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THE CLASSICAL CATWALK: FASHIONING THE ANCIENT WORLD ON THE RUNWAY

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the understudied connection between antiquity and modern fashion design. In order to show the richness of the field, it provides an overview of how antiquity has been used by designers, particularly in recent years. It also examines one way that fashion houses have connected their consumers to the ancient world, namely through elaborate fashion shows that recreate the imagined spaces of antiquity. It argues that the recreations, both spatial and sartorial, function as intermediate agents for bringing the audience/consumer into contact simultaneously with antiquity and with the fashion label itself through a distinctive form of classical reception. It approaches the study of these fashion shows through the methodological lens of recent approaches by scholars of fashion. The article includes discussions of designs and shows from Chanel, Dolce and Gabbana, Gucci, Mary Katrantzou, and Valentino, among others.