Abstract expression

Fall fashion drawn from the art world

THE TO-DO LIST: Introducing a month-by-month guide to must-visit exhibitions, notable collaborations and creative moments
SEPTEMBER 2022

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THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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Editor’s Letter

Double vision

Moments when style and art meet can be tricky to report on. Anyone who works in the applied arts – jewellery, interiors, graphic design, etc. – knows that an attempt to add conceptual weight to their work can often be cynically dismissed, while a connoisseur calling a visual artist “fashionable” is rarely meant as a compliment. If you’ve had the opportunity to watch all sorts of creative minds at work, however, you know there’s usually a common impulse to make something insightful and inspiring that drives their pursuits.

It’s in that spirit that we assembled this issue of Style Advisor, which explores the season’s notable connections between the visual arts and style. These moments of overlap can be fall collections that reference the work of artists and aesthetic movements including those profiled in our fashion feature, “Art of the matter” (PAGE 28). It can be a curator such as Mia Nielsen reflecting on ways to make the appreciation of artful objects part of the look of your living space (“Creation story,” PAGE 46). Or it can be a designer such as Alexander McQueen’s Sarah Burton foraging through the zeitgeist to imbue her work (pictured above and on PAGE 35) with a deeper meaning – in this season’s case, how mycelium symbolizes the value of community.

Our interest in art is not a passing fad. In every issue, you’ll find our new To-Do List of exhibitions and collaborations to add to your calendar (PAGE 8) as well as a page focused on art in our Essentials section (PAGE 21). They both evolved out of contributor Odessa Paloma Parker’s pandemic impulse to stay creatively energized via visits to local galleries. Her experience speaks to the payoff of searching out bold and innovative ideas, and not being too picky about where you find them.

Andrew Sardone
Editorial Director

Contributors

Regular contributor ODessa PaloMa PaRKer makes her debut as the magazine’s contributing art editor via a series of art-meets-style assignments including a profile of photographer Adetona Omokanye and how he incorporates fashion into his documentary work (“Spiritual awakening,” PAGE 10). When it’s time to get creative, the Toronto-based writer, editor and stylist says she typically turns up the volume on her stereo. “It’s the most easily accessible way to let my mind float past self-limiting thoughts and external preoccupations,” she says. Parker recently launched Opaloma, an e-newsletter she describes as “part Toronto-centric art-crawl itinerary, part artistic-happening compendium and part lifestyle digest,” and is also working on a fashion label focused on upcycling that will launch in 2023.

Hailing from Montreal, journalist, writer and creative storyteller SARAH MICho now calls Paris, France, home. For this issue, Micho wrote “Drawing attention” (PAGE 35), a profile of artist Sarah Alinia Ziazi, who created the mural seen on the magazine’s cover and in its fashion feature. Micho, who has contributed stories to The Globe and Mail about black hair in the workplace and the artistic landscape in Calgary, says that feeding off her personal relationships helps to stimulate her creativity including “my deep friendships with whom I discuss life with, my community of creatives, films, museums, fashion and art.” Micho feels that having multiple sources of inspiration reflects her desire to live a diverse and fulfilling life.

KRISTEN LIIM TUNG created a series of original sculptures for the accessory feature “Pearl wisdom” (PAGE 38), an assignment she says provided the rare opportunity to combine her skills as both a ceramicist and prop stylist. For this Toronto-based multimedia artist, visual imagery opens the floodgates to creativity. “Nature and sunsets have inspired colour combos and I’ve built ideas around interesting looking fruit or a wispy looking plant,” she says. She also likes to flex her artistic muscles via a variety of mediums, craft techniques and excursions. “There’s always something to be gained by looking at flowers, travelling and a good grocery store or bakery visit,” she says.
A lighthearted day
To-Do List

Art start

The new To-Do List compiles a calendar of inspiring moments when style meets visual art, music, books and other creative pursuits. This fall’s happenings chronicle the ways culture and craft are influencing everything from houseware collections to blockbuster exhibitions.

SEPTEMBER

12. CERAMICS WEEK, a new initiative from retailer Ssense’s (ssense.com) Everything Else lifestyle department, starts today. It presents captivating works by five artists including Vancouver’s Nathalie Paulinelli and France’s Lola Moyras (pictured right).

17. Haar artist Gordon Shadrach speaks about DIS/MANTLE, his residency and exhibition project on view at Toronto’s Spadina Museum (toronto.ca). It provides an Afro-futuristic survey of the legacy of a woman who worked as a laundress at the home when it was a private residence. The ambitious show also includes elements by muralist Elsier Elliott and mixed media artist Mora Shump.

22. On until Sept. 25, IDS VANCOUVER (interiordesignshow.com) is all about new ways of living. Highlights include a keynote by Lora Appleton, founder of the Female Design Council, and the sculptural work of Marion Selma Gamba (pictured left).

OCTOBER

8. Exploring the connection between style, identity and psychology, MIRROR - FASHION & THE PSYCHE – a joint undertaking between Fashion Museum Antwerp (moma.be) and Museum Dr. Guislain – showcases Swiss photographer Mario Del Curto’s portrait of Japanese outsider artist Eijiro Miyama (pictured right) as well as work by provocateurs such as Cindy Sherman and Rei Kawakubo.

20. Warm up to PATRICK HUNTER’s (holtrenfrew.com) newest selection of wares made for its Campaign for Wool initiative.

22. Launched in 1979, Arts Umbrella (artsumbrella.com) is a platform dedicated to youth arts education in the Metro Vancouver area that operates a creative hub on Granville Island. The non-profit’s annual auction, SPLASH, has raised over $9 million and this year’s contributing artists include Bobbie Burgers, Douglas Coupland and Marie Khouri.

