



The Impact of Generative AI on Brand Experience, Authenticity, and Exclusivity in the Luxury Fashion Industry

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Dissertation written under the supervision of professor

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the
MSc in in Management with Specialization in Strategic Marketing, at
the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 04.01.2026.

Abstract EN

This master's thesis examines how Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) interacts with creativity, authenticity and symbolic value in luxury fashion. It focuses on a single case study of Jacquemus, complemented by seven expert interviews from the luxury sector. The study addresses a gap in existing literature, which often treats AI mainly as an efficiency driver and underestimates that luxury value arises from symbolic expression, creative authorship and craftsmanship rather than from technology itself.

The thesis conceptualises luxury fashion as a system with two core layers and one connecting layer: a symbolic layer (images, stories, atmospheres), a substantive layer (craft, quality, origin) and a symbol–substance alignment layer that links both. Three analytical lenses structure the framework and guide the propositions and analysis: desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment.

Empirically, the study combines semiotic analysis of Jacquemus campaigns from 2023 to 2025 with seven interviews spanning creative, strategic and technological roles. The findings show that GenAI can expand symbolic expression and accelerate creative exploration when its use remains clearly human-led and culturally framed. Brands actively watch for thresholds at which AI-generated content becomes too generic, too smooth or too detached from material reality and intervene at these points.

Overall, the thesis demonstrates that GenAI does not alter the fundamental logic of value creation in the luxury fashion business model. Instead, it acts as an accelerant within an already strict and highly codified system, intensifying symbolic production and increasing the need for disciplined authorship, coherent brand codes and strong governance.

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Title: The Impact of Generative AI on Brand Experience, Authenticity, and Exclusivity in the Luxury Fashion Industry

Keywords: *Generative artificial intelligence; Luxury fashion; Brand experience; Brand authenticity; Exclusivity; Creative authorship; Symbol–substance alignment*

Abstract PT

Esta dissertação analisa como a Inteligência Artificial Generativa (GenAI) interage com criatividade, autenticidade e valor simbólico na moda de luxo. O estudo centra-se no caso Jacquemus, complementado por oito entrevistas com profissionais. A investigação aborda uma lacuna na literatura, que tende a tratar a IA como motor de eficiência e ignora que, no luxo, o valor decorre da expressão simbólica, da autoria criativa e do *savoir-faire*, e não da tecnologia em si.

A dissertação conceptualiza a moda de luxo como um sistema com duas camadas e uma camada de ligação: uma camada simbólica (imagens, narrativas, atmosferas), uma camada substantiva (*savoir-faire*, qualidade, origem) e uma camada de alinhamento símbolo–substância que conecta ambas. Três lentes analíticas estruturam o quadro teórico e orientam a análise: desejo, autoria e alinhamento símbolo–substância.

Empiricamente, o estudo combina análise semiótica de campanhas de Jacquemus entre 2023 e 2025 com oito entrevistas que abrangem funções criativas, estratégicas e tecnológicas. Os resultados mostram que a GenAI pode ampliar a expressão simbólica e acelerar a exploração criativa quando o seu uso permanece liderado por humanos e enquadrado culturalmente, e que as marcas monitorizam limiares em que o conteúdo gerado por IA se torna genérico ou afastado da realidade material.

No conjunto, a dissertação demonstra que a GenAI não altera a lógica fundamental de criação de valor na moda de luxo. Atua como um acelerador dentro de um sistema codificado, intensificando a produção simbólica e aumentando a necessidade de autoria disciplinada, códigos de marca coerentes e governação robusta.

Executive Summary

This thesis examines how Generative AI (GenAI) is changing brand experience and personalisation in luxury fashion, and under which conditions this remains compatible with authenticity and the substantive foundations of luxury. Luxury brands today must be highly visible and personalised on digital channels while still standing for exclusivity, craftsmanship and a clear creative voice. The central tension is how to work with GenAI without weakening the disciplined business model on which luxury fashion relies.

Research question

How is Generative AI transforming brand experience and personalisation in the luxury fashion industry, and under which conditions does this transformation remain compatible with authenticity and substantive brand foundations?

The thesis builds on three main theoretical strands: luxury and symbolic value, brand authenticity and authorship, and emerging work on AI in marketing and creative industries. It develops a three-layer model of value creation in luxury fashion. The symbolic layer includes images, stories, atmospheres and cultural meaning. The substantive layer covers craftsmanship, materials, origin and production. Between them lies an alignment layer that describes how well symbolic promises and material reality fit together. Three analytical lenses shape the framework: desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment, complemented by cultural intelligence as a cross-cutting orientation. Within this model, GenAI is understood as a technology that enters an existing value system and interacts with these elements, rather than as a stand-alone transformation.

Methodologically, the study follows a qualitative, exploratory design. At its centre is a single case study of Jacquemus, a strongly authored, visually driven and digitally fluent luxury fashion house positioned between luxury and contemporary fashion. The case is based on campaign imagery, runway productions, AI- and CGI-supported content and brand communication between 2023 and 2025. This material is complemented by seven semi-structured expert interviews with professionals working in luxury marketing, communication, design, clienteling and AI-supported visual creation. All data are analysed using qualitative content analysis guided by the lenses of desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment.

The findings show that GenAI mainly transforms brand experience and personalisation through the symbolic layer. Luxury brands can create visual worlds, campaign ideas and atmospheres faster and more frequently, adapt content more flexibly across channels and tailor visual experiences more precisely to specific audiences. In the Jacquemus case, AI-supported and CGI content extend an existing universe of Mediterranean light, summer moods, humour and emotional intimacy. GenAI acts as an amplifier for a clearly defined brand world rather than as an independent source of meaning.

At the same time, the results underline that this symbolic acceleration only remains credible when it is anchored in a convincing substantive base. For Jacquemus, this base appears in European production structures, a clear focus on materials and craft in key categories, a strong sense of origin and place and highly physical experiences such as runway shows in real landscapes and carefully designed stores. The experts describe substance in similar terms: quality, feasibility, heritage and lived brand values. GenAI can support these elements by making them more visible and easier to explain, but it cannot replace them.

The alignment layer emerges as the critical zone where tensions become visible. When AI-driven symbolic output continues to point back to real products, locations and processes, symbol and substance reinforce each other and GenAI strengthens the overall brand experience. When symbolic production scales faster than transparency, quality assurance and substantive development, a gap opens. The thesis describes these moments as perceptual red lines, where consumers start to question whether images, promises and reality still match. In this sense, the thesis concludes that GenAI does not make luxury more flexible; it makes discipline around authorship, coherence and substance more necessary and reinforces the strict logic of the luxury fashion business model.

For management in luxury fashion, the findings suggest clear guardrails rather than a fixed recipe. Before GenAI is scaled, brands need a sharp understanding of their DNA, visual codes and no-go areas so that AI-supported content can be steered instead of becoming generic. Creative directors and brand leaders remain central reference points for taste, selection and responsibility. GenAI should be positioned as a supporting tool, not as a substitute. It can add value when it helps to translate substance into experience, for example by visualising craft, making materials and origin more tangible or tailoring stories to specific clients. At the same time, AI-generated content in visible brand touchpoints should clearly remain in the minority. Luxury continues to depend on curation, selected moments and recognisably human-made experiences.

The thesis has several limitations. It focuses on a single luxury fashion house in a specific segment and draws on a limited number of mainly Europe-based experts. The qualitative design offers depth but ties the interpretation to the researcher's reading. The empirical work also reflects a specific moment in time in which GenAI tools, governance and regulation are still evolving. These boundaries open avenues for future research, including comparative case studies of different luxury archetypes, consumer studies on the perception of AI-based campaigns and personalisation, and organisational research on how creative and marketing teams reorganise their workflows around GenAI.

Overall, the thesis shows that the key question for luxury fashion is not whether GenAI is used, but how. GenAI can make brand worlds richer, more emotional and more individual, but its long-term value depends on human creativity, cultural sensitivity and a credible material base clearly remaining in the foreground, with AI used consciously, selectively and under strong strategic control.

Preface and Acknowledgements

This dissertation marks the completion of my Master's studies and has allowed me to deepen my knowledge and enthusiasm for strategic marketing and the luxury fashion industry. Within the MSc in Management with Specialization in Strategic Marketing at Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics, I have become particularly interested in how brands build desire, authenticity and exclusivity in a rapidly changing technological environment.

As Generative Artificial Intelligence becomes more present across creative and commercial processes, luxury brands face the challenge of embracing new possibilities without losing their symbolic depth and material substance. This tension has fascinated me and motivated me to explore how GenAI affects brand experience, authenticity and exclusivity in luxury fashion. The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to a better understanding of the conditions under which GenAI can strengthen existing brand worlds and where clear boundaries are needed to preserve what makes luxury distinctive.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Rita Torres Baptista. Her expertise, thoughtful feedback and continuous support have been central to the development of this work. I am also deeply grateful to all interview partners from practice who generously shared their time and insights and thus provided valuable perspectives for this study. Finally, I thank my family and friends for their constant encouragement, patience and belief in me throughout the Master's programme, especially during the intensive final phase of this dissertation.

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List of Abbreviations

AI – Artificial Intelligence

CGI – Computer-Generated Imagery

CRM – Customer-Relationship-Management

EU – European Union

GenAI – Generative Artificial Intelligence

GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation

P – Participant

ROI – Return on Investment

1. Introduction

1.1 Context and relevance: GenAI in luxury fashion

The fashion industry is undergoing a visible transformation as Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) enters creative and communicative processes. Luxury fashion houses are no longer using AI only for backstage optimisation; they increasingly experiment with GenAI in design exploration, image production and storytelling, while trying to protect the symbolic depth, craftsmanship and emotional resonance that distinguish luxury from mainstream fashion (Kok, 2025).

Recent examples such as Gucci's Fall/Winter 2025 campaign led by independent creative director Sybille de Saint Louvent illustrate this shift: GenAI is treated as a creative partner in visual exploration rather than merely an efficiency tool (Bain, 2025). These developments concentrate a central strategic question: how can GenAI be integrated into luxury fashion without weakening a tightly codified business model that rests on authorship, substance and symbolic coherence?

This dissertation addresses that question by examining how GenAI interacts with the creative and cultural dimensions of luxury fashion and under which conditions technology can strengthen, rather than erode, the foundations of luxury value.

1.2 Luxury as an indivisible construct: symbol and substance

Luxury can be understood as an indivisible system that integrates products, brands and communication into one coherent world of meaning (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Material substance – craftsmanship, origin, quality and production integrity – must remain aligned with symbolic expression – storytelling, codes, spatial staging and cultural references. When this alignment holds, communication is not a secondary layer but becomes part of the product itself. When it breaks, authenticity, legitimacy and emotional power weaken.

GenAI challenges this coherence because it can dramatically expand symbolic output while raising questions about how far these new expressions still reflect the brand's material reality. The core concern is therefore not whether AI can generate images, but whether it can do so without loosening the connection between symbol and substance.

1.3 Research problem and objective

Luxury fashion is built on a balance between material excellence and emotional meaning (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012; Dion & Arnould, 2011). Craftsmanship, originality and exceptional materials provide substantive depth, while desire, identity and cultural resonance emerge through codes, narratives and creative vision.

GenAI introduces a new tension into this system. On the one hand, it enables new image worlds, rapid visual iteration and emotionally engaging narratives (Davenport et al., 2019). On the other, symbolic expression can expand so quickly that it risks drifting away from craftsmanship and production realities, potentially weakening authenticity, aura and perceived value (Pantano, 2024). This tension is particularly acute in luxury fashion, where fast creative cycles and visually driven identities make symbolic production central to value creation.

This dissertation therefore examines GenAI as a potential form of cultural intelligence that can support creative leaders in interpreting cultural shifts, enriching symbolic codes and intensifying desire – but only if authorship and substance remain clearly in control. It focuses on three guiding questions:

- How can GenAI amplify emotion, magic and desire without feeling artificial?
- How can it extend the designer’s vision without diluting creative authorship?
- How can it support innovation while preserving the material and symbolic foundations of luxury?

The core assumption is that luxury remains authentic when technology supports, rather than replaces, the principles of substance, authorship and symbolic coherence.

1.4 Research question and working hypothesis

Research question

How is Generative AI transforming brand experience and personalisation in the luxury fashion industry, and under which conditions does this transformation remain compatible with authenticity and substantive brand foundations?

Working hypothesis

GenAI can generate cultural and creative value for luxury fashion when its use remains human-led, culturally informed and anchored in substantive depth. Under these conditions, AI can enrich symbolic expressions, surface aesthetic patterns and support narrative development.

When these boundaries are not respected, GenAI risks weakening the alignment between symbol and substance and undermining emotional depth and exclusivity.

1.5 Scope and delimitations

This dissertation focuses on luxury fashion houses in which creative direction, visual staging and cultural positioning are central to value creation. It examines GenAI primarily in campaign work and visual communication and concentrates on how AI influences brand expression, perceptions of authenticity and the emotional experience of luxury. Given the emerging nature of the field, the study adopts an exploratory, theory-building design. The goal is to clarify key relationships rather than to produce statistically representative findings.

Jacquemus is selected as the focal case because of its strong creative authorship, distinctive visual codes and pronounced digital fluency. These characteristics make the house a particularly suitable context for analysing how GenAI can support – or strain – the interplay between symbolic expression, material substance, desire and authorship in luxury fashion.

1.6 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of seven chapters that together examine how GenAI reshapes creativity, desire, and authenticity in luxury fashion.

Chapter 1 introduces the research field, problem statement, research question, working hypothesis, scope and methodological positioning.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on luxury fundamentals, desire, authorship and GenAI in marketing and creativity and identifies the conceptual gap this study addresses.

Chapter 3 develops the conceptual framework, structured around three analytical lenses – desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment – with cultural intelligence as a cross-cutting perspective.

Chapter 4 outlines the qualitative research design, including the Jacquemus case selection, expert sampling and analytical procedures.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical findings from the case study and expert interviews, organised by the three lenses.

Chapter 6 discusses the findings in light of the framework and situates the results within luxury strategy and AI literature.

Chapter 7 concludes by answering the research question, clarifying academic and managerial contributions, and outlining limitations and future research directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Luxury fundamentals: material excellence and symbolic meaning

Luxury fashion creates value by bringing material excellence and symbolic meaning together in one integrated system. Products, brands and communication do not exist as separate layers, but form a coherent whole that consumers experience as a complete world (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Luxury is therefore not just a premium extension of mainstream fashion, where competition focuses mainly on performance. Instead, it combines heritage, craftsmanship, controlled accessibility and symbolic depth, with products that sustain dreams more than they solve functional problems and that embody a specific universe of meaning (Kapferer, 2015; Kapferer & Bastien, 2025).

Authenticity grows out of how convincingly this universe is anchored in substance. Research points to signals such as heritage, stylistic consistency, distinctive production methods, provenance and a visible distance from purely commercial motives as central cues of authenticity (Beverland, 2006).

Perceived brand authenticity can be described through continuity, credibility, integrity and symbolism, supported by indexical cues like craft and origin, iconic cues like coherent visual codes and existential cues that allow for self-expression (Morhart et al., 2015). In luxury fashion, ateliers, fabrics, origin labels and characteristic design signatures operate as such evidence that the brand world has a real material base.

At the same time, luxury brands function as dense semiotic systems. Silhouettes, materials, colours, logos, runways, boutiques and campaigns together form a structured language of signs through which brand worlds are built and interpreted (Semprini, 1995). Communication and staging are therefore not simple

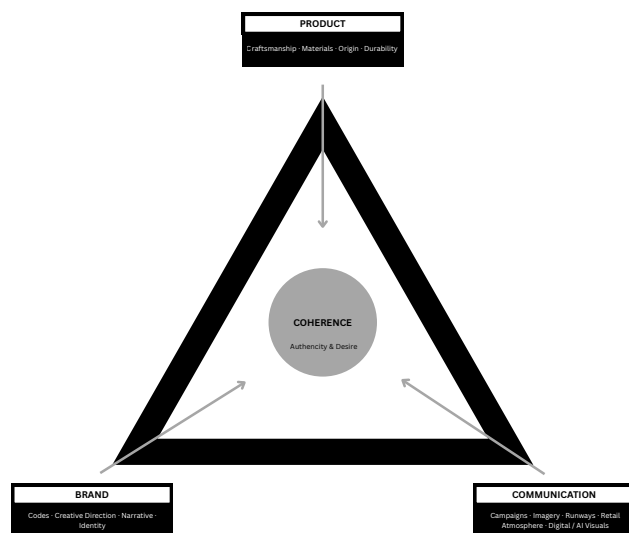


Figure 1: Integrated luxury value system: coherence between product, brand and communication as the basis of authenticity and desire.

wrappers around finished products but contribute directly to value, because they shape how products are understood, felt and desired (Dion & Arnould, 2011). Industry reports indicate that this symbolic system is under pressure from softer macroeconomic conditions, growing price sensitivity and new digital behaviours and markets (Vogue Business & IBM, 2025; Vogue College of Fashion, 2025). Luxury brands are expected to accelerate digital innovation and experiment with AI-enabled experiences while still keeping the connection between symbol and substance intact, since this coherence remains fundamental for legitimacy.

