THE CLASSICAL CATWALK: FASHIONING THE ANCIENT WORLD ON THE RUNWAY

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INTRODUCTION[1]

Since the early 2000s, scholarly analyses of the ancient world on screen began to appear more often in publications and at conferences, resulting in a well-established bibliography in this area of research.[2] More recently, scholars in Classical Reception Studies have started to examine the ancient world in other areas of popular culture, including advertising,[3] comic books,[4] video games,[5] and even theme parks.[6] Yet with a few exceptions,[7] and despite a rich body of scholarly work on ancient dress,[8] the world of 20th-21st-century fashion design has been relatively overlooked by both scholars of Classics and fashion historians.[9] Despite the prominent role the ancient world has clearly played in modern fashion, the lack of attention to this area of Classical Reception is not surprising. As fashion historian Valerie Steele (1991) noted in the early 1990s, fashion history was not taken seriously for many years in academia and therefore has been traditionally understudied as a discipline. She has referred to this issue as the "F word"[10] and has said that many scholars found fashion to be a "frivolous topic" (Lardera 2013).[11] But as many scholars have remarked in the years since Steele's early groundbreaking work, there is much to be gained from a study of fashion. As fashion historian Rebecca Arnold (2009: 7) writes, "[f]ashion is not merely clothes, nor is it just a collection of images. Rather, it is a vibrant form of visual and material culture that plays an important role in social and cultural life."

As an initial step into this field, this article has two objectives. First, via a brief overview, it will show the concrete and significant use of antiquity by the fashion world. Next, it will examine 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. 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. The result is often the weaving of the heritage of the labels and their designers into (in this case, ancient) history itself.

FASHION AND THE ANCIENT WORLD

While many people are familiar with the Versace Medusa,[12] goddess dresses, and gladiator sandals, these examples are merely the very surface of an ever-growing use of antiquity by modern fashion design. Below is a non-exhaustive overview, in chart form, of how antiquity is present in the world of high fashion design, with a focus on the last five years, in which there has been a marked increase in drawing upon the ancient world for inspiration at some of the most well-known international fashion houses. Endnotes marked in the chart lead to the links of published images of the designs and fashion shows either on the website of a fashion magazine,[13] the website or other social media account of the label itself, or a video of a fashion show. Images and videos are plentiful online and recommended as a supplement to the reading of the rest of this article.

Fashion Season/Year	Fashion Label	Designer	Overall Theme or Show Title	Relevant details
Pre-Fall 2019[14]	Chanel	Karl Lagerfeld	Ancient Egypt	Setting=Temple of Dendur, MET, NYC; Clothes and jewelry ancient inspired.
Resort 2019[15]	Gucci	Alessandro Michele	Rave in a Cemetery	Setting=Arles, Promenade des Alyscamps Roman necropolis, a few Roman hairstyles,[16] pants with memento mori.[17]
Cruise 2018[18]	Gucci	Alessandro Michele	Roman Rhapsody ad campaign	Setting=modern Rome + apartments. Clothes include wreath head ornaments and a trompe l'œil gown.[19]
Resort 2018[20]	Fausto Puglisi	Fausto Puglisi	-------	Statue of Hercules on shirts.[21] He referred to his ancient-themed t-shirts as designed "for a young Caligula living in La Jolla" (Cardini 2017).
Fall 2018 Ready-to-Wear	Fausto Puglisi	Fausto Puglisi	-------	"All given the ancient Greek and Roman treatment" (Phelps 2018).[22] Clothes include gladiator dresses.
Fall-Winter 2018-9[23]	Dolce and Gabbana	Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana	City of Rome	Models clothed in DG, in front of the Colosseum with men dressed as ancient Romans.[24]
Cruise 2018[25]	Chanel	Karl Lagerfeld	La Modernité de l'Antiquité	Setting=Greek "ruins" of temples, dresses that look like pottery, column shoes, purses with images of owls.
Spring 2017 Couture[26]	Valentino	Pierpaolo Piccioli	Greco-Roman	Goddess dresses, dress with Pandora image (Farra 2017).[27]
Spring 2017 Ready-to-Wear[28]	Mary Katrantzou	Mary Katrantzou	Ancient Greece	Dresses with frescoes and pottery patterns.
Fall 2015 Couture[29]	Valentino	Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli	Mirabilia Romae	Setting= Piazza Mignanelli in city of Rome. Clothing and jewelry=ancient inspired and included eagles, gladiator sandals, hair ornaments.
Fall 2015	Schiaparelli	Bertrand Guyon	-----	Goddess dresses.[30]
Spring 2014 Ready-to-Wear[31]	Dolce and Gabbana	Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana	Sicily	Designs included monuments and coins.
Spring 2013 Menswear[32]	Versace	Donatella Versace	Pugilist	"A nod to classic art, her brother Gianni's favoured time period" (Dezan 2013).[33]

