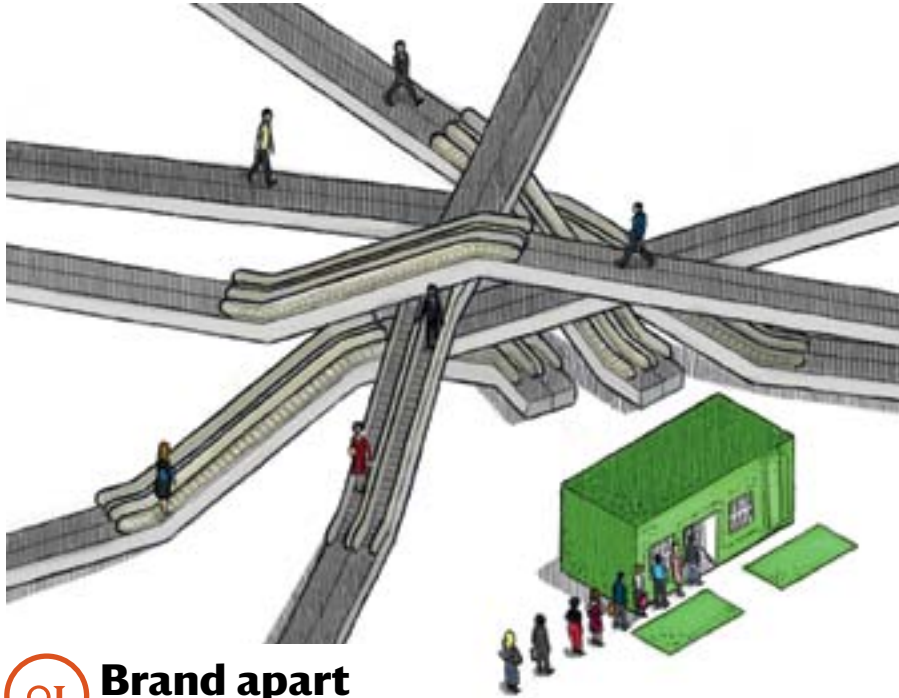


THE VINSON VIEW

Inside man and master shopper Nick Vinson on the who, what, when, where and why



01 Brand apart

Bottega Veneta's new Hollywood store is a welcome departure

As luxury brands get more and more powerful, their global reach expands, reflecting their success. The strategic focus today is on developing own-store networks (bottom line: why share the proceeds with a third party if you can afford to do it alone?) over, say, traditional multi-brand doors. Even with department stores, the mantra moved to concession from wholesale, giving more control over what is sold and how. The downside is that everything, already available to everyone everywhere, just looks the same all over the world. A local offering may be tailored by store managers and regional offices, but it does not match the knack of a shop floor-led buyer. The curatorial skills, perspective and edit that make the best stores interesting and dynamic are under threat.

Bottega Veneta's new Los Angeles store shows how a brand can win on both fronts. The one-storey unit has an ivy-covered façade and an all-white interior with timber ceilings, mesh screens, felt slab surfaces and parquet floors. The gallery feel is unlike any store in the brand's network and the products appear to be curated specifically for the clientele and climate.

It's LA, so there is plenty of black and grey and quite a lot of leather. What is also notable is that the brand's homeware and furniture get much higher visibility. Typically stand-outs precisely because they don't stand out, they are usually so discreet

they blend in and get mistaken for shop fittings. Here, the consoles, desks, lamps and seating crafted by Poltrona Frau, displayed on white, felt-covered platforms, get the visibility they deserve.

Bottega Veneta is not the only mega-brand breaking the mould. Chanel's pop-up boutiques that open seasonally in locations such as Cannes and St Tropez are fun and interesting. The brand's 'invasion' of Dover Street Market in 2008 and its co-branded store with Colette were the most memorable. Louis Vuitton has had a go in Miami, Forte dei Marmi and Florence but, although the stores were far from standard, they could be taken further, as was the case in Tokyo, where the brand teamed up with Comme des Garçons (it's always Rei Kawakubo that leads the way). Miu Miu's pop-up members' club at London's Café Royal included a sales space inspired by a show set and a unique offering, with products designed in collaboration with Vivienne Westwood and Stephen Jones.

Big brands must be brave and go a step further. I want to see stores with innovative architecture, dynamic displays and products selected by third parties with a real point of view. Allow them to edit, curate the products, bring in collaborators, inspire special editions and so offer something totally unique that can't be found in any mall. Scarcity is true luxury today.

Bottega Veneta, 8445 Melrose Place, Los Angeles



02

Craft work

During Frieze London, 14-20 October, Clare Corrigan, a designer who has worked with Marc Jacobs and Louis Vuitton, presents 'Nusch Fleuriste' at Fortnum & Mason. Her 'modern-day survey' of craftsmen includes collaborations with British metalworkers, weavers, potters and glassblowers. www.nuschlondon.com



03

High flyers

For his spring/summer menswear show, Raf Simons took guests to Le Bourget airport, where we viewed his collection from inside a series of Jean Prouvé architectural pavilions or beneath a kinetic Alexander Calder mobile, courtesy of Gagosian Gallery Paris and Galerie Patrick Seguin. www.rafsimons.com

FIVE HIGHLIGHTS OF PARIS MEN'S FASHION WEEK

Peter Saville's 80, one-off Lacoste shirts. The alligator evolves. (See page 105 for feature.)

Véronique Nichanian celebrating 25 years as the creative force of Hermès' men's universe.

Berluti's post-show barbecue in a *hôtel particulier* in Place des Vosges.



Haider Ackermann's menswear debut. Small, perfectly formed and well-received.

Valentino's navy blue alligator Havaianas. An unusual but very successful alliance.