2.2 Desire as the aim of luxury

Desire sits at the heart of luxury. Luxury brands generate value primarily by creating emotional and symbolic attraction rather than by offering superior functional performance (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Beverland, 2006). Desire emerges when luxury objects function as cultural symbols that connect craftsmanship, creativity and identity (Dion & Arnould, 2011). Luxury value can be described through five perceptual dimensions – conspicuousness, uniqueness, perceived quality, hedonism and the extended self – which together show how desire arises from the interplay of symbolic and sensorial cues rather than from scarcity alone (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). As markets mature and prices rise, this desire economy becomes more fragile. Consumers increasingly question whether symbolic premiums feel justified, while dupes, resale and social commerce provide access to luxury aesthetics without direct engagement with the original brand (Vogue Business & IBM, 2025). This situation creates a paradox: brands must combine selection rooted in craft, control and rarity with seduction driven by emotional appeal, cultural relevance and prestige (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016).

The rise of quiet luxury exemplifies this recalibration. Distinction is communicated through minimalism, materials and cut rather than overt logos, and recognition becomes a function of connoisseurship and insider knowledge (Fastoso, 2024; FashionUnited/DPA, 2024). From a semiotic perspective, desire can thus be understood as a system of seduction in which aesthetic codes, rituals and narratives invite consumers into an imagined world (Semprini, 1992). Desire endures when brands keep a dialogue between heritage and modernity and maintain an element of mystery while staying culturally attuned.

In summary, desire in luxury fashion emerges when symbolic richness and substantive credibility are tightly connected. Emotional and social appeal depend on how convincingly craftsmanship, quality and creative control support the brand's universe. This link leads directly

to authorship: for desire to remain credible over time, it must be anchored in a stable creative voice.

2.3 Authorship and creative direction as value drivers

Creative direction is the mechanism through which luxury fashion brands maintain coherence between past and present, substance and symbol. Authorship refers to a recognisable creative and ethical signature that shapes how a brand looks, feels and behaves over time.

Brand credibility is strongest when heritage, craftsmanship, stylistic coherence and clearly articulated values reinforce one another (Beverland, 2006; Morhart et al., 2015). A clear creative vision provides continuity, a coherent design language and non-opportunistic behaviour build trust, and symbolic depth allows consumers to express parts of their identity through the brand. In this sense, strong brands act as cultural producers: they pick up on social tensions and translate them into narratives that feel emotionally relevant to their audiences (Holt, 2002; 2004).

In luxury fashion, the creative director curates the visual and narrative signs that link products, communication and experience into one world. Authorship thus operates as both artistic and moral compass: it signals that a real person or team stands behind aesthetic choices and that these choices are guided by more than short-term commercial optimisation. Desirability becomes durable when creative expression remains aligned with substantive foundations – when imagery is supported by craftsmanship, provenance and quality. A creative signature is only trusted when it rests on real material integrity, which makes it necessary to examine the substantive layer that supports authorship and the conditions under which both remain aligned.

2.4 GenAI in marketing and creativity: opportunities, risks and governance

GenAI adds a new dimension to how brands plan, communicate and create. In marketing, AI has so far been used mainly to support analytical and operational work such as automation, decision support and large-scale personalisation (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018; Davenport et al., 2019; Huang & Rust, 2018). Typical applications include predictive models, programmatic media buying and next-best-offer systems, often embedded in cross-functional data teams. In this perspective, AI takes over clearly defined tasks, while people remain responsible for intuition, cultural understanding and strategic judgement.

For luxury fashion, the creative side of this development is equally important. In the creativity literature, creative work is often described as valuable when it either fits convincingly into an existing creative space or gently expands and transforms that space (Boden, 2003; 2018). From this angle, AI-generated visuals can appear striking at first glance, but still feel shallow if they are not rooted in brand codes, heritage and a recognisable aesthetic language. Discussions in computational creativity add another layer: creative systems are expected not only to generate content, but also to situate and evaluate it within a meaningful frame (Colton & Wiggins, 2012). Without intention, internal criteria and cultural positioning, GenAI remains a fast production tool rather than a creative voice in its own right.

Experiences from luxury design practice indicate that GenAI can accelerate concept development and visual exploration when it is guided by clear aesthetic references, brand guidelines and a defined point of view (Pantano, 2024). At the same time, broad access to similar models creates structural risks. Image worlds can start to look interchangeable, aesthetics may become more generic and brand distinctiveness can weaken if AI is used without a strong creative hand (Pantano, 2024). These dynamics make governance a central theme for luxury houses. Effective use of GenAI requires human oversight, brand-specific training material and carefully defined internal criteria for judging whether AI-generated content truly fits the brand's heritage, codes and creative intention. In such a set-up, GenAI acts as an ideation accelerator and executional support, while authorship and substantive depth remain clearly anchored in human teams.

2.5 Gap synthesis and theoretical positioning

Across management and marketing discussions, GenAI is still largely described as an operational enabler that improves efficiency, scalability and personalisation (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018; Davenport et al., 2019; Huang & Rust, 2018). Work on creativity and computational creativity, in contrast, underlines that the act of generating content alone does not yet constitute creativity; intention, evaluation and cultural context are treated as essential elements (Boden, 2003; 2018; Colton & Wiggins, 2012). Insights from luxury fashion further point to a tension: AI can imitate the surface of a brand's visual world, but differentiation quickly erodes when outputs are easily replicated and not firmly anchored in strong human authorship (Pantano, 2024).

Together, these strands of literature leave an important conceptual gap. Luxury fashion is built on symbolic value, aesthetic expression and cultural interpretation, yet most GenAI research

pays limited attention to how AI interacts with these deeper layers of meaning. AI is rarely considered as part of the symbolic or cultural side of the brand, and its influence on desire, authorship and the alignment between symbol and substance remains only partially understood. This dissertation responds to that gap by treating GenAI as a potential form of cultural intelligence within luxury fashion: a technology that can support creative exploration, surface aesthetic patterns and enrich symbolic storytelling – but only when it is clearly guided by human leadership and carefully situated within an existing brand world.

2.6 Conceptual lenses for this study

To operationalise this positioning, the study uses three analytical lenses:

1. **Desire** – the emotional and social attraction that turns luxury fashion into something aspirational rather than purely functional, structured by dimensions such as uniqueness, hedonism, conspicuousness, perceived quality and extended self (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; 2004).
2. **Authorship** – the presence of a recognisable creative and ethical signature that provides continuity, credibility, integrity and symbolic depth (Beverland, 2006; Morhart et al., 2015; Holt, 2004).
3. **Symbol–Substance Alignment** – the degree of fit between symbolic expression and the material and procedural foundations that legitimise it (craftsmanship, quality, origin, production integrity, retail staging).

Cultural intelligence functions as a cross-cutting perspective. It captures the ability to interpret and mobilise cultural codes with sensitivity and contextual awareness and is used to assess how far GenAI-supported outputs remain culturally specific and brand-coherent.

A brief note on **category specificity** clarifies why luxury fashion requires this particular combination of lenses. Fashion operates with short creative cycles, high symbolic intensity and performative retail environments; designers act as cultural interpreters who continually reconcile heritage with reinvention (Kapferer, 2015; Dion & Arnould, 2011). This makes the balance between desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment especially fragile and relevant for GenAI integration.

These lenses structure both the conceptual framework in Chapter 3 and the empirical analysis of the Jacquemus case and expert interviews.

3. Conceptual Framing

3.1 Working definitions

This chapter translates the literature review into an analytical vocabulary for the empirical work. It defines the three lenses – desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment – and the cross-cutting perspective of cultural intelligence. The aim is not to develop new theory, but to synthesise existing insights into working definitions that fit the focus of this dissertation.

3.1.1 Desire

Desire is the emotional and symbolic pull that turns luxury fashion into something aspirational rather than merely functional. It captures how products and brand worlds create fascination through aesthetic intensity, emotional response and social meaning. This thesis understands desire as shaped by perceptions of uniqueness, pleasure, visible status, perceived quality and the way a brand becomes part of one’s sense of self (Vigneron & Johnson, 1999; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). These dimensions show that desirability rests mainly on symbolic and sensorial cues rather than on practical utility. Research on global luxury markets suggests that emotional privilege and cultural relevance have become more important than physical scarcity alone (Kapferer & Valette-Florence, 2016). Early work on AI-assisted design indicates that desire can remain intact when GenAI supports parts of the creative process, as long as the resulting expression stays clearly anchored in brand identity and symbolic depth (Pantano et al., 2024). What matters is less the tool itself than whether the outcome is recognised as belonging to the brand’s world. In this thesis, desire is therefore understood as a durable form of attraction that arises when rarity, aesthetic coherence and symbolic meaning come together in a way that feels both aspirational and credible.

3.1.2 Authorship

Authorship denotes the presence of a recognisable creative and ethical signature that guides a luxury brand’s aesthetic and cultural direction. It goes beyond the name of a designer and reflects the perception that a coherent human mind and hand stand behind creative choices.

Artistically, authorship implies a consistent creative vision that shapes codes, forms and narratives over time. Brands appear authored when collections, imagery and experiences articulate a stable and original world rather than isolated trends (Holt, 2004; Morhart et al., 2015). Ethically, authorship is linked to integrity: consumers trust brands whose behaviour

aligns with their stated values and whose creative output appears driven by more than opportunistic motives (Beverland, 2006).

The rise of GenAI makes this signature more, not less, important. Creative teams worry about authorship being diluted when AI-generated imagery is not clearly framed and curated, while early examples of AI-assisted campaigns show that AI can be integrated without erasing authorship when conceptual direction, prompting and evaluation remain human-led.

In this thesis, authorship is understood as the combination of creative vision and ethical coherence that positions a luxury fashion house as a cultural producer. It is visible in consistent codes, continuity of style, meaningful references to heritage and a clear stance on purpose and responsibility. GenAI is evaluated against whether it supports or blurs this signature.

3.1.3 Symbol–substance alignment

Symbol–substance alignment captures the relationship between a brand’s symbolic expressions and the material and procedural foundations that legitimise them. It asks whether stories, imagery, pricing and positioning are credibly supported by craftsmanship, material quality, origin and long-term quality commitments.

Luxury depends on exceptional human skill and meaningful production practises. Craftsmanship, artisanal know-how and place-based provenance give physical credibility to the aesthetic and symbolic world a brand presents (Kapferer, 2015; Kapferer & Bastien, 2025). Longevity and repairability further reinforce the perception that products carry meaning over time. Retail environments translate this alignment into experience through material cues, spatial design and service rituals (Dion & Arnould, 2011).

GenAI changes the stakes of this alignment. As AI-generated aesthetics become more accessible, surface-level novelty loses its power to differentiate. Authentic luxury increasingly relies on elements that GenAI cannot replicate: embodied expertise, material depth and verifiable production integrity (Pantano et al., 2024). When symbolic output scales faster than substantive reality, authenticity and trust come under pressure.

In this thesis, symbol–substance alignment is defined as the degree of fit between symbolic output and the material and procedural base that underpins it. The lens is operationalised through indicators such as craftsmanship, origin cues, quality signals, pricing logic, retail staging and narrative continuity, making it possible to observe both successful alignment and emerging fractures.

3.1.4 Cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence refers to the ability to understand, interpret and mobilise cultural codes with nuance and contextual awareness. In luxury fashion, it is expressed in how creative leaders and organisations engage with art, heritage and contemporary culture to produce work that feels both rooted and relevant.

GenAI does not possess cultural intelligence on its own. Studies show that AI-generated outputs are perceived as aligned with a brand's essence only when prompts and training material are grounded in specific aesthetic and cultural cues (Pantano et al., 2024). Practitioners therefore rely on detailed prompt engineering that encodes brand world, mood and intention before any image is produced. The model can suggest variations, but cultural judgement remains human. In this dissertation, cultural intelligence is treated as a cross-cutting perspective rather than a separate lens. It informs how desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment are assessed in GenAI-enabled processes by highlighting whether outputs respect brand codes, heritage and context.

3.2 Integrated analytic schema: where and how GenAI acts

This section brings together the working definitions from Section 3.1 in a single analytic schema. It introduces a three-layer model that clarifies where GenAI exerts the strongest influence, where its role remains indirect, and where alignment mechanisms become essential for maintaining authenticity, authorship and symbolic depth in luxury fashion.

3.2.1 Three-layer model

To locate GenAI within the luxury fashion value system, this thesis uses a three-layer model:

- The **Symbolic layer** - where desire, authorship and cultural meaning are constructed through aesthetic codes, narratives and experiences.
- The **Substantive layer** - where craftsmanship, materials, origin and production practises anchor these symbolic expressions in physical reality.
- The **Alignment layer** - where symbol–substance alignment and cultural intelligence ensure that both dimensions reinforce one another rather than diverge.

GenAI primarily operates in the symbolic layer, supports parts of the substantive layer indirectly and is constrained by the alignment layer, which secures authenticity and trust.

3.2.2 Symbolic layer: domain of strongest GenAI influence

In the symbolic layer, GenAI is most visible. Luxury brands use it for campaign concepts, content variations, virtual experiences and early-stage visual exploration. GenAI enables rapid production of stylistic variations and mood concepts, especially when prompts encode clear brand codes and aesthetics.

At the same time, these capabilities introduce structural risks. Without strong human framing, GenAI can produce idealised bodies, generic aesthetics or motifs that superficially resemble luxury without belonging to any specific brand world. Symbolic value weakens when AI-generated visuals detach from craftsmanship, origin or distinct creative direction. GenAI thus amplifies symbolic production but does not understand meaning; its outputs depend on human authorship for coherence and depth.

3.2.3 Substantive layer: indirect and infrastructural roles

In the substantive layer, GenAI plays mainly an indirect role. AI-based systems support merchandising decisions, forecasting, supply-chain optimisation and digital prototyping. These applications improve efficiency and can contribute to sustainability goals, for example by reducing waste through virtual sampling. Yet they do not generate substantive value in the sense of craft, material mastery or place-based production expertise.

Consumers accept GenAI involvement in luxury design only when they assume that human craftsmanship and material quality remain intact (Pantano et al., 2024). As a result, GenAI is structurally limited to supporting the substantive layer; it cannot substitute the artisan and material foundations on which luxury value rests.

3.2.4 Alignment mechanisms: where authenticity is secured

The alignment layer determines whether GenAI strengthens or weakens luxury value. Three mechanisms are central:

1.Symbol–substance alignment - AI-supported imagery must remain consistent with what the brand can substantively deliver. If GenAI produces exaggerated or implausible representations that are not backed by craft, origin or quality, credibility erodes.

2.Cultural intelligence - prompts, reference material and evaluation criteria need to reflect the brand’s cultural world. Without this, GenAI outputs risk being culturally generic or insensitive.

3.Human authorship - the creative director or leadership team defines the conceptual frame, decides where GenAI is appropriate and retains final authority over what is released.

In this schema, the human creative director is positioned as the integrative anchor. They span symbolic and substantive layers, apply cultural intelligence and maintain the brand’s creative and ethical signature. GenAI can extend their reach but does not replace their role.

3.2.5 Visual model: positioning GenAI within the luxury value system

To understand how GenAI sits within the luxury fashion value system, the model can be imagined as two stacked layers connected by a middle band. The upper, symbolic layer is where desire, authorship and cultural meaning are created through images, stories and experiences. Beneath it lies the substantive layer, where craftsmanship, materials, origin and production practices give these symbols real weight. Between both sits an alignment layer that holds symbol–substance alignment and cultural intelligence: it ensures that what a brand shows and promises remains believable, coherent and culturally attuned. GenAI is positioned mainly in the symbolic layer, with dotted links to the substantive layer where it can support operations and prototyping. Any acceleration of symbolic output must pass through the alignment layer to remain authentic and trustworthy. The human creative director acts as the anchor across all three parts of the model, deciding how and where GenAI is used so that technology deepens, rather than dilutes, the brand’s world.