Bridal Fashion Week, 2013[34]	Suneet Varma	Suneet Varma	The Golden Bracelet, Pompeii	Setting=ancient city of Pompeii, including wall paintings.
Spring 2008 Ready-to-Wear[35]	Alberta Ferretti	Alberta Ferretti	Greco-Roman	Designs included goddess dresses, "togas," dresses that looked like columns.[36]
Spring 2008 Ready-to-Wear[37]	Vera Wang	Vera Wang	----	Ancient Rome inspired clothes.
2007[38]	Valentino	Valentino Garavani	Valentino a Roma, 45 Years of Style	Held at the Ara Pacis Museum, Rome. Dresses set up around the altar itself, including signature red dresses.
Spring/Summer 1997[39]	Givenchy	Alexander McQueen	The Search for the Golden Fleece	Mythological theme. Designs included lots of gold and white clothing, elaborate head ornaments, and wings.

The chart above refers to collections in which the ancient world plays some role, whether it be in the products themselves, in the spectacle of the fashion show, or the advertising campaign. At a glance, one can easily see the prevalence of the ancient world as a theme for fashion designers. Designers have taken inspiration from antiquity, or at least from the popular representations of it or their own imaginings of it. Sometimes the inspiration is clearly Roman, sometimes clearly Greek, but more often it is a conflation of ancient civilizations, ancient places, and time periods. Accuracy is not the point here because much like the ancient world(s) recreated in other forms of classical reception such as film, fashion designers play with the pieces that best suit them and their labels. For example, Alberta Ferretti in 2008 had a collection that Sarah Mower (2007) in *Vogue* described as "steer[ing] her collection in the direction of Greco-Roman imagery, all goddess drapery, toga-tunics, and mini gladiator skirts." The collection is neither Greek nor Roman, but "ancient," consisting of items that would be familiar to a fan of the ancients in popular culture.

That said, there are some patterns and themes that emerge in fashion's use of antiquity. Many designers have had a preference for the use of mythology in their designs. For example, Alexander McQueen in his first show for the fashion house Givenchy in 1997 used a Greek myth theme with the title "The Search for the Golden Fleece."[40] Karl Lagerfeld designed the 2011 Pirelli calendar with a myth theme, styling models and actors as Greek and Roman gods and heroes.[41] On a smaller scale, Pierpaolo Piccioli created a crepe dress with an image of Daphne and Apollo for the Valentino couture collection in Fall 2018.[42] The overall collection was described by Sally Singer (2018) in *Vogue* as "a mashup of Greek mythology, 17th- and 18th-century painting, the films of Pasolini, and the photographs of Deborah Turbeville, medieval armor, and Ziggy Stardust." Some designers have included art historical imitations, such as frescoes and vases on their clothing. Greek designer Mary Katrantzou placed such images on her clothes in her 2017 Spring collection.[43] She called her work "New Classical" and she claimed inspiration for it from Minoan artifacts, Mycenean pottery, and amphora designs. Her own website describes her designs in the following terms: "[t]he language is Mary Katrantzou, but the key is Greek…[it is] "Thucydides and Clytemnestra on acid."[44] Other designers have taken advantage of specific ancient sites, as Karl Lagerfeld did for Chanel with Greek temples in Spring 2018, Pierpaolo Piccioli and Maria Grazia Chiuri for Valentino with the city of Rome in 2015, Dolce and Gabbana with the monuments of Sicily in Spring 2014, and Suneet Varma with Pompeii in 2013.

