Rose, 2016).

Data Analysis

The collected data was organized and coded using qualitative data analysis software. Themes and patterns were identified and analyzed for the research questions. The findings were then interpreted considering existing literature on visual methodologies, film studies, and fashion marketing.

Validity and Reliability: To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was employed by cross-referencing multiple data sources, including visual and textual materials. Peer debriefing and member checking were also conducted to ensure the robustness of the analysis (Rose, 2016; Van Leeuwen & Jewitt, 2001; Kawamura, 2005).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained for interviews and other proprietary materials. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained, and all sources of data were properly cited and credited.

Analysis and Results

This research is still at an exceedingly early stage, and the comments that we have been able to make at this stage are, that contemporary fashion brands, such as Miu Miu, are constantly adapting to contemporary trends and market demands, always trying to stand out through innovation, creativity, and unique and differentiated approaches (Kim, 2020).

Just as film festivals have taken on new roles beyond showing films, fashion brands are also turning to other approaches to connect more deeply with their audience and influence cultural trends (Seixas, 2017). Creative collaborations help contemporary fashion brands to build a closer dialogue and a deeper relationship with their audience. They allow the brand to address current and relevant issues such as identity, empowerment, and creativity in different and innovative ways, showing that a contemporary fashion brand can be commercially and artistically relevant. Miu Miu invests in innovative marketing campaigns and artistic collaborations which, despite requiring significant investment, are fundamental to keeping the brand relevant and attractive to the public and investors.

Miu Miu, like other contemporary fashion brands, organizes events, shows, and campaigns that serve as platforms for interaction between designers, artists, and the public. Examples of these strategies are festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, and Busan, with a strong focus on industry and networking. These events function as business forums, essential for building brands and creating new opportunities (O'Neill, 2015; van der Linden, 2017; Seixas, 2017).

According to (Turney, 2021) creative collaborations not only enrich brand identity but also create unique experiences that strengthen the emotional connection with consumers, something evident in Miu Miu's strategies (Turney, 2021).

All these strategies increase the brand's visibility, but also enrich its cultural value, allowing Miu Miu to continue to inspire and influence the contemporary fashion market. Brands like Miu Miu are seen as key influencers in contemporary fashion and actively participate in society's cultural and aesthetic trends. Understanding the components and power dynamics within brands helps to analyze how they position themselves in the market and interact with global audiences.

End Notes

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