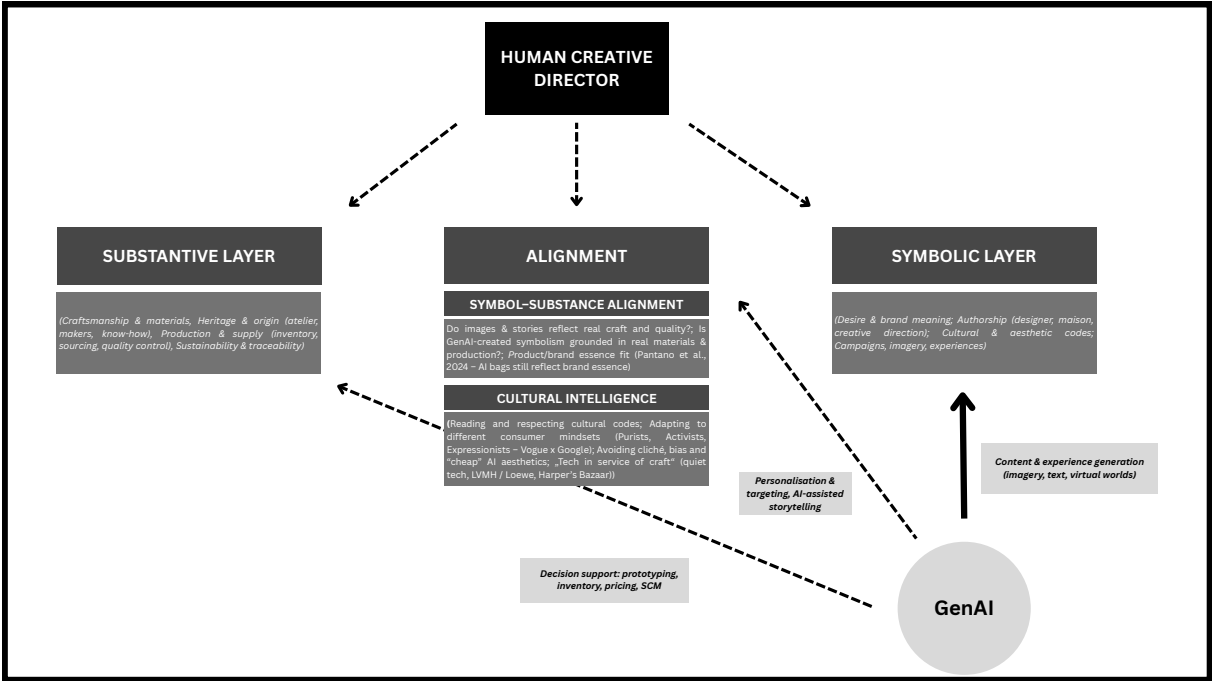


Figure 2: Visual model positioning GenAI within the luxury value system and its interaction with the substantive, alignment and symbolic layers. Source: Own illustration.

3.3 Propositions guiding the empirical work

Based on this schema, the empirical analysis is guided by three propositions:

Proposition 1 - *Human-led, culturally informed GenAI as enabler of symbolic value:*

When GenAI is deployed in a human-led and culturally informed manner, it enhances symbolic value creation by expanding expressive and experiential possibilities while staying coherent with the brand's world.

Proposition 2 - *Signature retention as a condition for authenticity:*

GenAI-generated outputs are perceived as credible and authentic only when they retain a recognisable creative signature that aligns with the brand's established aesthetic, narrative and ethical codes.

Proposition 3 - *Red lines and corrective intervention:*

When GenAI-generated outputs diverge from substantive authenticity or cultural intelligence, luxury brands encounter perceptual red lines that activate the alignment layer and require human corrective intervention to re-establish consistency between symbolic expression and material reality.

These propositions structure the analysis of the Jacquemus case and expert interviews in Chapter 5 and form the basis for the discussion in Chapter 6.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study follows a qualitative, exploratory research design that combines a single-case study with semi-structured expert interviews. The design is anchored in the conceptual framework developed in Chapter 3, which examines GenAI in luxury fashion through three lenses: desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment. These lenses guided sampling, data collection and analysis.

The single-case study provides in-depth insight into how GenAI operates within one clearly authored luxury fashion universe. Jacquemus was selected not for statistical representativeness but because its strong creative authorship, clear visual codes and visible digital experimentation

make it a particularly suitable context in which to study how GenAI interacts with symbolic meaning and brand identity.

The case study is complemented by expert interviews with practitioners working across luxury marketing, creative direction and digital innovation. Their perspectives contextualise the Jacquemus-specific observations within broader luxury fashion practices and industry-wide debates about GenAI. Together, case material and interviews enable triangulation between internal brand meaning, external expert evaluation and the three lenses.

The overall goal is to build conceptual understanding rather than to test predefined hypotheses. The study follows the logic of analytical, not statistical, generalisation in the sense of Yin (2018): the findings are meant to illuminate how GenAI interacts with the symbolic and substantive layers of the luxury fashion business model under conditions of strong creative authorship.

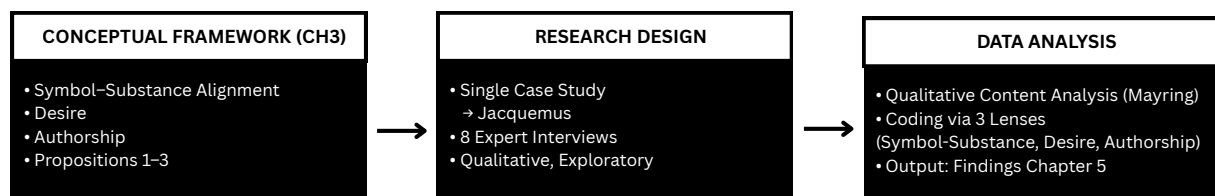


Figure 3: Research design overview: connection between conceptual framework, case study and expert interviews. Source: Own illustration.

4.2 Case Selection: Jacquemus

Jacquemus was chosen on theoretical grounds as a paradigmatic case of a contemporary, strongly authored luxury fashion house. The brand offers a highly concentrated expression of symbolic value creation, where desire is constructed through a distinct emotional universe, authorship is visibly embodied by a single creative figure, and symbol-substance alignment is actively negotiated. These characteristics map directly onto the three lenses of the framework. The brand world shaped by Simon Porte Jacquemus is marked by a recognisable authorial voice, a coherent Mediterranean visual language and a high degree of digital fluency. Campaigns and shows frequently blend surreal imagery, cultural references and digitally constructed atmospheres, providing rich material for examining how GenAI-generated content fits with - or begins to strain - the existing creative codes and the material foundations of the house.

Empirically, the case corpus covers the period 2023–2025 and includes visual campaign material, AI-related experiments, digital activations and brand communications. These primary observations are complemented by secondary industry sources that contextualise Jacquemus’ GenAI use, signature retention and emerging tensions between symbolic acceleration and substantive authenticity within broader luxury and technology trends.

4.3 Sampling Strategy

To complement the case study, the research includes seven expert interviews with professionals working in or closely connected to luxury fashion. A purposive sampling strategy ensured coverage of four domains linked to the three lenses and the propositions in Chapter 3:

- brand and marketing strategy
- creative direction and design
- communication, content and client experience
- creative technology and digital innovation

These roles directly influence how desire is staged, creative signatures are protected and symbol–substance alignment is managed when GenAI enters workflows. All interviewees have several years of professional experience in luxury or adjacent sectors and were recruited via professional networks, industry contacts and targeted outreach. The sample thus provides multiple practitioner viewpoints for evaluating the three propositions.

4.4 Data Collection

Data collection draws on three complementary sources, each structured around the three lenses and the propositions introduced in Chapter 3:

1. Expert Interviews: Semi-structured interviews of around 45 minutes were conducted with each participant, using a guide informed by desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment. Questions addressed human-led and culturally informed GenAI, signature retention and moments where symbolic acceleration risks crossing perceptual red lines. Interviews were held via video call, recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

2. Jacquemus Case Study: The Jacquemus data set comprises visual and textual materials such as campaign imagery, short films, social media content, website texts and press releases from

2023–2025. Visual material was examined through semiotic reading and translated into analytical memos before being integrated into the coding system.

3.Secondary industry material: Secondary material from established industry publications (e.g. Vogue Business, The Business of Fashion, Forbes) provides contextual information on contemporary luxury strategies, GenAI adoption and debates around creativity, authorship and authenticity, and serves primarily as background and triangulation.

All procedures followed established ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, and data were pseudonymised and securely stored in line with GDPR requirements.

4.5 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2015). A deductive category system was first derived from the three lenses - desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment - and from the three propositions on human-led and culturally informed GenAI, signature retention and perceptual red lines. These categories were applied across all interview transcripts, Jacquemus materials and secondary sources.

In a second step, the system was refined inductively wherever recurrent themes emerged that were not fully captured by the initial categories, such as concerns about “algorithmic sameness” or the renewed value of analogue experiences. New subcodes were retained only when they could be consistently related back to the overarching conceptual logic.

Visual materials were analysed through semiotic interpretation and then coded within the same category system as the textual data, enabling triangulation between what brands do, what experts say and how GenAI-supported imagery operates at the level of meaning. Qualitative data management software supported the organisation and traceability of coding decisions.

4.6 Transfer Note: Analytical Generalisation

The findings of this study are analytically, rather than statistically, generalised. Following Yin’s logic of analytical generalisation, the Jacquemus case is treated as a well-theorised instance from which propositions can be extended to other luxury fashion houses with dense symbolic universes, strong authorship and a business model that depends on credible symbol–substance alignment. In this sense, the methodology is designed to support the broader theoretical

argument of the thesis: GenAI can be integrated into the luxury fashion business model in ways that reinforce, rather than redefine, its underlying logic.

5. Findings

5.1 Introduction to the Findings

This chapter presents the empirical findings from the Jacquemus case study and the seven expert interviews. The results are organised through the three conceptual lenses developed in Chapter 3 - desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment - which also structure the three propositions on human-led and culturally informed GenAI, signature retention and perceptual red lines in the alignment layer.

Across all data, a clear pattern emerges: GenAI can strengthen symbolic value and intensify desire, but only when its use remains anchored in a coherent creative signature, strong human authorship and credible substance. Misalignment becomes visible as soon as AI-generated expressions appear aesthetically generic, culturally ungrounded or detached from the material realities of production, place and product.

5.2 Jacquemus Case Study

This section examines Jacquemus as a contemporary, strongly authored luxury fashion house in which the three lenses from Chapter 3 become clearly visible: desire is built through a tightly defined emotional universe, authorship is embodied in a visible creative lead, and symbol–substance alignment is continuously negotiated. In this context, the integration of GenAI allows us to observe how symbolic acceleration can reinforce – rather than weaken – an existing luxury fashion business model.

5.2.1 Brand World and Symbolic Positioning

Founded in 2009 by Simon Porte Jacquemus, the brand has evolved into one of the most influential independent luxury fashion houses. Its universe is built around a deeply personal narrative, rooted in the designer’s Southern French upbringing and in a broader “French way of life” that integrates photography, cinema, sculpture and the decorative arts. This cultural grounding shapes the mood, tone and emotional resonance of the brand.

Jacquemus constructs desire primarily through **atmosphere and emotion** rather than detailed product communication. Mediterranean landscapes, warm light, minimal yet expressive

silhouettes and a poetic visual language create a recognisable emotional world. Site-specific runway shows in lavender and wheat fields, salt marshes, Hawaiian beaches or at Versailles function as immersive cultural events that translate this universe into walkable experiences and generate highly shareable moments.

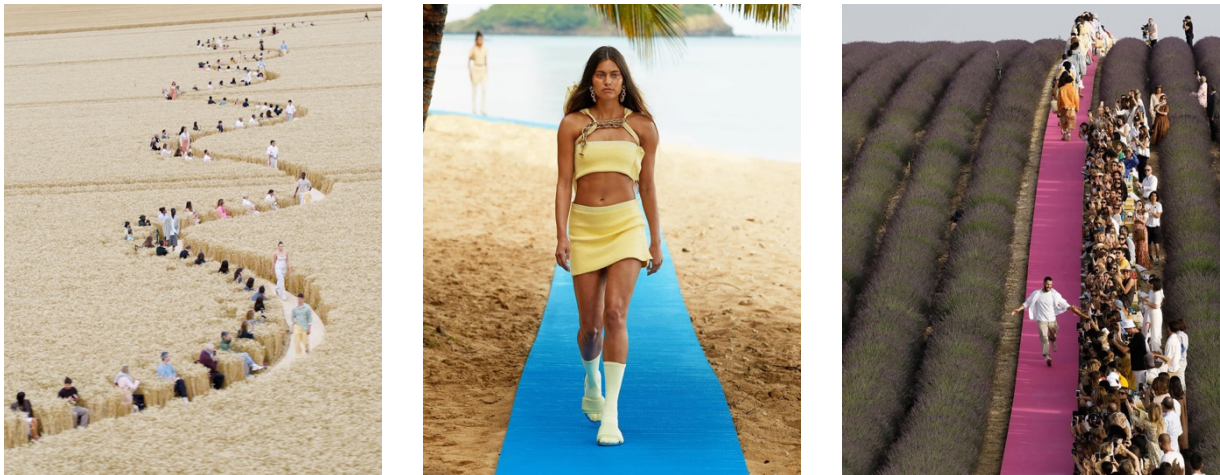


Figure 4: Jacquemus site-specific runway shows: wheat field outside Paris, beach runway in Hawaii, and lavender field in Provence. Source: Jacquemus (@jacquemus), Instagram.

Commercially, the brand has grown rapidly, supported by a strong accessories segment and a global retail rollout, including its flagship on Avenue Montaigne in Paris. Communication reinforces the sense of intimacy and accessibility: Simon Porte Jacquemus uses social media as an extension of the brand's emotional world and as a personal channel, linking his life to the brand's trajectory.

Taken together, Jacquemus occupies a symbolic position that combines artistic authorship, emotional narrative and accessible luxury.

5.2.2 Desire and Emotional Universe

Jacquemus generates desire by staging a coherent emotional universe built around escapism, intimacy and aesthetic clarity. The brand's visual language is consistently associated with Mediterranean simplicity and warmth, which younger consumers experience as both aspirational and relatable. Desire emerges from mood and narrative rather than from functional attributes.

A key mechanism is the translation of deeply personal stories into a collective sense of longing. References to childhood in Provence, family ties and everyday situations, communicated via interviews and social media, create tangible, human emotions instead of abstract markers of

status. This supports parasocial relationships in which followers feel they are engaging with a person as much as with a brand.

The brand's imagery repeatedly uses everyday objects and exaggerated forms - bread, lemons, fruit, ultra-small bags, oversized hats - to connect luxury with humour and daily life. AI-based content (for example surreal sequences of lemons or bags embedded in idealised landscapes) extends this logic by linking technological experimentation with familiar sensory cues and by reinforcing an aesthetic of lightness and play.

At the same time, this model depends structurally on **high frequency and continuous visibility**, especially on social media. Symbolic acceleration, further amplified by GenAI, raises the risk that communication tips into pure spectacle and drifts away from the material foundations of the brand.

5.2.3 Authorship and Creative Signature

Simon Porte Jacquemus represents a highly visible and central form of authorship. As founder, creative director and public figure, he embodies the brand's creative and strategic direction. The house is perceived not as an anonymous corporate entity but as the extension of a personal life project.

Three aspects stand out:

1. Continuous personal presence

The designer remains prominently present in communication, from social media captions and behind-the-scenes content to glimpses into his private life. Audiences feel they are following both a brand and a person.

2. Strong creative control

Despite rapid growth, he maintains close involvement in design decisions, campaign imagery, show formats and store architecture. The aesthetic coherence of the brand is thus directly linked to his decisions and visual preferences.

3. Biographical anchoring

His Southern French upbringing, family relationships and early DIY beginnings are repeatedly used as narrative reference points and visibly inform themes and tone.



Figure 5: Simon Porte Jacquemus with his partner in the South of France. Source: Jacquemus (@jacquemus), Instagram, 2023

This pronounced authorship stabilises the creative signature and supports a clear brand identity, but it also increases vulnerability: the brand’s symbolic capital is closely tied to a single individual.

5.2.4 Substance: Materiality, Production, Place and Runway Realism

Although Jacquemus is strongly associated with visuality and symbolic expression, its desirability is anchored in several forms of substance.

At the product level, external assessments emphasise collaborations with Italian and Portuguese manufacturers, comparatively small production series and a high degree of manual work in key categories such as leather goods and tailoring. As the brand scales, typical tensions appear between commercial lines and more craft-driven segments, but craftsmanship remains an important reference point.

Substance is also tied to provenance and place. The Mediterranean heritage that shapes the brand’s imagery is mirrored in retail architecture and material choices: limestone, natural textures and warm palettes translate the landscapes of Provence into store environments. Place thus becomes part of the material evidence that underpins the symbolic world.



Figure 6: „The New York Boutique“. Source: Jacquemus (@jacquemus), Instagram, 2024

Sustainability and transparency form another layer. The geographic proximity between design, sourcing and production supports a perception of control, while incomplete disclosure highlights the work still to be done in order to sustain credibility under closer scrutiny.

Finally, “runway realism” anchors the brand’s dreamscapes in real locations. Shows in lavender fields, wheat landscapes, salt marshes or Versailles function as physical manifestations of the brand universe. They demonstrate that the poetic imagery is rooted in material landscapes and experiences, not in digital construction alone.

Overall, these dimensions show that Jacquemus’ symbolic world sits on a substantive base of materials, production structures and place-based identity - conditions that are crucial for understanding how GenAI can intensify symbolism without fully detaching from reality.