Individual designers have used the ancient world in a way that seemingly tries to create an imagined continuum between past and present, and fashion writers have often noted these connections. One need only look at Vera Wang's proclaimed ancient Rome inspired collection for Spring 2008 that included peplum jackets and what critics (Phelps 2007) referred to as "reimagin[ed] togas." Wang herself described in part the collection as follows: "From the colors found in Nature, which the Romans worshiped… to the colors of their civilization (as my imagination would have me believe) ancient Rome represented an energetic,

romantic take on life from which to play with cut, color, and construction" (Martinez 2008). While there is a foundation in ancient Rome, this is her Rome. Similarly, Donatella Versace's menswear line in 2013, which she referred to as "Pugilist," was described by Tim Blanks (2012) in *Vogue* "as a Roman orgy staged in a Miami discotheque." According to this same piece, Versace was making statements before the show about young people needing to be "gladiators on behalf of their rights." More recently, Alessandro Michele, commenting to *The New York Times* on his work for the label Valentino, noted the ability of clothing designs to enable someone to be in a space "between imagination and reality," adding: "A dress is like a passaporto, no?" (O'Grady 2018).

<div align="center">THE CLASSICAL CATWALK</div>

Fashion theorists have recently noted the need for more interrogation of the spaces of fashion, specifically spaces like the runway and the retail store.[45] These spaces are crucial to the way the modern fashion world plays a role in the reception of the ancient world, with designers manipulating them to determine how ancient-themed clothes are displayed and consumed. At times, the ancient world has been used as mere backdrop on the runway with seemingly little connection to the clothes being modeled for that season. For example, Gucci's Pre-Fall 2016 setting was modelled on a Pompeian villa without obvious connection to the clothing designs.[46] But these are not the examples under examination in this section. Instead, the case studies below are examples of what I would call the Classical Catwalk, in which both the display spaces and the clothes have a connection to antiquity. The fashion space might be an elaborate set specifically constructed to recall the ancient world, or at least to recall how a modern audience might imagine the ancient world. It might also be a well-known urban space, such as the streets of Rome, with its own palimpsestic qualities and connections to antiquity, that is being reused as a runway to invoke the ancients.

Before turning to these examples, it is helpful to better understand the evolution of runway shows and audience dynamics. Runway shows began as small gatherings meant to exhibit the creations of fashion designers to particular patrons and were not always the grand performances we see today.[47] The small gatherings expanded from "salon shows" (Stark 2018:11) into fashion parades and eventually became the international and celebrity-thronged events of the present.[48] Unfortunately there is still no complete history of the fashion runway, so it remains difficult to trace all of the historical transformations of this cultural practice.[49] But one specific change over time can be noted: the runway has become increasingly artistic and spectacular. As fashion scholar and curator Lydia Kamitsis notes (2009: 93), in the 1960s shows started to become events, what she calls "artistic happening[s],"[50] with music and a performance in interesting spaces. In the late twentieth century the shows became even more elaborate. According to Kamitsis (2009: 96), "From then on the choice of location, stage design, choreography, background music and lighting became almost as important as the collection itself. And the dress designer became an artistic director and surrounded himself with specialists in each of these domains."[51] Some shows today still have models walking back and forth in sparsely-designed spaces and sometimes admittedly this simple space is wielded with purpose. However, for other designers, the catwalk itself has become a more overtly performative space. It is not just a showing of the designer's clothes, but the larger demonstration of the fashion designer as an artist that stretches far beyond the clothing.[52]

The goals of the displays (not only in fashion shows, but also in retail spaces and museums) have also changed in terms of audience interaction and it is this point that is most important for audience engagement with ancient worlds. Fashion scholar José Teunissen (2013: 212) well explicates that the "desired goal [of display and of fashion space] is to direct the viewers' attention not to the object itself but to their own relationship with it. Designers want their audience to 'get to know' the material object in order to understand its underlying conceptual idea or register. It is this cognitive aspect that elicits an emotional response in the viewer, provoking ideas, memories, and stories." Teunissen (2013: 212) further notes that fashion is a "carrier of ideas comparable to a work of art" and that the catwalk and retail stores have become "hybrid locations that ever more closely resemble art destinations, such as museums, galleries, and theaters." This desire to provoke a cognitive reaction in the spectators has made possible the enhanced performances at current fashion shows. Spectators become part of the spectacle through imagining stories built on the world only semi-created in front of them. The viewers, given just a few notes to explain the inspiration for the

show, weave their own narratives into this semi-constructed world. For the consumers, the shows provide a connection to the objects through the space of the spectacle.

In an age when shows are becomingly increasingly spectacular, worlds, imaginary or otherwise, are regularly formed in the contained space of the runway show. For example, Chanel for the 2019 Cruise collection, constructed a cruise ship setting with a ship named *La Pausa*, after Coco Chanel's summer home.[53] For the Spring 2019 couture collection for Dior, Maria Grazia Chiuri created the space and setting of a circus.[54] Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel for Spring 2019 created a beach setting (complete with sand and water at the boundary of the front row of spectators) inside the Grand Palais in Paris.[55] For the Fall 2014 Ready-to-Wear collection, the same label had a supermarket-themed show,[56] for the Spring 2016 Ready-to-Wear collection an airport terminal,[57] and for the Fall 2015 Ready-to-Wear collection a bistro setting in which the participants were placed in booths and given champagne, making the experience even more interactive than most shows (Sherman 2015).[58]

The case studies that follow aim to show what an ancient world refracted through the eyes of a fashion designer looks like and how these performances are able to draw audiences into these newly designed worlds. For the Cruise collection of 2018, Karl Lagerfeld produced an ancient Greece-themed show for Chanel titled "The Modernity of Antiquity."[59] There were eighty-five new looks in this collection alone that were visually connected to the created space. According to Alexander Fury (2017) in *The New York Times*, the ancient Greek-inspired set took three weeks to construct and nine days to assemble.[60] Although the show was held in Paris at the Grand Palais, the spectators were transported to the temples of ancient Greece, at least the fragmentary forms of them. As others have noted (e.g. Fury 2017 and Leitch 2017), the setting looked more like an archaeological excavation than a scene from a living ancient Greek society. In a room with walls painted beige and a seeming sunset as well, there were numerous chipped columns standing on ground that looked the color of sand, stones all around, and with some foliage from an olive tree to give the impression of the outdoor landscape. Besides the image of ruins, the audience was meant to see something larger than the ancient world here, as was made obvious by the scaffolding and the bits of scattered statues. A Venus statue from Chanel's apartment served as one of the points of inspiration for Lagerfeld and was featured on the invitation (Fury 2017).[61] He also supposedly used as inspiration the Parthenon and the Temple of Poseidon on Cape Sounion (Fury 2017). The clothes are reminiscent of museum objects, with dresses that resemble vases and gladiator sandals with the heels of ancient columns. Buttons on clothing take the form of ancient coins and even a purse has a connection to the ancient world, with an owl design next to the symbol of Chanel. Here in the space of the show, the objects of vases, columns, bracelets, head ornaments, and coins come to life on moving models and the runway space surpasses the museum. Lagerfeld described his own show as follows: "To create the future, you have to pay attention to the past" (Fury 2017). But what past? He could well be discussing ancient Greece, but one suspects he is also referring here to Chanel history and Gabrielle Chanel's interest in ancient Greece. Besides the Venus statue in her apartment, Chanel had designed the costumes for Jean Cocteau's *Antigone* in 1922 (Garelick 2014: 170-171; Bièvre-Perrin and Besnard 2017; Hunt 2017). Lagerfeld does not pretend to present here more than his refracted vision of antiquity. He stated that "[r]eality is of no interest to me. I use what I like. My Greece is an idea" (Fury 2017). Lagerfeld was also expressing his own connection to the past. On the Chanel website, he said: "I'm expressing through fashion a fascination I've had since childhood. The first book I read was Homer."[62]

The next case study takes place in ancient Rome, but again with a twist of the modern and a similarly refracted image of antiquity, this one again by the designer's connection to the ancient place. In 2007, Valentino had a forty-five-year retrospective inside the Ara Pacis, with dresses placed around the altar.[63] Events were also held all around the city, including a feast at the Villa Borghese and a performance at the Temple of Venus and Rome in the Roman Forum, events captured for posterity in the documentary *Valentino: The Last Emperor* (2008). The city was celebrated along with the designer, in a most public display of the connection of the label to the city. Later that same year, Valentino announced he would resign from the company (Menkes 2007c). In 2015, Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli, creative designers for Valentino, continued this tradition of showcasing the city and blending the fashion into the urban landscape with their major exhibition *Mirabilia Romae* and a closing fashion show, celebrating the opening