5.2.5 Symbol–Substance Alignment

Jacquemus currently demonstrates a high degree of symbol–substance alignment. The emotional world built around Mediterranean lightness, nostalgia and playful surrealism is supported by strategic and operational choices that lend credibility to the narrative.

On the symbolic side, the brand cultivates a recognisable universe with sun-washed colours, relaxed sensuality and recurring settings in the South of France or other iconic locations. Runway shows, campaigns and pop-ups are designed as extensions of this world rather than as generic luxury spectacles.

On the substantive side, several decisions support this positioning: the choice to remain independent, the dual role of Simon Porte Jacquemus as creative director and CEO, retail spaces that reflect the Southern French aesthetic, a streamlined product offering and early moves towards more responsible materials and production.

At the same time, the alignment is not automatic. The growth model depends on constant visibility across events, collaborations and digital content, which structurally increases the risk that symbolic activity accelerates faster than transparency and substantive documentation.

In this sense, Jacquemus offers both a strong baseline of symbol–substance alignment and an early stress test: GenAI enters an ecosystem where symbolism is dense and substance is present but unevenly documented, making the alignment layer particularly sensitive to how the technology is governed.

5.2.6 GenAI in Jacquemus’ Brand Experience

Jacquemus has embraced GenAI and CGI as visible elements of its public imagery. Across its Instagram feed, the house uses AI-based videos and stills to frame product stories, store openings and seasonal moods. The following subsections analyse this corpus through the lenses of desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment.



Figure 7: Pop-up Store in Seoul. Source: Jacquemus (@jacquemus), Instagram, 2023.

5.2.6.1 GenAI and Desire in Jacquemus' Visual World

GenAI formats build directly on the brand's existing form of desire. Instead of conventional product shots, Jacquemus uses short sequences that transform bags, architecture and landscapes into small visual narratives.

Examples include the "Le Turismo" video, where a bag moves through a stylised workshop landscape, or clips in which oversized bags appear as inflatable installations in the sea, as ice-cream trucks on promenades or as moving silhouettes in Paris. Other sequences show Jacquemus-branded gondolas in snowy mountains or lemons falling over coastal towns.

These images invite viewers into condensed Jacquemus "micro-worlds" of French summers, Mediterranean fantasy, everyday urban scenes and winter holidays. Products often appear as protagonists but sometimes recede behind atmosphere and rhythm. Desire emerges from being momentarily immersed in the universe rather than from explicit arguments about function or price.

A recurrent device is the ambiguity around production methods. Some clips are clearly digital; in others, it remains open whether the scene was physically built, simulated in CGI or generated with AI. This uncertainty fuels fascination and engagement but also marks a potential boundary where symbolic spectacle risks moving too far away from material reality - an issue taken up in the alignment analysis.

5.2.6.2 GenAI and Authorship: Extending, Not Replacing, the Signature

From an authorship perspective, GenAI and CGI do not displace the Jacquemus signature; they extend it. The digital corpus consistently reproduces the established codes: warm light, reduced settings, humorous exaggeration and recurring references to the Mediterranean and everyday scenes.

Captions and communication maintain a strong first-person or intimate "we" voice. Posts are often framed by Simon Porte Jacquemus' own words, mixing English and French and linking even surreal visuals back to biographical milestones, new stores or personal moments. GenAI thus operates within a human-authored narrative, amplifying an already defined voice rather than creating an anonymous machine aesthetic.

Many digital pieces also dialogue with the brand archive. Teasers for new shows echo earlier moods; store-opening clips foreground iconic bag models and colour codes; children's campaigns parallel established silhouettes in playful contexts. GenAI is used to create variations around a stable core, not to reframe the brand.

However, the lack of explicit labelling of AI-generated content raises questions about transparency, particularly where the same imagery references craftsmanship, origin or specific locations. The increased ease and speed of creating new variations also reinforces the tension between almost continuous visibility and luxury’s traditional emphasis on restraint and curation.

5.2.6.3 GenAI, Substance and Symbol–Substance Alignment

The third lens examines how far substance - materiality, production, place and runway realism - remains present within AI-supported imagery.

In many formats, GenAI and CGI are used to translate substance into stylised metaphors rather than to replace it. “Le Turismo” evokes atelier-like machinery, suggesting competence and care, even though the scene is not documentary. Giant bags in Paris or floating installations at sea link dreamlike visuals to recognisable geographies and store openings. Products remain identifiable and connected to current collections, so that symbolic intensification does not fully detach from material goods.



Figure 8: a) bag-shaped ice-cream truck, (b) Le Bambimou installation floating off the French coast, (c) Le Bambino bags rolling through the streets of Paris. Source: Jacquemus (@jacquemus), Instagram, 2023.

At the same time, structural risks are visible. Some sequences focus almost entirely on visual impact, with little reference to craft, provenance or responsibility. Because digital tools make such content comparatively easy to produce, symbolic output can scale faster than investments in transparency, traceability or sustainability. In a sector already under scrutiny for uneven

reporting, an increasing volume of hyper-real AI images without clear context can reinforce perceived gaps between visual promises and lived practice.

A further tension concerns the “is it real or not?” effect. Hybrid content combining real footage, CGI and GenAI can be captivating, but if left entirely opaque, it may gradually undermine trust, especially when brands simultaneously rely on claims of being handcrafted or rooted in specific places.

Jacquemus appears to manage this balance by alternating highly stylised clips with backstage footage, real landscapes and detailed product or store shots. These insertions signal that physical objects and locations still underpin the brand. Overall, the current AI and CGI corpus leans more towards **intensifying** an existing symbol–substance configuration than towards detaching imagery from its material base, while also revealing early pressure points in the alignment layer.

5.2.7 Summary of the Jacquemus Case Study

The Jacquemus case shows how an independent luxury brand constructs desire primarily through a tightly defined symbolic universe of Mediterranean lightness, humour and intimacy, anchored in European production, place-based retail architecture and runway realism. The visible, biographically grounded authorship of Simon Porte Jacquemus ties these elements together and supports a clear creative signature. GenAI and CGI are integrated as extensions of this universe: they amplify desire via short, surreal and sometimes ambiguous scenes while keeping the handwriting recognisable and maintaining references to place, product and retail reality. At the same time, the case reveals early tension points in symbol–substance alignment, where symbolic acceleration risks outpacing transparency and substantive documentation.

5.3 Expert Interview Insights

This section synthesises key patterns from the seven expert interviews. In the main text, excerpts are attributed to EXP-M1, EXP-M2 and EXP-M3 (marketing leaders), EXP-D1 (design), EXP-C1 (film director), EXP-CL1 (clienteling and events) and EXP-AI1 (creative director and AI visualist). The analysis follows the qualitative content analysis described in Chapter 4: the three lenses – desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment – served as deductive categories, with more fine-grained themes developed inductively.

5.3.1 Authenticity, Desire and Contemporary Brand Expression

Across interviews, authenticity is defined as credibility, coherence and emotional relevance rather than perfect “on-trend” styling. For the senior marketing leader in a global fashion house

(EXP-M1), authenticity starts from claims a brand can genuinely uphold and translate into ongoing, culturally resonant conversations. Desire arises when these conversations are entertaining and emotionally engaging rather than purely transactional.

Marketing leaders in e-commerce and premium fashion (EXP-M2, EXP-M3) emphasise that luxury clients want to feel recognised and valued. Desirable communication therefore combines a distinctive tone of voice with visible expertise and clear symbolic anchors, such as Mytheresa's yellow box or RIANI's grounded elegance and female empowerment. Brand expression becomes aspirational when it offers a curated but personal experience instead of generic messaging.

From a clienteling perspective (EXP-CL1), authenticity is linked to "raw and honest" elements and to truly unique experiences in a crowded luxury environment. Heritage and craft still underpin desirability, but long-term private clients expect these qualities to be shown in ways that feel less staged and more genuinely lived. Overall, the interviews support the view that contemporary desire in luxury fashion is constructed primarily in the symbolic layer – coherent emotional worlds, recognisable codes and clear points of view. This mirrors the Jacquemus case and suggests that GenAI intensifies desire only when it amplifies an existing, believable brand universe.

5.3.2 Human Authorship and Creative Signature

All experts underline that human creative authorship remains a non-negotiable anchor, even as GenAI tools become more embedded in everyday work. For EXP-M1, designers, art directors and creative leads decide which ideas are right for the brand, where the line lies between authentic and generic expression and how the brand's personality is articulated across channels. Without this human judgement, brand voice and distinctiveness would quickly erode.

Design leadership (EXP-D1) ties authorship directly to brand DNA and recognisable codes. A strong brand identity is rooted in non-negotiable design characteristics – silhouettes, colour worlds, logo treatment and an overall handwriting – that are protected over time. Authorship means taking a clear stance within these boundaries and privileging long-term coherence over short-term trend following. Marketing and communication leaders in premium and e-commerce contexts (EXP-M2, EXP-M3) add that visible authorship also carries ethical and cultural accountability: when creative directors or brand leads are identifiable, clients can better attribute responsibility for aesthetic, cultural and diversity choices, which supports trust.

The film director (EXP-C1) offers the most sceptical view. He rejects visual GenAI in his own work and insists that knowing when there is "enough paint on the painting" is rooted in

experience, time and emotional investment, not in algorithmic iteration. By contrast, the AI visualist (EXP-AI1) sees GenAI as a powerful instrument that expands what is visually possible but stresses that quality still depends entirely on human ideas, taste and domain knowledge. In his account, the rise of GenAI foregrounds authorship because the centre of gravity shifts more towards concept definition, precise briefing and curatorial decisions. Across perspectives, authorship appears as the key condition for preserving distinctiveness and trust: GenAI may accelerate production and broaden the aesthetic range, but it does not remove the need for a clearly identifiable human signature.

5.3.3 GenAI as Tool: Benefits, Risks and Everyday Use

Across roles, GenAI is described as a working tool woven into everyday routines. Marketing and design leaders (EXP-M1, EXP-M3, EXP-D1) highlight faster idea generation and visual exploration, the ability to test more creative options, efficiency gains in translation, research and summarisation and greater flexibility in adapting content across formats and markets. In their teams, GenAI already supports moodboard creation, campaign pre-visualisations, product imagery adaptations and strategy work by condensing market information for briefs. The Mytheresa expert (EXP-M2) describes similar gains for copy and content production, such as more efficient translation workflows and inspiration for headlines, while the AI visualist (EXP-AI1) emphasises the democratising effect for smaller brands that lack budgets for complex shoots but possess strong ideas.

Alongside these advantages, the interviews converge on a shared risk profile. A first concern is over-reliance: if teams lean too heavily on AI, curiosity, critical reflection and independent judgement may atrophy (EXP-M1, EXP-M2, EXP-M3, EXP-CL1). Second, several experts warn of generic, homogenised aesthetics or “algorithmic sameness” when brands privilege speed and cost over curation and depth (EXP-M1, EXP-D1, EXP-AI1). Third, there is a perceived risk of emotional flattening and loss of personal tone in communication, in high-touch client contexts (EXP-M2, EXP-M3, EXP-CL1, EXP-C1). Finally, interviewees point to legal, ethical and reputational vulnerabilities if AI output is insufficiently checked for cultural fit, factual accuracy and alignment with brand values (EXP-M2, EXP-AI1). Overall, GenAI is viewed as most valuable where it augments established processes, supports exploration and enables scaling and most problematic when it is treated as a shortcut that substitutes human thinking, taste and accountability.

5.3.4 Substance, Craft and Symbol–Substance Alignment

When asked about substance, craft and material reality, interviewees become noticeably cautious. Marketing and design leaders (EXP-M1, EXP-M3, EXP-D1) stress that tailoring expertise, material quality and brand heritage form the non-negotiable core of luxury. GenAI can help tell more compelling stories about these aspects – for example by visualising construction details, structuring layered product narratives or adapting craft-focused stories to different platforms – but it cannot substitute them.

From a clienteling perspective (EXP-CL1), GenAI shows particular potential in personalised explanation: tailor-made content that deconstructs a specific watch or garment for an individual client can deepen appreciation and make craftsmanship more tangible, especially when clients cannot be physically present. Yet core brand codes – logos, shapes, materials and patterns – are described as strict guardrails that must remain intact at visible touchpoints. Design leadership links symbol–substance alignment to technical and material feasibility (EXP-D1). AI-generated garments must still be buildable and consistent with production capabilities; otherwise, the gap between image and product becomes too large and risks undermining trust. For this reason, EXP-D1 frames GenAI as a translation and amplification tool rather than as an autonomous design engine.

The AI visualist echoes this view, arguing that AI imagery in luxury should be held to the same standards of detail and plausibility as any other high-end production. Work that looks “almost like the brand” but fails in nuances of fabric, proportion, movement or atmosphere is considered particularly problematic, because these subtleties signal substance and credibility. Overall, the interviews confirm that GenAI is most accepted where it serves to render substance more visible and comprehensible, not where it replaces it with pure spectacle. Symbolic acceleration is perceived as sustainable only when it remains anchored in a convincing substantive layer.

5.3.5 Future Outlook and Capability Requirements

Looking ahead, experts do not expect GenAI to recede; rather, it is seen as becoming deeply embedded in everyday workflows across design, marketing and clienteling. At the same time, several interviewees anticipate a counter-movement in which the value of the “real” increases: analogue photography, physical experiences and campaigns that are explicitly positioned as human-made (EXP-C1, EXP-AI1, EXP-D1).

For brands, the interviews collectively describe a “both/and” scenario. GenAI is expected to support greater personalisation, faster prototyping and more agile content production, but originality and credibility depend on clearly defined brand DNA, strong creative leadership,

cultural sensitivity and AI literacy. Rather than replacing creative judgement, GenAI heightens the need for curatorial, strategic and ethical capabilities that can hold technology inside a brand-specific frame. Several experts expect a shift towards systems trained on each brand’s archive and product history (EXP-D1, EXP-AI1, EXP-CL1); organisations with strong internal codification and clear guardrails are likely to be better positioned to use such systems as reinforcing mechanisms.

5.4 Synthesis Across Both Data Sets

This section integrates the findings from the Jacquemus case and the expert interviews and reconnects them to the three lenses. The same deductive categories were applied to both data sets and then refined inductively.

5.4.1 Desire and Symbolic Acceleration

Across both data sets, desire appears as something intensified by GenAI rather than fundamentally redefined by it. Jacquemus already constructs desire through a dense emotional universe; GenAI and CGI extend this universe by multiplying scenes, formats and “micro-worlds” that invite short, intense engagements with the brand. Experts describe a similar pattern: GenAI helps teams generate more images and adapt content faster, but desire still depends on a recognisable brand world, points of view and emotional resonance, not on technology alone. These observations support Proposition 1: GenAI strengthens symbolic value when it operates within a human-led and culturally informed framework.

5.4.2 Authorship and Creative Signature

The Jacquemus case and the interviews converge on the centrality of authorship. Jacquemus functions as a strongly authored house in which the founder’s biography and aesthetic preferences shape the brand universe; GenAI and CGI extend this signature rather than supplant it. Interviewees describe brand identity as anchored in stable codes and in the judgement of identifiable individuals. GenAI is framed as a powerful tool that needs to be directed by clear human intention, otherwise generic aesthetics and erosion of distinctiveness are likely. Taken together, these findings support Proposition 2: GenAI contributes positively when it operates inside a well-defined creative framework and when human authorship remains visible and accountable for final decisions.

5.4.3 Symbol–Substance Alignment and Emerging Red Lines

The alignment lens shows where the symbolic dynamic meets its limits. The Jacquemus case demonstrates how substance – craft, material quality, place-based identity and runway realism – can underpin a dense symbolic universe, including AI-supported imagery, while also revealing pressure points: high communication frequency, partial transparency and a growing reliance on ambiguous “is it real or not?” visuals. Experts confirm that the most serious risks arise when symbolic output scales faster than transparency and documentation, when AI-driven imagery drifts away from what can be materially delivered or when image production becomes opaque while claims about craft, origin or responsibility remain central. These situations mark the perceptual “red lines” of Proposition 3.

5.4.4 Integrating the Three Lenses

Looking across the lenses, the findings suggest that desire, authorship and symbol–substance alignment are mutually reinforcing when GenAI is governed well and mutually vulnerable when it is not. Human-led and culturally framed use of GenAI supports desire and helps brands articulate richer emotional worlds; strong creative authorship keeps the technology within a stable set of codes; and active management of symbol–substance alignment ensures that AI-supported imagery makes craft, heritage and product quality more tangible rather than obscuring them. Conversely, weak authorship, thin substance or vague governance magnify the risks of symbolic overextension, generic output and eroding trust. GenAI thus acts less as an external disruptor than as a stress test for the existing luxury fashion model, amplifying both strengths and vulnerabilities.

6. Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the findings considering the framework developed in Chapter 3. The central question is how GenAI reshapes the relationship between symbolic value, substantive foundations and human authorship in luxury fashion. I focus on three themes. First, the role of symbol-substance alignment under conditions of symbolic acceleration. Second, the theoretical implications for how we understand GenAI in luxury value creation. Third, the managerial implications for brands working with AI-supported creativity. The chapter closes with a reflection on the limitations and transferability of the study.

6.1 Symbol-Substance Alignment

The results from the Jacquemus case study and the expert interviews show that symbol–substance alignment is not just an analytical lens but the central tension line along which the use of GenAI in luxury fashion currently unfolds.

On the symbolic side, desirability today is created primarily through worlds, atmospheres and images rather than through pure function. Jacquemus is a strong example: the brand builds an emotional universe around summer, the Mediterranean, lightness and closeness. GenAI and CGI do not change this basic logic; they increase its intensity.

The interview partners describe a similar dynamic in their own work. GenAI is used to layout faster, test more variations and adapt content for social media, e-commerce and internal presentations. The symbolic layer becomes denser and faster as AI-supported tools enter daily routines.

What becomes crucial is the foundation under this acceleration. In the case study, this foundation appears in European craft and production, clear references to place and physical shows and stores that anchor the brand world in real space. In the interviews, substance is described in comparable terms: quality, technical feasibility, material depth, heritage and lived values that cannot simply be automated.

Symbol–substance alignment describes the connection between these two sides. As long as intensified, partly GenAI-supported imagery repeatedly and visibly leads back to real products, real places and real processes, the brand remains believable. In that situation, GenAI functions as an amplifier that makes existing symbolism more intense without disconnecting it from its base.

At the same time, the results show how quickly this alignment comes under pressure. GenAI makes it extremely easy to produce “one more” image, video or concept. If reporting, transparency and the substantive layer do not grow at a similar pace, a gap opens up. In the interviews, this moment appears as the feeling that images look too perfect, too generic or too far away from reality. In this thesis, such situations are described as perceptual red lines in the alignment layer – points where consumers start to question whether the brand promise still matches the material reality behind it.

Overall, GenAI does not introduce a new luxury principle. It intensifies an existing tension: the symbolic layer becomes faster and denser, and this raises the demands on substance, transparency and conscious human correction.

6.2 Theoretical implications

Theoretically, the study first confirms that luxury brands need to be understood through the interaction of a symbolic layer, a substantive layer and a mediating alignment layer. The three-layer model developed in Chapter 3 is supported by the empirical material. Jacquemus and the interviewed experts show that desire is primarily constructed in the symbolic layer, that authorship and cultural intelligence sit at the centre of this symbolic world, and that substance provides the necessary material base.

Within this structure, GenAI appears as an accelerator in the symbolic layer rather than as an independent source of meaning. The technology intensifies narratives, images and atmospheres, but it does not produce significance on its own. Meaning continues to emerge where human creativity, cultural references and lived practise come together. The thesis therefore positions GenAI as a secondary factor in luxury value creation that remains dependent on human authorship and substantive foundations.

Second, the study sharpens the understanding of authorship in a GenAI context. The results suggest that creative authorship in luxury today combines a visible creative signature, ethical responsibility and curatorial control over technological tools. The human creative lead remains the instance that decides which ideas are right for the brand, which AI outputs fit the codes and where the line lies between a distinctive brand world and generic aesthetics.

Third, the findings give the concept of symbol–substance alignment a more dynamic profile. Alignment is not a fixed state but an ongoing process that is constantly tested by symbolic acceleration. From a theoretical perspective, it is important that alignment is not only described when it works well, but also understood as a field of tension where fractures, pressure points and red lines can be observed. The perceptual red lines identified in this thesis show that authenticity depends not only on objective features but also on thresholds of perception where consumers start to doubt the connection between image and reality.

Finally, the study contributes to a more nuanced view of GenAI in symbolic industries. Instead of framing GenAI mainly as an efficiency tool or as a threat, the thesis argues that the key question is how GenAI is embedded into existing symbolic and substantive structures. The theoretical contribution lies less in a completely new theory and more in reorganising established concepts such as desire, authenticity, authorship and substance under the conditions of AI-supported creation.

6.3 Managerial implications

From a managerial perspective, the results translate into several concrete implications for luxury brands that already work with GenAI or plan to do so.

First, the study shows that brands need a clear position on where GenAI will be used and where it will not. In the symbolic layer, GenAI can help to visualise campaigns, explore creative options and adapt content across channels. The condition is that this use remains embedded in a clearly defined brand world. For management, this means that the creative core, brand codes and non-negotiables need to be clearly formulated and actively maintained before GenAI is scaled up.

Second, the findings highlight that substance is not just a background element but a strategic resource. Craft, material quality, origin, production processes and credible sustainability efforts become more important as brands lean further into visual acceleration. In practice, this implies that investments in substance, transparency and traceability are not separate from GenAI. They are the precondition for AI-supported symbolism to remain believable over time.

Third, the study underscores the role of creative leadership. Creative directors and brand leads increasingly act as translators between technology, brand identity and consumer expectations. They need strong aesthetic judgement, a clear sense of the brand's DNA and at least a basic understanding of how GenAI systems work and where their limits are. For companies, this means investing in hybrid profiles that combine creative, strategic and technological skills and defining clear responsibilities for AI-related content.

Fourth, the results point to the rising importance of AI governance in luxury. Processes around training data, approval of AI-generated material, archive protection and the treatment of client data are not only legal questions. They are also symbolic signals. Brands that wish to stand for authenticity and responsibility need to address these topics proactively and not only as technical details in the background.

Finally, the interviews show that teams need new capabilities. Alongside traditional design, craft and marketing skills, there is a growing need for prompting competence, critical evaluation of AI outputs, curatorial selection and interdisciplinary collaboration. For management, this suggests that training, exchange between generations and open learning formats around GenAI should become a regular part of organisational development.

6.4 Limitations and transferability

Like any qualitative study, this thesis has clear limitations. The first limitation lies in the research design. The analysis is based on a single luxury fashion house in a clearly defined segment of the market. Jacquemus represents a strongly authored, visually driven and fast-growing brand positioned between luxury and contemporary fashion. Luxury brands with different histories, ownership structures or price points may approach GenAI in other ways and experience different tensions. The aim here was to explore one theoretically informed case example, not to derive universally valid claims for the entire industry.

Second, the material is strongly orientated towards the industry side. The main voices are brand leaders, creatives and technology experts, not consumers. The perceptual red lines described in this thesis are therefore theoretically derived and reconstructed from an expert point of view. A direct test of these perception thresholds on the consumer side would be a valuable next step for future research.

Third, the study is situated in a moment where GenAI is still relatively new in fashion and luxury. Many practises are just emerging, routines are still developing, and regulatory frameworks are in flux. The findings capture a snapshot of a fast-moving field. This means that some of the tensions identified here may soften, shift or intensify over the coming years.

In terms of transferability, the results are most relevant for luxury brands with strong creative authorship and a clearly coded visual world. For these luxury fashion houses, the thesis highlights the conditions under which GenAI can support symbolic value creation and where key boundaries lie. For broader premium or mass brands, the core ideas around symbolism, substance and alignment remain useful, but the concrete role of craft, origin and cultural depth will differ and must be adapted to each segment.

Finally, the role of the researcher also needs to be acknowledged. The analysis follows a systematic and transparent procedure, but it remains interpretive. Other researchers might weight individual passages of the interviews or the visual analysis differently. This is both a limitation and a strength of qualitative work. It enables dense, context-specific insight, but it also requires a reflective handling of subjectivity.

Overall, this chapter situates the findings within the developed framework and marks clear boundaries for what the study can and cannot claim. The thesis does not aim to provide the final word on GenAI and luxury fashion. Instead, it shows how GenAI inserts itself into an existing tension between desire, substance and human authorship in one concrete, strongly authored luxury context and which questions this raises for theory, management and future research.

7. Conclusion

This final chapter brings together the core results of the thesis and relates them back to the research question. It first summarises how GenAI is shaping brand experience and personalisation in luxury fashion and under which conditions this development remains compatible with authenticity and the material foundations of luxury. It then outlines the main theoretical contributions and the key implications for practice in luxury brands. Finally, it reflects on the central limitations of the study and points out possible directions for future research.

7.1 Answer to the research question

The starting point of this thesis was the question of how GenAI affects brand experience in luxury fashion and which conditions must be in place to ensure that this development does not undermine authenticity and substance. The central research question was:

How is Generative AI transforming brand experience and personalisation in the luxury fashion industry, and under which conditions does this transformation remain compatible with authenticity and substantive brand foundations?

The combined evidence from the Jacquemus case study and the expert interviews reveals a clear pattern. GenAI transforms brand experience and personalisation primarily through the symbolic layer. Brands are able to develop new visual worlds, campaign ideas and atmospheres more quickly and at a higher frequency, adapt content more flexibly to channels and target groups, and tailor visual experiences more closely to specific audiences. In this sense, GenAI acts as an amplifier for what already characterises luxury: emotional worlds, strong imagery and consistent codes.

What proves decisive, however, is the framework within which this happens. The Jacquemus analysis shows that GenAI only enriches brand experience in a meaningful way when AI-supported content is clearly anchored in the existing brand universe and repeatedly leads back to real products, concrete places, craftsmanship and physical experiences. The interviews confirm this point. The experts emphasise that GenAI is helpful as long as clear brand codes, defined boundaries and a visible human signature continue to guide creative direction.

At the same time, the findings also make clear what GenAI cannot do. It does not replace creative authorship, craftsmanship or lived brand values. GenAI does not develop materials,

does not build a design signature that has evolved over years and does not take over real relationships with clients. It can only make these elements more visible, faster to activate and easier to scale. Precisely for this reason, dosage becomes important. When GenAI becomes too dominant and symbolic production grows faster than transparency, quality assurance and substantive development, a noticeable gap opens up. In this thesis, such breaks are described as perceptual red lines – moments in which consumers start to question whether visual worlds, promises and the brand’s real foundations still align.

Taken together, the thesis shows that GenAI does not alter the fundamental logic of value creation in the luxury fashion business model. Instead, it intensifies symbolic production and raises the requirements for authorship, coherence and governance. GenAI makes symbolic worlds faster, denser and more individually addressable, but this transformation remains compatible with authenticity and the material foundations of luxury only when GenAI is clearly understood as a complementary, human-led tool – not as a substitute for creative authorship or substantive brand foundations, and not as the dominant organising principle. What matters is a conscious, restrained use in which AI-supported symbolism is visibly and repeatedly tied back to a credible, materially and culturally grounded brand base.

7.2 Theoretical contributions

On a theoretical level, this thesis clarifies how GenAI interacts with the value system of luxury fashion without dissolving the core of what makes luxury distinct. Much of the broader discussion about AI remains abstract; this work aims to make more tangible where concrete shifts occur and where boundaries appear.

A first contribution lies in the three-layer model that runs through the thesis. By distinguishing between a symbolic layer, a substantive layer and an alignment layer, it becomes visible that GenAI does not affect all parts of the system equally. The strongest effects appear where images, stories and atmospheres are created, that is, in the symbolic domain. The substantive layer – craftsmanship, materials, origin and production processes – is touched more indirectly, for example through digital prototyping, simulation or data-based planning. The alignment layer links both sides and explains why key tensions emerge exactly where symbolic acceleration starts to move ahead of the underlying material base.

A second contribution lies in how core luxury concepts are adapted so that they speak to GenAI while retaining their depth. Desire is understood as attraction that is primarily constructed symbolically, built from emotional worlds, aesthetic coherence and cultural relevance.

Authorship is framed as a recognisable human signature that is at once creative and value-driven. Symbol–substance alignment captures the ongoing fit between symbolic worlds and their material and organisational foundations, and shows where pressure points and red lines emerge. Cultural intelligence runs across all three lenses by describing the ability to work with cultural codes in a deliberate and sensitive way. Within this frame, GenAI appears not as a separate topic but as an intensifier that interacts with these existing dimensions rather than redefining them.

Building on this, the thesis formulates three propositions that connect the conceptual model to the empirical material. Together, they suggest that (1) GenAI can enhance symbolic value when it is human-led and culturally framed, (2) perceived authenticity depends on a stable creative signature and clear authorship, and (3) perceptual red lines emerge wherever symbolic acceleration moves too far away from substantive authenticity and from the realities of production, place and craft. The Jacquemus case and the expert interviews illustrate how this logic plays out in practice - where it appears robust, but also where it starts to become fragile as volume and speed increase.

Finally, the thesis contributes to the broader debate on AI in marketing by deliberately focusing on a strongly authored luxury fashion house rather than on tech companies or mass-market brands. This perspective underlines how closely GenAI is tied to questions of authorship, cultural meaning and craft. It shows that in luxury the key issue is not simply the introduction of new tools, but how they are embedded into an existing brand world and into a strict, symbolic business model that already operates with tight codes and boundaries.

7.3 Managerial implications

For decision-makers in luxury fashion, this thesis does not provide a blueprint, but it does highlight where GenAI can support brand experience and where caution is needed. The findings point to a central shift: GenAI does not make luxury more flexible; it makes discipline more necessary. The question is less whether brands can use GenAI, and more how they govern it.

A first implication concerns the brand foundation. Before GenAI is scaled across touchpoints, brands need a clear articulation of what they stand for. This includes visual language, recognisable codes, tone of voice, reference worlds and explicit boundaries – what does not fit the brand. The analysis shows that AI-supported content only feels coherent when it is clearly rooted in this existing universe, rather than building a separate, easily interchangeable “AI aesthetic” alongside it.

Closely connected is the role of the people behind the brand. Even in an environment where content is produced at increasing speed, creative directors, design teams and brand leads remain the key reference points for taste, selection and responsibility. In practice, this means that GenAI should be positioned internally as a tool that supports these roles, not as a technical solution that replaces them. Towards clients, this hierarchy can also be made visible, for example by foregrounding human ideas, processes and creative direction, while treating AI more as part of the backstage.

The findings also show that GenAI is most promising where it helps to make substance more visible. This includes visualising craftsmanship, making materials and origin more tangible, or tailoring narratives more precisely to individual client interests. In these cases, symbolic and substantive layers reinforce each other. By contrast, content that focuses purely on visual effect, has little connection to real products, places or processes, and is not clearly linked back to the brand's world is more likely to lead to fatigue and scepticism over time, even if it performs well in the short term.

Another practical implication concerns pace and volume. GenAI makes it easy to produce “just one more” image, video or variation. The case and the interviews, however, underline that luxury still depends on selection, reduction and carefully staged moments. Managers therefore need to decide where AI-supported output genuinely adds value and where it is better to limit frequency and rely on clearly curated, human-made campaigns and experiences. AI-generated content in visible brand touchpoints should clearly remain in the minority, with recognisably human-made expression setting the tone.

Finally, the results point to governance and capability building as ongoing tasks. AI adoption in luxury is less a question of technical capability than of governance. Teams need a basic understanding of the tools, a critical eye for outputs, a feel for cultural context and an awareness of how images, data and references are being used. Clear internal agreements on where GenAI is allowed, who has final approval, how archives and signatures are protected, and how brand consistency is checked can significantly reduce the risk of crossing perceptual red lines. For luxury brands that have built their equity over decades, this conscious handling of GenAI is not a technical detail but part of long-term brand protection and leadership responsibility.

7.4 Limitations and directions for future research

The findings of this thesis should be read in light of several limitations. The analysis focuses on a single luxury fashion house in a clearly defined segment of the market. Jacquemus

represents a strongly authored, visually driven and fast-growing brand positioned between luxury and contemporary fashion. Luxury brands with different histories, ownership structures or price points may approach GenAI in other ways and experience different tensions. The aim here was to explore one theoretically informed case example, not to derive universally valid claims for the entire industry.

The expert interviews capture a slice of reality. The perspectives are from professionals based in Europe whose views are shaped by markets, company cultures and attitudes towards technology. Even though different roles were included, the sample cannot represent the diversity of positions and practices across the global luxury sector.

Methodologically, the thesis is based on qualitative content analysis and interpretive coding. This approach is suited to uncover symbolic structures, meanings and nuances, but it also ties the results to the researcher's interpretation. Complementary studies using experimental designs or larger quantitative surveys could test individual propositions systematically and examine how different consumer groups respond to AI-shaped brand experiences, personalisation or the labelling of GenAI-generated content.

In addition, the field itself is evolving quickly. GenAI is developing, and many luxury brands are still in an exploratory phase. Governance structures, routines and regulatory frameworks are still emerging, and concrete practices are likely to change further. The underlying tension between symbolic acceleration and substantive authenticity will probably remain, but the ways brands manage this tension may look different over time.

These limitations open up avenues for future research. Comparative case studies could analyse how heritage luxury fashion houses, conglomerate-owned brands or digital-first labels integrate GenAI into their brand worlds and where challenges converge or diverge. Consumer-focused research could explore which forms of AI-supported communication are experienced as inspiring and which as excessive or inauthentic. Organisational studies could examine how creative and marketing teams reconfigure their workflows around GenAI, which skills become important, and how internal trade-offs between speed, efficiency and creative depth are negotiated.