of a new flagship store for the fashion house in Piazza di Spagna.[64] Instead of creating its own ancient set as Chanel did in 2018, Chiuri and Piccioli used the city of Rome itself as the runway for *Mirabilia Romae*, with the name of the exhibition recalling *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*, a medieval text that was a guide to the city. They described their show, which was really a ten-location display across the city, in the following way: "Through our Valentino Mirabilia Romae project we wanted to depict through our eyes the beauties of the city of Rome, [a] constant source of inspiration for us. We love its beauty, its contrasts, its multiple facets, its ability to change in time and to project itself in the future" (Tortora 2015). They achieved their vision through an exhibition around the city called *La Mostra Diffusa*, curated with art historian Filippo Cosmelli (Garrigues 2015).[65] Pieces by Valentino appeared in surprising spots around the city, such as in a mithraeum and in the Biblioteca Casanatense. The event closed with a more traditional fashion show in Palazzo Mignanelli, which today is the Roman headquarters of the label. By holding the show outdoors in the actual space of the city, the connection between label and city was made evident. Writers online (Chabbott 2015; Wischhover 2015) described the collection as fitting into the cultural contexts of not only ancient Rome, but also *Game of Thrones*. The collection consisted of dresses in mostly solid colors of black, red, and gold with elaborate jewelry and numerous eagles, meant to be both a symbol of ancient Rome and also to recall a recently uncovered eagle at the Valentino atelier (Friedman 2015).[66] Other dresses invoked the ceiling of the Pantheon and parts of the Colosseum (Friedman 2015). Like with the Chanel show, it was the confluence of ancient and modern that was integral to how the audience viewed this show. The label used the spaces of the city as more than a mere staging ground: they combined the city's history with the history of the label to create a larger meaning. The audience was sitting on top of this layered history.

In the book *Mirabilia Romae*, with an introduction by art curator Francesco Bonami, the label again lays claim to a close connection to the city of Rome:

> To look at Rome today and to look at Valentino is to look at both a woven tapestry of history and a slow accumulation of layers in which memories and inspiration are confronted by imagination and desires.… Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pier Paolo Piccioli are Valentinos. Carrying their vision over a new realm that keeps building its strength, adding layer after layer to its own identity, shedding the past while honoring the heritage of history. (2015: 19)

The author is here comparing the palimpsest of the city of Rome to the palimpsest of the fashion label. The city and the label are eternally linked with an addition that Chiuri and Piccioli are Romans themselves and therefore "rooted" in the identity of the city. At a later point in the book (Bonami 2015: 42), the label Valentino is compared to Ovid: "Valentino is perhaps the Ovid, the great ancient Roman poet, of the Fashion Empire."

Valentino is not the only label to make a connection between its line and the city of Rome. In Summer 2018, Dolce and Gabbana also connected their label to the ancient city of Rome with its advertising campaign for Fall 2018 using the hashtag #DGROMA.[67] The campaign included magazine ads and Twitter ads featuring models in Dolce and Gabbana clothes in front of ancient monuments, such as the Colosseum, next to people dressed as ancient Romans.

The next case study is the use of antiquity in a fashion show by Gucci, a label that has used antiquity numerous times in recent years. Most recently in June 2018, Gucci held its Resort 2019 show in Alyscamps, outside of Arles in southern France, at the site of a former Roman necropolis. On their website, Gucci described the show as "Rave in a Cemetery."[68] Not all of the fashions were related to the ancient world, but models did sport hairdos that Gucci claimed on its own Twitter feed were "inspired by stone busts from the end of the Roman Empire."[69]

For its Spring Summer 2018 show held in Milan in September 2017, Gucci again turned to the ancient world for its setting, at least in part. On its Instagram feed, Gucci's creative director and designer Alessandro Michele described the setting for the show: "The setting's captions written into the floor resemble a modern translation of an ancient map featuring [the] Roman poet Orazio's country home. The runway is [the] Tiber

river; while the map is juxtaposed with the layout of the imperial Fora, dotted with classical statues from different periods and cultures."[70] He then goes on to claim other Indian, Aztec, and Egyptian inspirations. The multi-temporal setting tells us that the precise temporal setting of the show is unimportant; rather, what matters is the feel of the spatial setting.

Alessandro Michele was born in Rome and studied costume and fashion there at the Accademia di Costume e di Moda as well,[71] so we may not be surprised that he often turns to classical antiquity for inspiration. In an interview for *The New York Times* (Friedman 2015b), he said "You can feel the power of this old city [Rome]… Old things make me feel very contemporary. It's really about that kind of contradiction between the past and the future."[72] This is not the only time that Michele has used the settings and objects of the ancient world combined with Gucci dress. For example, the Gucci Cruise collection in 2018 was advertised on Twitter with busts of Poseidon[73] and Apollo[74] with ties hanging from their mouths. Likewise, for the Roman Rhapsody advertising campaign for Spring 2018, there were many touches of antiquity and the adverts were set in parks and apartments around the city.

CONCLUSION

As shown above, the occurrences of the ancient world being recreated for fashion are becoming increasingly common and a number of fashion designers have linked their shows and advertising to the heritage of the labels themselves. But why should we consider them a form of reception distinct from others? To what can we compare them to better understand their effects on the audience? In order to appreciate their originality, one should compare them to other ways an audience might interact with the ancient world, such as movies or theatre, theme parks, or virtual reality. First, one should note that fashion shows are not quite like movies or the theatre, although they may be inspired by them at times. One might argue that fashion shows, like movies or plays, have a power to help the audience experience a conceived idea of the past and form some identification to what they are seeing. In part, this can be true. But movies and plays usually have clear narrative arcs and provide less room for imagination than fashion shows. In addition, the viewing experience itself is different. While spectators might watch a movie or a play with a large group in a theatre, they are often in the dark, only mildly aware of the people watching with them. Fashion shows happen under bright lights, with cameras flashing, and part of the point of the experience is to see the people around you and to be seen by them. The spectators provide a grounding in the present day and therefore a point of disconnect from the past. In fact, at the fashion show, the presence of the audience is a main part of the spectacle of the show. The composition of the audience can determine the amount of social media a show receives. The front row, also known as the frow, is particularly important in this respect.[75] The more celebrities and fashion influencers a show attracts, the further the ideas of the show are disseminated. The audience may help sell the clothes and determine the fashion designer as an artist, but it may also serve as the important point of disconnect between past and present that is vital to how a fashion show and its representation of a theme are interpreted.

We might then ask if the ancient world-themed fashion shows function more like theme parks than movies or plays. Classicist Filippo Carlà has written on the topic of theme parks with themes based on antiquity, such as ones inspired by Greek mythology. He argues that "[s]uch historical themed spaces are immersive environments that allow visitors to feel as if they were traveling through time and directly experiencing the historical Other" (Carlà 2016: 20). This immersive quality of theme parks is clearly missing in fashion shows, which typically maintain a clear spatial divide between the spectacle and the spectator.

One might wonder next if the experience is more akin to virtual reality. But yet again, and for the same reason, this comparison is not quite right. In virtual reality, participants wear goggles and enter the three-dimensional world of the simulation, disconnecting themselves from the spaces of their own world and attempting to enter another. With the fashion show, audience members remain present with other participants and part of the experience is that it is shared. Moreover, through the audience a person remains connected to current society and cannot fully engage with the ancient world. The fashion show is more active than a movie and more real, up close and in front of the audience, but they cannot escape their own world. As fashion designer and scholar Gill Stark (2018: 6) has explained, part of a fashion show is for the

audience to "collectively consume the experience." In addition, Luca Marchetti and Emanuele Quinz (2009: 122) note the effect of this communal experience: "the fact that we are sharing a space and a time, we are part of an event, we are creating a community. In this context clothes take on a different value: they become interface."[76] For the audience at an ancient world-themed fashion show, the clothes and the sets become the "interface" between antiquity and the label.

It seems then that fashion shows cannot be placed into the same category of reception as movies, plays, theme parks, or virtual reality. They occupy instead their own functional space in reception, refracting the ancient world through an experience that does not hide the modern elements, but rather amplifies and utilises them with purpose. The audience participates in a way that allows them to be drawn into the grand spectacle of antiquity, but never truly leaving the comforts of their own world. The image of the past is overtly refracted through that of the present, resulting in the capability for a label to construct its own fashion history.

While all receptions may be refracted in some way through the modern world, in this case we are meant to see very clearly the refraction as we experience it. In other words, it is the refraction that is important. It is in the very setting that we are reminded that the ancient worlds of Greece and Rome are those of other times. We experience the setting of the past, going so far as to imagine ourselves in ancient-inspired dress, but in the end it remains pretend. The modern world beckons to us too easily in these settings. Fashion shows, while providing some means of transport to ancient stories, are no Westworld, nor are they meant to be.