Despite these boundaries, the thesis offers a perspective on GenAI in luxury fashion that brings together symbolic, substantive and alignment layers. It shows that the challenge is less whether AI is used in luxury and more how consciously and responsibly it is embedded into a value system that still relies on human creativity, cultural intelligence and a credible material foundation. GenAI does not redefine what luxury is, nor how luxury creates value. It reinforces an already strict and codified business model and shifts the strategic challenge from disruption

to control, from experimentation to discipline, and from technological adoption to leadership and governance.

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Appendix 1 - Base Interview Guide (Universal Version)

In addition to this universal base guide, role-specific adapted versions were used for the different expert profiles; these are provided in the separate appendix document : [Adapted Interview Guides Role Specific](#)

Due to the formal page limit, this thesis includes only the most analytically relevant and illustrative interview transcripts in the main appendix. The remaining fully transcribed expert interviews are available via the following online repository:

[Expert Interviews Full Transcript](#)

Purpose and Context

This interview is part of a Master's dissertation at Católica Lisbon School of Business & Economics.

The study explores how Generative AI is affecting creativity, authorship, authenticity and desire in luxury fashion.

All responses are anonymised and used for academic purposes only.

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time. I am interested in your perspective on how creativity, brand work and new technologies are evolving in your field. With your permission, I will record our conversation for transcription.

SECTION 1 - Role & Understanding of Creativity

1. Could you briefly describe your current role and what creativity means in your daily work?
2. In your view, what makes brand expression feel authentic and desirable today?
3. What, in your experience, defines a strong and recognisable brand identity?

SECTION 2 - Authorship, Identity & Brand Coherence

4. How would you describe your brand's character and its key creative codes?
5. How do you ensure creative coherence across seasons, markets and teams?
6. What role does human creative authorship (for example a designer or creative director) play in how authenticity and trust are built?

SECTION 3 - GenAI and the Creative Process

7. How is Generative AI influencing the way ideas are generated, explored or refined in your work?
8. How does GenAI support content creation, campaigns or digital storytelling in your teams?
9. What benefits do you see in using GenAI (for example speed, iteration, exploration)?
10. What risks do you see (for example generic aesthetics, loss of depth, brand drift or over-reliance)?
11. In your view, what remains distinctly human in the creative process?

SECTION 4 - Substance, Craft & Authenticity in a GenAI Context

12. In luxury, craft and material quality are central. How can GenAI help express these qualities credibly?
13. Can you think of a moment where technology strengthened authenticity rather than weakening it? What made it work?
14. What guardrails are important to ensure that substance and symbol stay aligned when GenAI is used?

SECTION 5 - Future, Originality & Team Capabilities

15. As GenAI becomes more powerful, how can brands protect or redefine originality while staying true to their identity?
16. In your teams, is GenAI used more as a tool, as a collaborator, or moving towards more autonomous creation?
17. Which skills and mindsets will become essential for creative and brand teams over the next few years?

SECTION 6 - Industry Reflection

18. Who do you see integrating GenAI in a way that strengthens brand identity and desire, and why?
19. Which approaches to GenAI in fashion feel less convincing to you, and why?
20. If you look ahead, what does the next stage of GenAI in fashion look like, and what should brands prepare for?

Appendix 2 – Interview Transcript: Marketing Leadership

Role: Senior Vice President Global Brand & Marketing, Hugo Boss

Format: Semi-structured interview

Date: 03.12.2025

Participant = P (anonymised)

This appendix contains the transcribed interview with the Senior Vice President Global Brand & Marketing of a global luxury fashion brand. The interview was conducted as part of the qualitative research for this Master's thesis and explores creative authorship, brand identity, and the impact of Generative AI on marketing processes.

The transcript has been lightly edited for clarity and anonymised according to academic standards.

In the main text, this interview is referenced as EXP-M1.

SECTION 1 - Role & Understanding of Creativity

Q1. Could you briefly describe your current role and what creativity means in your daily work?

P: My In my role, I ensure that the needs of the business are reflected in the work we do to reach the consumer. That means identifying which stories, commercial priorities and brand elements best represent BOSS and translating them into consumer-facing narratives that help us achieve our business goals.

I also make sure we have the right talent delivering high-quality creative output-work that is innovative, competitive and builds a strong, prominent expression of the brand. Additionally, I manage budgets and ensure we maintain a constant stream of relevant content throughout the year.

Creativity, for me, is the enabler that allows us to stand out in culture and capture attention. It's about creating opportunities for consumers to interact with the brand in meaningful, culturally relevant and emotionally engaging ways.

Q2. In your view, what makes brand expression feel authentic and desirable today?

P: *For me, authenticity starts with believability and trust. I have to feel that what a brand is saying to me is something it can genuinely and credibly claim.*

At the same time, it has to be entertaining and interesting – it needs to give me a reason to engage and to want an ongoing “conversation” with the brand. Cultural relevance is key: does this brand speak to me, does it speak for me?

If a brand manages that, it can create desire and emotional connection. Storytelling is the simple word for it: doing things that give people a reason to care, to consider the brand for their needs and, ideally, to buy the product – while still feeling emotionally understood.

Q3. What, in your experience, defines a strong and recognisable brand identity?

P: *A strong and recognisable brand identity comes from a consistent set of long-term codes and behaviours. For us, that includes things like the colour palette, branding elements, the brand platforms and calls to action. Those should not change from season to season.*

These stable elements help people identify the brand wherever they meet it, whether that’s BOSS or HUGO. Around that, there is flexibility – in art direction, casting, music, locations – but the core identity stays constant.

If you keep those fixed elements clear while allowing creative execution to evolve with culture, the brand remains both recognisable and relevant.

SECTION 2 - Authorship, Identity & Brand Coherence

Q4. How would you describe your brand’s character and its key creative codes?

P: *With our two-brand strategy we have two distinct characters.*

For BOSS, the character is about the attainment and achievement of success – it’s aspirational, self-made, empowered. The brand speaks to people who see themselves in those stories and images. Through testimonials, brand campaigns and how we present the collection, we build a world that communicates confidence and assuredness. “Be Your Own BOSS” works both as a call to action and as a platform for that mindset.

For HUGO, the territory is different. HUGO addresses a different consumer need. It is more about ambition and rawness – paths that are not always linear, experimenting with style and self-expression. With “Red Means Go”, we invite people not to take “no” for an answer and to push through barriers, particularly early in their careers or on non-traditional paths.

Visually and experientially, this results in two different worlds, even if both are ultimately about tailoring.

Q5. How do you ensure creative coherence across seasons and markets?

P: *We separate what is fixed from what is flexible.*

Fixed are the long-term brand codes: logo, colour palette, brand platforms and calls to action. These do not change every season. They provide continuity and help consumers recognise the brand globally.

Flexible are the elements that respond to culture and context: art direction, casting, testimonials, music, locations, the tone of specific campaigns. Culture moves, and we want to be in conversation with that. So we adjust those variables based on insights, signals from the market and what we see in the world.

In practice, that means: the foundation stays the same, but each season we reinterpret it to keep the brand fresh and differentiated from the competition.

Q6. What role does human creative authorship play in building authenticity and trust?

P: *Human creative authorship is still absolutely critical. You need freedom of thought, curiosity and the willingness to challenge things from a human perspective.*

AI can speed things up, generate options and scale ideas, but it cannot replace the kind of deep, cultural and behavioural understanding you need to be truly relevant. There is always a balance of art and science, and that art part sits with designers, art directors and creative leads. They decide which ideas are right for the brand, what truly represents its personality, and where the line is between something that feels authentic and something that feels generic. Those human decisions are central for building authenticity and trust.

SECTION 3 - GenAI and the Creative Process

Q7. How is GenAI influencing the way ideas are generated, explored or refined?

P: *On a daily, even hourly basis, my teams already use AI in the ideation and research phases. We can now generate many more scenarios and options in a much shorter time, which helps us arrive at a final outcome more quickly.*

In the studio, GenAI enables more dynamic approaches to product imagery – more angles, more perspectives, more variations for handbags, shoes or jackets – far faster than in purely manual workflows.

Beyond that, AI helps us identify trends and insights and understand what competitors are doing. It supports faster, more informed decision-making in marketing.

Q8. How does GenAI support content creation, campaigns or digital storytelling in your teams?

P: *GenAI helps us in two main ways.*

First, on the executional side, it accelerates content creation: adapting visuals, exploring different crops or angles, and localising or fine-tuning campaigns for different markets. This is particularly relevant for e-commerce and social, where you need a lot of assets in different formats.

Second, on the planning side, AI supports us in summarising research, condensing documents and structuring information for briefs and strategies. That makes it easier for teams to understand the core story, and then to translate it into the right format for each platform.

Q9. What benefits do you see in using GenAI?

P: *The obvious benefits are speed, volume and depth of exploration.*

AI lets us do work that would otherwise require many manual hours – from summarising large amounts of data to generating multiple creative options. It makes it easier to test different directions, to refine ideas and to get to a decision point faster.

It also improves efficiency in everyday workflows: summarising meetings, aligning understanding across teams and preparing material in a more digestible way.

Q10. What risks do you see for fashion and luxury brands?

P: *The main risk is over-reliance. People can become lazy and stop really thinking problems through themselves, or stop using their own curiosity, experience and judgement to challenge ideas.*

From a content perspective, if everything is generated by AI, you risk losing believability and distinctiveness. The brand's personality and tone of voice can become diluted if you lean too heavily on automated output.

AI will get better at representing brands, but in fashion I don't think it can or should replace human creativity. If that happened, you could end up with a very homogenous, algorithmic look across the industry.

Q11. What remains distinctly human in your creative process?

P: *Several things. First, cultural intuition - understanding what really matters in culture now and what might come next. AI can only tell you what it already knows from existing data; it struggles with the unexpected.*

Second, creative judgement - deciding which ideas are right for the brand, what feels authentic, and where to draw the line.

Third, styling and detail. Those small human touches - the way a collar sits, the way a jacket folds or creases - still matter a lot in fashion imagery and are not something AI currently does well.

And finally, leadership: helping teams navigate change, encouraging curiosity and problem-solving, and ensuring AI is used as a tool, not a crutch.

SECTION 4 - Substance, Craft & Authenticity in a GenAI Context

Q12. In luxury, craft and material quality are central. How can GenAI help express these qualities credibly?

P: *Craftsmanship, quality and origin are fundamental for BOSS. We have been a tailoring brand for a hundred years, so substance is a core part of our identity.*

GenAI can help us express this by supporting product-led storytelling. For example, it can help us visualise details of construction, deconstruct a suit in a more accessible way, or adapt product stories to different platforms without losing the underlying craft message.

Used well, AI can make these stories more engaging and easier to tailor to specific audiences and channels, as long as the underlying facts and product reality remain clear and true.

Q13. Can you think of a moment where technology or GenAI strengthened authentic brand communication rather than weakening it? What made it work from a brand and marketing point of view?

P: *In general, I would say technology strengthens authenticity when it helps us tell the truth about the product better.*

That includes tools that allow us to show why a jacket performs well in certain conditions, or why a particular suit is constructed the way it is – and to do that in more immersive or explanatory ways online and on social. When technology supports craftsmanship-focused storytelling rather than replacing it with generic visuals, it can enhance authenticity.

Q14. What guardrails are important to ensure substance and symbol stay aligned when GenAI is used?

P: *Two things are essential. First, we need to protect the core brand codes – our colour world, our style, our personality and our behaviours. Innovation and technology should not compromise these.*

Second, we need to maintain human oversight. AI output should always be checked against the real product, real quality and our real brand story. If we only optimise for spectacle or speed, we risk drifting away from what actually differentiates us: tailoring expertise and material substance.

SECTION 5 - Future, Originality & Team Capabilities

Q15. How can brands protect or redefine originality as GenAI grows more powerful?

P: *By clearly defining what is non-negotiable.*

For us, that is our personality, the way we behave as a brand, and the core visual and verbal codes. Those elements have to remain consistent, regardless of what technology allows.

Execution can be flexible, but how we use our badge, colours and core identity needs to be very carefully protected. If you know what is fixed, you can experiment more confidently around it without losing originality.

Q16. In your teams, is GenAI more of a tool, a collaborator or moving toward autonomous creation?

P: *At the moment, it is mostly a tool and an enabler, and in some areas a kind of collaborator. We are all still learning what it can do.*

It accelerates and scales what we already do and may fully replace certain processes, for example some aspects of product imagery. But there is still a need for humans to operate it, to understand the brief, and to judge outputs against brand needs.

I don't see it becoming fully autonomous in the sense of "doing everything for us". It will radically change some ways of working, especially around repetitive or highly technical tasks, but not the core of creative authorship.

Q17. Which skills and mindsets will be essential?

P: *Curiosity, critical thinking and problem-solving will become even more important. People need to be comfortable asking questions, challenging the status quo and working with new tools like AI without becoming dependent on them.*

Strong, independent thought is key – we still need debate and discussion to arrive at good decisions.

Leadership also matters: helping teams navigate change, harness the potential of innovation and protect them from misuse or overuse of technology.

Across seniority levels, I look for passion, hunger, curiosity and problem-solving ability. Those qualities will remain crucial whether you're fresh from university or have decades of experience.

Appendix 4 – Interview Transcript: Head of Design / Creative Leadership

Role: Head of Design, Hugo Boss

Format: Semi-structured interview

Date: 22.12.2025

Participant = P (anonymised)

This appendix contains the transcribed interview with the Head of Design of a global luxury fashion brand. The interview was conducted as part of the qualitative research for this Master's thesis and explores creative authorship, design direction, brand identity, and the impact of Generative AI on creative and design processes. The transcript has been lightly edited for clarity and anonymised according to academic standards.

In the main text, this interview is referenced as **EXP-D1**.

SECTION 1 - Role & Understanding of Creativity

Q1. Could you briefly describe your current role in design and what creativity means in your daily work?

P: In my current role I develop collections within clearly defined brand and product strategies. My daily work spans concept, silhouette, materials and their visual translation. I work in very close alignment with pattern, product development and the overall concept team. For me, creativity is less about free invention and more about making smart choices within these frameworks. The focus is always on relevance, feasibility and a real market need. I understand creativity as a continuous, reflective process rather than a one-off moment of inspiration.

Q2. In your view as a designer, what makes a collection or brand expression feel authentic and desirable today?

P: For me, authenticity comes from a clear stance rather than surface aesthetics. It only feels authentic when there is a clear statement and design handwriting behind form, colour and material. A coherent brand presence across product, communication and even pricing is crucial. At the same time you need zeitgeist relevance without blindly chasing trends. Good quality and intelligent, clear design are essential, as well as real distinctiveness and a sharp separation from competitors. When all of that comes together, the result feels credible and therefore desirable.

Q3. What, in your experience, defines a strong and recognisable brand identity?

P: A strong identity starts with a very clear Marken-DNA. You see it in an independent visual language and a high level of recognisability. That language has to be consistent across all channels, from product to retail to digital. At the same time the brand must remain relevant and create an emotional bond with people. When credibility and authenticity are present on top of that, you get a truly strong brand identity.

SECTION 2 - Authorship, Identity & Brand Coherence

Q4. How would you describe your brand's character and its key creative codes?

P: I would describe our brand as progressive, urban and young. It is bold, expressive and quite experimental. We are very zeitgeist- and culture-driven; music, for example, plays an important role. A key point is our distance from BOSS – we are less classic and much more street-inspired. Red is a leading colour for us. Our designs are clear and graphic, where streetwear meets tailoring. Visible logo codes are part of the language, and the overall attitude is very gender-fluid.

Q5. How do you ensure that your design language stays coherent across seasons and collaborations, while still evolving?

P: The starting point is always to define a clear Marken-DNA. From there we set non-negotiable design codes – unmistakable design characteristics that hold across seasons. Within that framework we define the Spielräume, the boundaries that allow for variation. Consistent creative leadership is crucial. Seasonal stories are always developed from the core of the brand rather than from random ideas. Collaborations are subordinated to our own DNA; they have to fit into it, not the other way around. And finally, we regularly review and sharpen the codes so that coherence and evolution stay in balance.

Q6. From the inside, how does creative authorship – whether your own or that of a creative director – shape authenticity and trust in the brand?

P: A clear creative handwriting is absolutely key. Consistency and recognisability over time build trust. For me, authorship means having a strong point of view instead of just following trends. It also means having the courage to make clear decisions, even if they are not the easiest commercially. When that creative stance is visible and internally well understood, it creates credibility and internal clarity – and that is what builds trust in the brand.

SECTION 3 - GenAI and the Creative Process

Q7. How is Generative AI influencing the way ideas are generated, explored or refined in your work?

P: GenAI primarily accelerates idea generation. It expands the creative thinking space and allows for very fast visual exploration and iteration. That makes it easier to sharpen and evaluate concepts early on. Overall, it increases efficiency in the process. But for me human authorship remains central – AI can support the work, but it does not replace the person who defines the idea and the aesthetic direction.