The study above is just one small window into the dynamics of how modern fashion design and the ancient world have been brought into dialogue with each other. While an examination of fashion shows can provide us with some reasons why it is important for scholars of reception to study fashion more generally, such a study should eventually be broadened, with a consideration of specific designers, in-depth studies of the clothing designs themselves, and the other display spaces such as retail stores and window displays.

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[1] I would like to thank the participants of the Twenty-First Century Popular Classics panel at the Celtic Classics Conference in July 2018 for their valuable feedback on a draft of this work. I would also like to thank Mitchell Toolan for aiding in the compiling of relevant runway shows and Eliza Burbano for inspiring me to work on this topic.

[2] For a list of examples, see Solomon (2010: 435-36).

[3] Carlà-Uhink, García Morcillo, and Walde (2017).

[4] Kovacs and Marshall (2011); Kovacs and Marshall (2016).

[5] Lowe (2009); Christesen and Machado (2010).

[6] Carlà and Freitag (2015).

[7] Ronnick (2005); Platt (2016); Bièvre-Perrin and Besnard (2017); Renault (2018); Blouin (2019). In addition, there was a panel at the 2017 CAMWS on "Styling the Past," organised by Monica S. Cyrino, that included papers on the influence of Cleopatra on fashion (by Kelly Olson, Monica S. Cyrino, and Anise Strong), as well as the influence of ancient Greece on nineteenth-century women's fashion (by Rebecca F. Kennedy).

[8] E.g. Sebesta and Bonfante (2001); Llewelyn-Jones (2002); Edmondson and Keith (2008); Olson (2008); Olson (2017); Harlow (2017).

⁹ An interesting comparison to this topic could be made with the Costume Institute exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2018 titled *Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination*, and with a 2003 exhibit *Goddess*: *The Classical Mode*. See Bolton (2018) and Koda (2003) respectively.

¹⁰ Steele, in addition to being a prominent scholar in fashion studies and the author of many books on fashion history, is also the director and curator at the Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. http://www.fitnyc.edu/museum/about/director.php. On Steele, see also Menkes (2012).

¹¹ For a video of Steele in conversation on this topic, see here: http://www.casaitaliananyu.org/node/6268.

¹² On Versace and Medusa, see Ronnick (2005).

¹³ There will be many references to *Vogue* in this article, since the magazine displays full fashion collections for any given season.

¹⁴https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/pre-fall-2019/chanel#coverage; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7c4d9061V0.

¹⁵https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2019/gucci; https://www.gucci.com/us/en/st/stories/runway/article/cruise-2019-details.

¹⁶ https://www.gucci.com/us/en/st/stories/runway/article/cruise-2019-details. Third model in line has a Roman-inspired hairstyle. See also https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2019/gucci/slideshow/collection#3.

¹⁷ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2019/gucci/slideshow/collection#73.

¹⁸ https://www.gucci.com/us/en/st/stories/advertising-campaign/article/cruise-2018.

¹⁹ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2018/gucci/slideshow/collection#19.

²⁰ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2018/fausto-puglisi.

²¹ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2018/fausto-puglisi/slideshow/collection#30.

²² https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2018-ready-to-wear/fausto-puglisi#coverage.

²³https://fashionista.com/2018/07/dolce-gabbana-fall-2018-ad-campaign#&gid=ci022f324c600124ca&pid=dolce-and-gabbana-winter-2019-woman-advertising-campaign-12s.

²⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPkgNb6nZao.

²⁵ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2018/chanel.

²⁶https://www.vogue.com/article/valentino-spring-2017-couture-pierpaolo-piccioli-greek-mythology-pandora-gown.

²⁷ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2017-couture/valentino/slideshow/collection#47.

²⁸ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2017-ready-to-wear/mary-katrantzou.

²⁹ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2015-couture/valentino.

³⁰ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2015-couture/schiaparelli/slideshow/collection#33.

³¹ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2014-ready-to-wear/dolce-gabbana.

³² https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2013-menswear/versace.

³³ https://www.vogue.co.uk/shows/spring-summer-2013-menswear/versace.

³⁴ https://www.vogue.in/content/suneet-varma-1/.

³⁵ https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2008-ready-to-wear/alberta-ferretti.

[36]https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2008-ready-to-wear/alberta-ferretti/slideshow/collection#49.

[37] https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2008-ready-to-wear/vera-wang.

[38] http://www.arapacis.it/en/mostre_ed_eventi/mostre/valentino_a_roma.