Q8. Beyond design, have you seen GenAI being used in lookbooks, campaigns or digital storytelling around your collections? How?

P: Yes, absolutely. In lookbooks we use AI models, digital settings and pre-visualisations, and we experiment with hybrid worlds that mix real and AI-generated elements. For campaigns we work with AI key visuals, atmospheric image worlds and conceptual visual statements; we also use it to test different visual languages. In digital storytelling we use AI for material and detail visualisations, for building narrative worlds and interactive formats, and for translating heritage into new visual contexts.

Q9. What benefits do you see in using GenAI (for example speed, iteration, exploration)?

P: The most obvious benefit is higher speed. There is more efficiency and also cost savings in certain stages. It gives us a greater creative Ausschüttung, meaning a much larger pool of ideas and options. Iteration and comparison between routes become much faster, which improves the quality of decisions. In that sense AI helps to minimise risk and allows us to put even more focus on quality and craftsmanship.

Q10. What risks do you see when GenAI enters the design and image process (for example generic aesthetics, loss of depth, brand drift or over-reliance)?

P: AI becomes risky when it starts deciding instead of supporting, and when brands forget that curation, stance and responsibility cannot be automated. If you outsource those parts to the machine, you lose depth and you open the door to generic aesthetics and brand drift.

Q11. In your view, what remains distinctly human in fashion design, even when GenAI is used?

P: AI can support and amplify, but meaning, stance, judgement and responsibility remain clearly human. What stays human is Haltung, taste and intuition. Authorship and responsibility cannot be delegated. Emotion and empathy are human, as are curation and reduction – knowing what to leave out. A deep understanding of craft also remains essential. And finally, the courage to take risks and make decisions is something I still see as very human.

SECTION 4 - Substance, Craft & Authenticity in a GenAI Context

Q12. In luxury fashion, craft and material quality are central. From a design point of view, how can GenAI help express these qualities credibly?

P: AI cannot create luxury authentically on its own, but it can translate it authentically by making craft, material and time visible and by amplifying them visually. It should not replace craftsmanship but make it more visible. Concretely, AI can support material and surface exploration, and it can magnify and highlight details of craft quality. It enables more coherent, emotional storytelling around these aspects. Through efficiency it can even free up more time for real handwork. And by making processes and details more transparent, it can strengthen credibility.

Q13. Can you think of a moment where digital tools or GenAI actually strengthened the authenticity of a collection or campaign? What made it work?

P: Whenever digital tools or AI translate handcraft and the core idea well, authenticity can actually increase. It works best when AI is used in the early concept and narrative phase, not just at the end. Then you get coherent storytelling. Working with the archive and heritage is also crucial – using AI to re-read and visualise that material. The focus has to be on details rather than on pure effects. Efficiency is helpful, but only in combination with clear curation. And it only works when there is a clear Marken-DNA and guiding principles, and when human authorship and transparency are visible.

Q14. What guardrails are important for you so that design substance – cut, fabric, construction – stays aligned with AI-augmented imagery and storytelling?

P: The basis must always be a clear design DNA. The real product has priority. Any AI work has to respect technical and constructive plausibility – a garment must be actually buildable. For me, AI is a translation tool, not a pure design tool. Storytelling needs to remain consistent and credible, otherwise the gap between image and product becomes too large. And finally, transparent AI use is important so that people understand how the visuals were created.

SECTION 5 - Future, Originality & Team Capabilities

Q15. As GenAI becomes more powerful, how can brands protect or redefine originality while staying true to their identity?

P: Brands need to clearly define and protect their core. Human authorship has to remain visible. AI should be used as a tool, not as the brand voice. Allowing organic imperfections is important too – they are part of authenticity. Using one's own archives and data as a basis helps keep the work rooted in the brand's history. Clear ethical and design guidelines are

necessary. And any evolution should come from the brand's own DNA rather than from generic trend copying.

Q16. In your teams, is GenAI used more as a tool, as a collaborator, or moving towards more autonomous creation?

P: *At the moment it is very clearly seen as support, as a tool that assists the creative process rather than replacing it.*

Q17. Which skills and mindsets will become essential for creative and brand teams over the next few years?

P: *The ability to curate and decide will become more important than producing sheer volume. Teams need to think and design strategically. A basic technological and AI understanding is essential. Clear authorship and Haltung are needed, as well as a systemic understanding of the brand. Interdisciplinary collaboration will be standard. Cultural sensitivity and zeitgeist competence are crucial. On a personal level, learning agility and resilience matter, and finally a strong sense of ethics and responsibility.*

SECTION 6 - Industry Reflection

Q18. Who do you see integrating GenAI in a way that strengthens brand identity and desire, and why?

P: *The brands that do it well are those with a clearly defined DNA. They have strong creative leadership and authorship, and they build on a deep archive and substantial craftsmanship. They use AI as a tool, not as an author. They set clear guardrails before scaling AI use. Their focus is on translation and precision rather than substitution – on sharpening what is already there. And they accept imperfections and development as part of the process rather than chasing a sterile perfection.*

Q19. Which approaches to GenAI in fashion feel less convincing to you, and why?

P: *I find approaches less convincing where AI replaces creative authorship. When the focus is only on efficiency and mass output instead of substance, the result feels weak. Unrealistic, non-implementable visuals are another red flag. Simple trend copying and generic aesthetics, without a clear brand filter, do not convince me. The absence of guidelines and curation is problematic, as is intransparent AI use where no one knows how or why something was created.*

Q20. If you look ahead, what does the next stage of GenAI in fashion look like, and what should brands prepare for?

P: *I think we will move towards brand-specific AI rather than generic tools. Systems will better understand construction and feasibility. Workflows across design and communication will*

become more integrated. We will see fewer superficial effects and more precision. Co-creation with designers will become the norm. Personalisation will increase, but ideally without identity loss. Brands will build their own archives and data as the basis for AI. Clear Marken-DNA and guardrails will be crucial, as will strong curatorial decision-making. And overall, AI will have to be thought of in a long-term strategic way, not just as a quick fix.

Appendix 5 – Interview Transcript: Clienteling & Events Expert

Role: Clienteling & Events Coordinator (ex. Louis Vuitton)

Format: Semi-structured interview

Date: 10.12.2025

***Participant** = P (anonymised)*

This appendix contains the transcribed interview with a former Private Client Relations & Events Coordinator EMEA at a global luxury fashion brand. The interview was conducted as part of the qualitative research for this Master's thesis and explores creative authorship, clienteling, experiential brand identity and the impact of Generative AI on clienteling and events processes. The transcript has been lightly edited for clarity and anonymised according to academic standards.

In the main text, this interview is referenced as **EXP-C1**.

SECTION 1 - Role & Understanding of Creativity

Q1. Could you briefly describe your current role and what creativity means in your daily work?

***P:** If I look back at my role when I worked for Louis Vuitton, I was working in private client experiences and events. We coordinated nine EMEA regions for high-end events and fashion shows, creating unique experiences for private clients. We invited them to shows and events all over the world – for high watchmaking, high jewellery and fashion shows, but also more commercial events in the end.*

Creativity in that context came more from the craftsmanship and the creation teams who design the products. For us, creativity was more about how we could create unique client experiences

for each year and each event doing things that had not been done before. I would say that was the most creative part of the job.

Q2. In your view, what makes brand expression feel authentic and desirable today?

P: *When we talk about authenticity, I think a lot of people today want to see the raw and honest side of a brand. There was a time in the early 2000s and 2010s when many things were very commercialised, with highly staged product commercials. Now I feel it's shifting more towards showing how the brand really works – its “authentic self”.*

That can also be true for celebrities and influencers the brand partners with. People want to feel that these partnerships and stories are real. In the luxury sector, desirability still comes from high-end quality, but it has to be shown in an authentic way, not in an overly staged environment.

Q3. What, in your experience, defines a strong and recognisable brand identity?

P: *For me, brand identity starts with having a strong mission and a strong vision. A brand should know why it exists what it wants to do and also where it wants to go in the future, so it can set clear objectives and goals.*

The older a brand is, the more heritage it usually has, and that history shapes its identity. Recognisable features also play a big role: a strong logo, distinctive patterns or signatures that people can recognise everywhere.

If you think about Louis Vuitton, people recognise the logo and canvas pattern immediately, even in collaborations and partnerships. These elements take people back to what the brand stands for and where it comes from.

SECTION 2 - Authorship, Identity & Brand Coherence

Q4. How would you describe your brand's character and its key creative codes as they show up in client experiences and events?

P: *For a luxury brand, you always have to stand out in a very competitive market. It is not only Louis Vuitton, there is also Dior, Hermès and many others. Some clients are very important clients at several brands, so when a client comes to your event, it has to feel unique in some way.*

What makes you unique compared to competitors can be many things. For example, when they enter a showroom, they should recognise the pattern, the canvas and the logo immediately and know that this is Louis Vuitton. Colours, the way the event is organised and the way client advisors interact with guests are all part of these creative codes.

For high end events, fashion shows, high jewellery or high watchmaking, clients should recognise from the moment they step into the showroom that they are at Louis Vuitton or at Hermès. So logos, colours, materials and the behaviour of client advisors all become part of the brand's creative codes in client experiences and events.

Q5. How do you ensure creative coherence across seasons, markets and teams?

P: *What I just mentioned also applies across seasons and markets. For example, during the festive season there is a strong focus on Christmas, and stores adapt their design. But a flagship store still keeps its unique culture and overall look. The creative direction remains the same.*

This is also true globally. If you visit a Louis Vuitton store in New York or in Tokyo, you should get the same feeling. The creative direction and visual merchandising are aligned worldwide, depending on which collection is currently sold.

For global clients and a global brand, this consistency is crucial. Elements that are very visible to consumers, such as stores, windows and visual merchandising, need to stay coherent across markets and across the globe.

Q6. What role does human creative authorship (for example a designer or creative director) play in how authenticity and trust are built?

P: *Human authorship plays a very important role. When Louis Vuitton brought Pharrell Williams on board as menswear designer, for example, that had to be a good fit between the designer and the brand. The goal is to bring something new to the brand and to the collections, but at the same time keep them close to the heritage and brand identity.*

That balance is difficult to achieve and is one reason why these collections and designers are so desirable. Trust is also built through key events and long term relationships with private clients. Clients stay loyal because they have good experiences at events and trust that the brand will stay innovative and not repeat itself too often.

So creative and artistic directors are crucial. They bring newness to collections while ensuring that everything still feels true to the brand identity.

SECTION 3 - GenAI and the Creative Process

Q7. How is Generative AI influencing the way ideas are generated, explored or refined in your work?

P: *I definitely see it as a plus if people know how to use it. In the end, it is a combination of human intelligence and artificial intelligence. People who have been with a brand for a long time bring deep experience. They know which collections have been launched, what has been done before and what kinds of client experiences have worked.*

If you take that human experience and combine it with AI, you can explore new ways of generating ideas. For example, you can think about new forms of personalised experiences or online experiences for clients who cannot attend an event in person. Generative AI can help create new formats.

But you cannot rely on Generative AI to do the work for you. It becomes powerful when it is paired with human experience and used in the right way. Then it can be a real asset.

Q8. How does GenAI support content creation, campaigns or digital storytelling in your teams?

P: In my role I was not directly involved in campaign or storytelling teams, so I am not fully aware of how exactly they use Generative AI. I have some ideas, but I do not think I can give a detailed or suitable answer here.

Q9. What benefits do you see in using GenAI (for example speed, iteration, exploration)?

P: Efficiency is one of the biggest benefits. It can help you find new ways of making experiences unique. You can generate new ways of thinking and ideas much faster than without it.

Before, you might have needed several brainstorming meetings to collect ideas. Now you can use AI efficiently to ask how you can take learnings from past events and create unique experiences for the future. Whether that is hyper personalisation, product design, prototyping or new formats, time saving is a major advantage.

Q10. What risks do you see (for example generic aesthetics, loss of depth, brand drift or over-reliance)?

P: The main risk I see is that people stop thinking for themselves and rely too much on AI. You also have to remember that if your brand uses AI, other brands will do the same.

So you need to ask what still makes you unique and gives you a competitive advantage if everyone has access to similar tools. For example, if a client experience manager at Louis Vuitton and one at Hermès use the same tool, you still need to rely on human intelligence and experience to train it in a way that fits your brand.

If you do not do that, the ideas that come out could be copied by any brand. So the risk is overuse without reflection and not anchoring AI outputs in the brand identity and uniqueness.

Q11. In your view, what remains distinctly human in the creative process?

P: I would say ideation and briefing. Even when you use Generative AI, you still have to give prompts, and those prompts do not come from nowhere. The input you give to the tool is human. Designers and teams still need to think for themselves and decide what they want to use this tool for and what they want to achieve. That part cannot be replaced. In my view, this will remain a human responsibility.

SECTION 4 - Substance, Craft & Authenticity in a GenAI Context

Q12. In luxury, craft, heritage and material quality are central. How can GenAI help express these qualities credibly in client-facing touchpoints (events, clienteling, communication)?

P: I think Generative AI has a lot of potential to augment client experiences, especially through personalisation. If you have a very important client and know their preferences and buying behaviour, AI can help you personalise the experience as much as possible so the client feels truly valued.

For example, if you introduce a client to high watchmaking and you know they are a fan of a certain type of watch, AI could create a video showing how that specific watch works, taking it apart and highlighting the craftsmanship behind it. That is a very personalised experience that might not have been created as efficiently or quickly without AI.

So personalisation in client experiences can move to a new level. But again, you need to know the client's preferences, so it remains a combination of human knowledge and AI tools.

Q13. Can you think of a moment where technology strengthened authenticity rather than weakening it? What made it work?

P: This is partly covered in the previous answer. When technology is used to reveal craftsmanship and make processes more understandable for clients in a personalised way, it can strengthen authenticity instead of weakening it.

Q14. What guardrails are important to ensure that substance and symbol stay aligned when GenAI is used?

P: A brand is recognised by its logos, patterns, materials and colours. These elements have to stay true when Generative AI is used.

If, for example, you want to create more sustainable bags because sustainability is a big topic, you still need to check whether you can do that with materials that clients already appreciate and that fit the brand identity.

AI will bring a lot of new ideas for fashion, leather goods, high jewellery or high watchmaking. But outputs still need to stay true to the brand identity. Those guardrails, such as logos, materials and codes, need to stay in place, and then newness can come in through AI within those boundaries.

SECTION 5 - Future, Originality & Team Capabilities

Q15. As GenAI becomes more powerful, how can brands protect or redefine originality while staying true to their identity?

P: *This comes back to how you train the tool. AI needs to be trained in a way that makes it beneficial for a specific brand. When you use AI to generate new creative ways of working, whether in client experiences or product ideation, it has to stay aligned with the identity of that brand. You cannot have one generic tool that fits both Louis Vuitton and Dior. Clienteling managers and creative designers need to train the tool so that the output fits one brand and only that brand. That is how brands can protect their identity. They make sure that the co created output of human intelligence and AI is unique to them and would not work in the same way for another brand.*

Q16. In your teams, is GenAI used more as a tool, as a collaborator, or moving towards more autonomous creation?

P: *At the moment, I would say it is clearly more of a collaborator. Autonomous creation might come in the future, but right now the tool still has to learn a lot, especially in this industry. For example, if you are planning a fashion event or a high end event and want to summarise a long meeting with many ideas, AI can be a very good collaborator and summarise everything in a few seconds.*

If you ask it to create completely new client experiences, it can help with brainstorming, but it still needs time and training before it could move closer to autonomous creation.

Q17. Which skills and mindsets will become essential for creative and brand teams over the next few years?

P: *Learning how to use AI will be essential. Our generation, and the younger generation entering the workforce now, is already quite used to these tools. Older generations, such as some baby boomers or older millennials, might be less used to them.*

People who have been in the industry for many years can say that everything they achieved was possible without AI. Younger people coming in will be highly invested in these tools.

So more and more people will need to learn how to handle AI and tools like ChatGPT or Gemini. Being comfortable with them will become inevitable when you enter the workforce.

SECTION 6 - Industry Reflection

Q18. Who do you see integrating GenAI in a way that strengthens brand identity and desire, and why?

P: *I think Generative AI can be integrated in many sectors. In luxury, it can be used by both creatives and clienteling managers. Creatives can use it for new products, new ways of working and personalised products for top clients. Clienteling managers can use it to ask how they can*

create unique experiences for their clients that have never been done before and how they can make clear that an event is unique to the brand.

In general, I think AI will be used across industries and teams. It will probably become especially important for jobs that are more automated. In creative areas, the human element will still be vital, for all the reasons we discussed, to make sure AI is used in the right way.

Q19. Which approaches to GenAI in fashion feel less convincing to you, and why?