[39]https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/alexander-mcqueen-s-first-collection-for-givenchy-search-for-the-golden-fleece/3AGqKWg45-Ja8A.

[40] https://en.vogue.me/archive/backstage-confidential/alexander-mcqueen-givenchy-haute-couture-debut-1997/.

[41]https://www.pirelli.com/tire/us/en/news/2010/11/30/pirelli-in-moscow-presenting-the-2011-calendar-"mythology"created-by-karl-lagerfeld/.

[42] https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2018-couture/valentino/slideshow/collection#11.

[43] See also Bièvre-Perrin and Besnard (2017) on this designer.

[44] https://www.marykatrantzou.com/collections/spring-summer-2017/.

[45] Potvin (2009), Crewe (2017: 1-11); Crewe 2016, Rocamora (2013).

[46] https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/pre-fall-2016/gucci#coverage.

[47] On the fashion show, see e.g. Evans (2001); Teunissen (2006); Idacavage (2016); Blanchard (2018); Stark (2018).

[48] On the fashion parades, see e.g. Evans (2001: 273); Idacavage (2016); Stark (2018: 18).

[49] See e.g. Fortini (2006), who quotes Valerie Steele as saying "The topic of fashion shows remains to find its historian." See Stark (2018: 9-44) for the "evolution of the fashion show."

[50] "The presentation of a new collection had become a parade, a performance, an artistic 'happening'."

[51] Kamitsis (2009: 103) says in a note that the term "artistic director" was not actually used for the designer, but "seems appropriate for designating the change in the designer's role."

[52] As Skov, Skjold, Moeran, Larsen, and Csaba (2009) have well stated: "it is the défilé that makes the designer an artist, and not merely a dressmaker."

[53] https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/resort-2019/chanel.

[54] https://fashionista.com/2019/01/christian-dior-couture-2019-review,

[55]https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/fashion-week/a23561061/chanel-beach-spring-2019-show/; https://fashionista.com/2018/10/chanel-spring-2019-review.

[56] https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/fall-2014-ready-to-wear/chanel.

[57] https://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2016-ready-to-wear/chanel.

[58] https://fashionista.com/2015/03/chanel-fall-2015.

[59] For a video of the show, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDZ9utxSOlE. For more on this show, see Bièvre-Perrin and Besnard (2017).

[60] Images of the sets can be found here: https://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2017/05/03/t-magazine/fashion/chanels-2018-cruise-show-in-paris/s/Chanel-Cruise-slide-7GT2.html.

[61] See the invitation here: https://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2017/05/03/t-magazine/fashion/chanels-2018-cruise-show-in-paris/s/Chanel-Cruise-slide-YZQD.html.

[62] https://www.chanel.com/en_MY/fashion/news/2017/05/a-modern-mythology.html.

[63] http://www.arapacis.it/en/mostre_ed_eventi/mostre/valentino_a_roma. See also Horyn (2007), Menkes (2007a) and Menkes (2007b) for summaries of the event.

[64] Chiuri and Piccioli had worked for years at the label designing accessories. After the retirement of Valentino and the passing of a few seasons, they were named creative directors. https://www.valentino.com/en-us/maison/creative-direction.

[65] For a video of the exhibition, see here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnzYvny2QWI&feature=youtu.be.

[66] See here for some images: https://www.vogue.fr/fashion/fashion-news/diaporama/mirabilia-romae-valentino-celebrates-the-wonders-of-rome/21505.

[67] https://fashionista.com/2018/07/dolce-gabbana-fall-2018-ad-campaign. The label has also had ad campaigns for other Italian cities, including Venice and Naples.

[68] https://www.gucci.com/us/en/st/stories/runway/article/cruise-2019-details.

[69] https://twitter.com/gucci/status/1005238147666628609?lang=en.

[70] https://www.instagram.com/p/BZQ7h09F9d4/?hl=en&taken-by=gucci/embedtarget=. For more on this show, see Renault (2018).

[71] See Mead (2016) on Michele's study of costume, as well as other biographical details that inform his work.

[72] Friedman (2015), in the audio of the interview.

[73] https://twitter.com/gucci/status/944272859689574400?lang=en.

[74] https://twitter.com/gucci/status/944281488966803458?lang=en.

[75] On the frow, see Blanchard (2018).

[76] See Teunissen (2013: 206) on this passage.