P: *I feel less convinced by the idea of creating collections, products and designs completely autonomously with AI. I do not want to say it will never be possible, but I do not think it will work at the same quality level without human creativity.*

The idea that AI will fully take over and create entire women's or men's collections, or new collaborations, just based on prompts, is not convincing to me. For me, it will always be a combination of both. Humans give the prompts and direction, and AI supports them.

Q20. If you look ahead, what does the next stage of GenAI in fashion look like, and what should brands prepare for?

P: *I think AI is already at a good stage, but it will keep improving. In client experiences, personalisation will become even more important.*

In product design and prototyping, creative processes will become quicker. I could imagine a step up in the quality of craftsmanship as well, because people can learn more efficiently through AI based tools, and AI can help teach internal teams how to produce certain products. Supply chains could also become more efficient if AI is used in the right way, for example faster deliveries to customers and smoother logistics, which can increase client satisfaction.

Overall, I think brands will step up in client experiences, quality and efficiency when they use AI thoughtfully.

Appendix 6 – Interview Transcript: AI Expert

Role: Creative Director and AI Visualist | Fashion, Beauty, Luxury , Independent Studio

Format: Semi-structured interview

Date: 12.12.2025

Participant = P (anonymised)

This appendix contains the transcribed interview with an independent Creative Director and AI Visualist working across high fashion, beauty and luxury brands. The interview was conducted as part of the qualitative research for this Master's thesis and explores Generative AI, visual authorship, brand identity and the evolving collaboration between human creatives and AI tools.

The transcript has been lightly edited for clarity and anonymised according to academic standards.

In the main text, this interview is referenced as EXP-AI1.

SECTION 1 - Role & Understanding of Creativity

Q1. Could you briefly describe your current role and how it relates to Generative AI, creativity and brand work in fashion or adjacent industries?

P: I currently have several roles and job titles. On the one hand, I work as an AI artist – which I actually find a terrible title, but I haven't yet found a better one for myself. In that role, I work directly with AI and create images for brands, almost exclusively in the beauty and fashion space.

I also work in creative conception, developing ideas and concepts for campaigns, again mainly for beauty brands. There I use AI to create mock-ups of my ideas, visualisations clients can see before they decide – for example for pitches or to illustrate creative directions.

In addition, I give AI artist workshops for different groups: artists, make-up artists, creative directors, photographers, and sometimes at make-up schools or even universities. In all of these areas, I'm using AI for image creation.

In my daily work I also use large language models, such as ChatGPT, for more organisational purposes: summarising briefings, cleaning up texts, structuring timelines and similar tasks. That part is less creative and more organisational and logistical – basically basic “pro” tasks that I outsource to free up time for concept and visual work.

Q2. From your perspective, what makes digital or AI-augmented brand expression feel authentic and desirable today?

P: For me, it feels authentic and desirable when you don't immediately notice that AI has been used. It is still the case that consumers often react negatively once they realise something is AI-generated, even though personally I think it should be labelled. If, at first glance, it doesn't read as “machine-made”, that's usually a good sign.

At the same time, there has to be a good idea behind it – a strong concept, strategy or vision. A campaign or brand communication is only really effective if there is a meaningful idea that meets the technology. “Good” is always subjective, but effective work usually depends on that meeting point between concept and tool. If one of those sides is weak, the result won’t be convincing and will not be well received.

Another important factor is the intention with which companies use AI. If the intention is purely “I want to save costs”, it usually shows. If instead the motivation is to test a new aesthetic, reach a different consumer group or open up fresh visual territory, then the use of AI tends to feel more authentic and makes more sense from a brand perspective.

Q3. What, in your experience, defines a strong and recognisable brand identity?

P: *I think it is mainly defined through the visual layer. As soon as there is recognisability and a real point of difference, you can say, “this could only be this one brand and nothing else.” So uniqueness plays a big role.*

If you zoom out, storytelling is also central: heritage, the narrative around the brand, and how unique that story is. But first of all I would say it is an unmistakable aesthetic that runs consistently through all assets. That visual through-line across formats and channels is what makes the identity clear and recognisable.

SECTION 2 - Authorship, Identity & Brand Coherence

Q4. When you work with different luxury or fashion brands, how do you identify the key creative codes that define their identity?

P: *Most of the time I receive a briefing in which the brand already breaks down its key elements quite clearly. On top of that, because I have been working in the industry for a while, I can see very quickly what their visual language is: how they cast, how they stage products, which compositions and moods they use repeatedly. I pay very close attention to imagery.*

It can always happen that when they work with me, they explicitly want something new. That is quite common: they want to rejuvenate the brand, or – increasingly now – also speak to older target groups again, not only very young ones. In those cases, I depend heavily on the input I receive, because the brand may be in a transition.

Sometimes it works the other way around: I send some initial proposals, and only then we refine the briefing because the first visuals did not fully match what they had in mind. But generally, a good brief already contains a concise summary of the existing creative codes – and where they want to take them next.

Q5. How can brands ensure creative coherence across seasons, markets and teams?

P: *One important point is not to jump on every trend. For example, if a certain look – say Y2K – suddenly becomes big, it’s tempting to say “we also need that now.” But for a consistent identity, the more important questions are: what do we actually want to say with this brand, what feeling do we want to transmit, not just what product we want to sell quickly.*

This is especially true in luxury, where the focus is more on long-term value than on immediate sell-out. It helps to ask: will this still look good and relevant in ten years; will this product or this visual world still feel strong and enduring. A strong design team with real expertise is crucial for that.

So, ideally, you do not let yourself be overly driven by trends, even though the brand’s look should remain contemporary, not outdated. A good starting point is to think carefully about the world you want the brand to inhabit – what that world looks like, what the consumer looks like, which places and atmospheres belong to it. If you develop a full profile, from personas to environments, you can more easily arrive at an aesthetic that fits and can be consistently maintained.

Q6. What role does human creative authorship (for example a designer or creative director) play in how authenticity and trust are built?

P: *It is absolutely essential. I think this is often misunderstood in AI discussions: AI does not replace ideas. You can see that very clearly because there is so much really bad, ugly AI content out there. People assume that just because they can quickly generate an image, they have also encoded taste and a concept into it – but that is simply not the case.*

I would even say human authorship becomes more important, because the focus shifts even more to the idea. What has a person actually thought through and designed. That becomes the real centre of gravity.

Fashion is also a very political world: who you have access to, what budget you have, which model or photographer you can hire. AI removes some of those constraints. The idea remains, and in that sense I find it quite democratic. For smaller brands that have strong ideas but lack network or budget, it is an opportunity to compete visually with big players. But the creative authorship – the concept, taste and vision – is still what everything relies on.

SECTION 3 - GenAI and the Creative Process

Q7. How is Generative AI influencing the way ideas are generated, explored or refined in your work?

P: *In my case, it has not changed the creation of ideas themselves. My ideas still come from the same places: observation, references, experience. What has changed is that I can now turn an idea into an image immediately, without having to search for endless reference pictures that are “sort of” similar.*

I also find that AI shows me more clearly which ideas are truly new. Even though AI works on the basis of existing images, you can still create something that feels very fresh. If something looks strangely familiar, I notice that maybe the idea is not as original as I hoped.

I rarely use AI to come up with the core idea. At most, I might use it for associations, not to have models “freely” invent image concepts for me. For my work, the main change is that I have more time for ideation and refinement, because implementation is faster and more flexible.

Q8. How does GenAI support content creation, campaigns or digital storytelling in your teams?

P: *Almost everywhere, depending on who uses it and how. In a more general sense, it can be very powerful for analysing data – there are plenty of systems for that, and I hope many companies already use them, because having a human do all that would be unnecessary.*

In content creation, I see AI in many places. You have AI creators, you have campaign elements that are AI-generated. There is still a lot of untapped potential. Some use cases are quite obvious: in some scenarios you might not need to fly an influencer somewhere anymore. A good product photo and a good portrait might be enough, and you could create the entire rest in AI. I think many people would welcome that shift, because we all know situations where people are flown somewhere without any real connection to the story or place.

Another strong field is helping smaller brands with the sheer amount of content needed today. You do not need ten different shoots planned out; you can “prompt” for a week and get a large volume of coherent imagery. When a small brand has a clear aesthetic, AI can help it to transport and scale that look quite efficiently.

Q9. What benefits do you see in using GenAI (for example speed, iteration, exploration)?

P: *First, there is a new freedom to express yourself visually without major spatial or financial limitations. You are less dependent on locations, weather or travel budgets.*

Second, the speed from idea to image is higher. It still depends on the project, but overall it is faster than organising a shoot.

Third, you can execute a broader range of aesthetics and ideas. You do not need perfect weather or twenty flights; the technical hurdles become lower. For me, it is both an efficiency gain and an expansion of creative possibilities. You can also work in very imaginative ways, which would not be feasible in traditional production setups.

Q10. What risks do you see for fashion and luxury brands (for example generic aesthetics, loss of emotional depth, brand drift, legal or ethical concerns)?

P: *If you work well with AI, I think the risks are relatively small. Problems arise when brands treat AI as something that is extremely cheap and fast, without recognising the work it takes to hit a specific aesthetic at a high level. When you want high quality and true brand fit, it takes more time and expertise than people who have never used AI usually think – and it will be more expensive, especially if you work with experienced people.*

If a brand hires someone with no fashion background, just because they produced three cool images, it can be difficult to reach what the brand actually needs. If you work with someone who has been in fashion for ten or fifteen years and really understands the codes, they will likely deliver better and more accurate results – but that also requires more investment.

On emotional depth, I am honestly not as worried as many others. A lot of traditional campaigns already look extremely artificial and optimised: heavily retouched, perfect skin, endless lighting and editing. In that context, I am not sure whether it is really “more authentic” just because a human stood there once. Sometimes, AI could even be more honest, because you are not pretending that this is a real, unedited human being.

Where I do see a risk is in human collaboration. If companies think, “here is the briefing, see you in two weeks when the images are done,” they are missing the fact that great work needs exchange and feedback. The only part that is actually faster is the image production. The conceptual forework and dialogue still need time – and if that is cut back too much, quality suffers, and brand alignment suffers.

Q11. In your view, what remains distinctly human in the creative process?

P: *The idea itself always remains human – the creativity and the taste behind it. The outcome can only ever be as good as the person operating the system. I see this every day.*

That applies to images, but also to texts, videos or more marketing-driven work. If someone knows exactly what they want, how to brief a system and how to handle it, they will get very strong results. If someone has no idea what they want and thinks “I’m a CEO now and AI will do everything for me,” it simply will not be good.

So expertise and domain knowledge remain crucial – whether it is beauty, fashion, luxury or something else. AI cannot replace that; it only amplifies what is already there.

SECTION 4 - Substance, Craft & Authenticity in a GenAI Context

Q12. In luxury, craft and material quality are central. How can GenAI be used in a way that still credibly conveys these substantive qualities rather than replacing them with pure spectacle?

P: That is not easy, of course. I think a sensible approach is to use AI more in the background when very specific materials are involved – for example in moodboards, pitches or creating shotlists – and then still photograph or film the real product. This keeps the overall storytelling coherent and anchored in real materials.

You can also see AI as a collaboration tool. I worked on a project with a make-up artist who defined the looks and did all the planning, and I then translated her input into AI visuals. You can bring experts in and treat AI as a kind of translation into another visual context.

Right now, AI has a rather difficult image. Some companies are enthusiastic because they think it is cheap; others reject it because they see it as completely artificial. I am convinced this will change. In ten years, we probably will not ask “AI or not AI” anymore, but rather: what kind of visuals does this story need, and which tool is best – a specific camera, a particular photographer or an AI artist with a certain style.

Q13. Can you think of a case where GenAI or adjacent technologies actually strengthened authenticity or transparency instead of weakening it? What made it work?

P: At the moment, people are generally not thrilled when they see something is AI. Brands that honestly label their AI use do not necessarily benefit, even if the visuals are objectively better than their previous work. The spontaneous response is often “oh, it’s AI”, which is still loaded negatively.

I think the brands that currently benefit the most are those that can now produce a large number of high-quality images but previously lacked the means to do so. They can raise their visual game significantly. Whether audiences perceive that as more authentic depends strongly on how attitudes towards AI evolve. Right now, the reaction is still dominated by scepticism as soon as AI is mentioned.

Q14. What guardrails (technical, ethical, organisational) do you consider important so that symbolic acceleration through GenAI does not detach from underlying product and production realities?

P: The decisive factor is to realise AI visuals with the same quality standards as any other production: same eye for detail, same level of refinement. It cannot be “almost” the brand; it has to sit precisely in the brand universe.

You can see the problem quite often: AI artists add, say, the Louis Vuitton logo to a random image and then claim it could be a Louis campaign. But if you look closely, there are ten things

in the picture that show it absolutely could not be. It is not enough that it is dark blue and has a zip – that is not what luxury is about.

So the guardrail is to work with the same care: look at fabrics, buttons, proportions, atmosphere. Take the brand's aesthetic seriously. Only then does the AI-based staging stay connected to product reality and values, instead of becoming a superficial imitation.

SECTION 5 - Future, Originality & Capabilities

Q15. As GenAI becomes more powerful, how can fashion and luxury brands protect or redefine originality while staying true to their identity?

P: *By really focusing on their idea and not getting distracted. They need to stay true to their vision and aesthetic and define them clearly.*

If this identity is well defined, it becomes easier to use AI in a way that supports and extends it, rather than diluting it. The core is to keep the brand's own vision at the centre and treat AI as a way of expressing that vision, not as a driver that dictates it.

Q16. In the use cases you see, is GenAI mostly used as a tool, as a creative collaborator, or are there moves towards more autonomous creation? How does this affect authorship and responsibility?

P: *All three forms exist. There are purely automated use cases, for example in e-commerce, where models are dressed on white backgrounds. That is mainly about automation.*

Then there are genuinely creative experiments, where teams use AI as a collaborator to explore new visual solutions and aesthetics. You can see this in luxury and in mass market. I have seen AI used for e-commerce and also for full campaigns.

Authorship and responsibility still need to be clearly defined in all of these cases. Someone has to own the idea, make the key decisions and be accountable for the result. AI does not remove that; it just changes the production pathway.

Q17. Which skills and mindsets do you think will be essential for creative, strategic and technical teams over the next few years as GenAI matures?

P: *Besides creativity itself – which becomes even more central – teams need technological understanding. They have to know how to apply AI intelligently in order to serve their concepts and not be afraid of the tools.*

Some people say: "I don't want to use AI, I want to continue thinking myself." But you have to do that anyway – if anything, even more. AI can actually help you to sharpen an idea, because you have to explain it to a system clearly and precisely.

For me, it is similar to refusing to use a calculator because you want to use your brain. It does not make sense. It is great that you can focus so much on the idea, while the tool takes care of the parts that can be automated.

SECTION 6 - Industry Reflection

Q18. Which fashion or luxury brands do you see integrating GenAI in a way that strengthens identity and desire, and why?

P: I do not think there is already a “perfect” case. I know some AI-driven campaigns – for example the ones for bags you probably know as well – but I would not say they used AI perfectly. They look good, but they are still quite experimental. You can tell they were mainly testing how far they can push the technology and how accurately clothes and details can be rendered.

One example I really liked is from Moncler, although it is already a bit older. They used AI creatively at a time when it was much less common, not to automate technical tasks, but to create artistic, surreal visual worlds. They built sets and dressed models using AI in a way that was intentionally not fully realistic and still very aligned with the brand. I thought that looked strong and fitting.

Q19. Which GenAI approaches in fashion or adjacent sectors feel less convincing to you, and what is missing there (from a technical or strategic point of view)?

P: For me, the least convincing approaches are those where naturalness and credibility are missing. This is especially visible in skin, poses and movement – things quickly look overdone and uncanny.

I also feel that many projects lack taste and a feeling for fashion and beauty imagery. There are AI artists who come from completely different fields – for example from IT – and have never really worked with fashion. They may tick obvious boxes like “blue” or “zipper”, but they do not grasp what makes a dress or make-up look truly luxurious: the fabric, the cut, the way it moves, the emotional atmosphere.

If you compare that to photographers who have shot fashion campaigns for decades, the difference is obvious. Their understanding is deeply ingrained. When someone without that background uses AI, it often looks “almost right” but still wrong in a way that is hard to describe – you just feel that the fashion or luxury dimension is missing.

Q20. If you look ahead, what does the next stage of GenAI in fashion and luxury look like, and what should brands start preparing for now?

P: *I think sooner or later everyone will use AI. No brand will be able to avoid it, because the systems keep getting better and it becomes easier to achieve realistic results.*

At the same time, I see a very strong counter-trend, especially in luxury: the “real” will become the ultimate value. We will see an increased focus on analogue photography, on campaigns that can only be created in reality and that are presented as such. Those will gain a different, higher value.

So both developments will happen: more AI and more emphasis on the human, the analogue and the truly crafted. For certain images and experiences, you will still need a team; and when that team is good, the results will be better than anything you could do alone with a tool. In that sense, the human side might actually become more valuable again, because we feel more clearly what kind of human input we need and appreciate it more.