NOVEMBER

10. Celebrating the interplay between music and visual expression, Sodium Tuartimentu! at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (mmbam.qc.ca) examines Inuit work from precolonial times until today. Pictured is Kenojuak Ashevak’s Guardians of Katajjaqin.

18. The weekend-long AFRICA FASHION CONFERENCE at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum (vam.ac.uk) hosts seminars that complement its parallel show. The exhibition’s dazzling book, edited by polymath Dr. Christine Checinska, as well as clothing and accessories by buzzy British-Nigerian multidisciplinary artist Yinka Ilori are available through the V&A’s gift shop.

19. Investigating a period of extreme transformation, FORECAST FORM: ART IN THE CARIBBEAN DIASPORA, 1950s - TODAY at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (mca-chicago.org) meditates on how geopolitical, social and economic upheaval informed the output of photographer Christopher Cozier, painter and sculptor Firelei Baez and more.
Though he began his career documenting images for non-governmental organizations, Adetona Omokanye came to realize he didn’t want his photography to focus solely on what he describes as the “poverty gaze.” The 32-year-old photographer, who splits his time working between Toronto and Lagos, Nigeria, knew the rich spectrum of people, creativity and customs that span the West African region deserve as much attention as the humanitarian stories he was tasked with chronicling.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 »

Photographer Adetona Omokanye’s spiritually fashionable images reference masquerade figures and contemporary West African fashion.

- Spiritual awakening
  Adetona Omokanye’s photography captures the striking similarities between West African masquerade and contemporary fashion.
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“I think that there's so much to do as a photographer,” Omokanye says, describing the shift in mindset that would send his career in a livelier direction. “I said to myself, okay, I think I have to take a break from this.”

Inspired by a former classmate, Omokanye turned his lens toward individuals with dwarfism, seeking to display their daily lives with an animation and abundance historically not afforded to people in that community. “It's a story of people that are unique in their own way,” he says.

As a testament to his attentive approach, Omokanye became the first Nigerian to receive a Creative Bursary Award from Getty Images for the series. “Adetona's project Beyond 4 Foot 10 Inches really stood out to the judging panel when selecting winners for the 2019 Getty Images + Verizon Disability Stories Grant because he captured the humanity of his subjects in a way that was bold and empowering and really let the viewer feel their personalities,” says Claudia Marks, senior art director at Getty Images.

“The photographs were purposefully inclusive and refrained from ‘othering,’ which is what we seek to do with all our visuals in The Disability Collection.”

Omokanye’s ability to shift a narrative with his curious and compassionate eye can also be seen in his Streethawker series, a set of vivid shots of merchants who roam with a variety of commodities balanced expertly on their heads. “I was drawn to the colourful and artistic elements of them,” Omokanye says. “There's so much power in those images.”

The commandeering compositions and superimposed silhouettes of Streethawker have evolved into his Spiritually Fashionable project. Using digital collaging techniques and photos taken in two different yet aesthetically linked forums, he navigates the visual and ideological relationship between the elaborate dress of Egúngún – which describes a Yoruba masquerade or masked figure engaged in ancestor reverence – and models posing in designs during Nigeria’s Valentine Festival in 2019.

“I spent a lot of time developing this world,” he says about the months-long process of defining the pan-thematic, kaleidoscopic portraits that were short-listed for this year’s Contemporary African Photography Prize. “I didn’t want to rush it. That's one thing about being creative; it comes with exploration.”

The motifs and muses surveyed in Spiritually Fashionable complement the intensifying spotlight on African fashion designers such as Thebe Magugu, Bloke’s Faith Oluwajimi and Kenneth Ize. Their meteoric rise is one that Omokanye himself should anticipate given the scope of his ambition. – ODessa Paloma ParkEr

For more information, visit adetonaomokanye.com.
French hospitality

Chef Bernard Loiseau’s eponymous inn gets a nature-inspired revamp

A HOTELIER THAT CAN BOTH SPOIL GUESTS and make them feel like members of the family is a rare thing. But the family that runs Le Relais Bernard Loiseau in Burgundy, France, accomplishes that by simply honouring the vision of their late husband and father. Loiseau, a three-starred Michelin chef, was as famous for his welcoming spirit as his dedication to the fine art of French living.

The 35-room hotel and spa has just improved its guest experience with sumptuous upgrades to several suites including enhanced natural lighting, warm dark woods and a burgundy and chestnut palette that soothes the soul. Inspired by the hotel’s outdoor gardens, architect Arnaud Behzadi played with the theme of nature and the kitchen’s renowned cuisine. Each of the renovated suites opens onto a lush courtyard where wildlife scurries and chirps and trees rustle in the breeze.

If you’re driving through Burgundy’s rolling vineyards to the town of Saulieu, you’ve likely come for the food. La Côte d’Or, Relais Bernard Loiseau’s restaurant, is now the domain of two-Michelin star chef Patrick Bertron. It is part of France’s new Vallée de la Gastronomie, a collection of culinary experiences between Dijon and Marseille. Bertron honours Loiseau’s legacy (the lollipop frog’s legs are still on the menu) while evolving the dining experience with his own ideas. In February, the family will mark the 20th anniversary of Loiseau’s death at the new Cité de la Gastronomie in Dijon with talks, tastings and a gala dinner.

— CATHERINE DAWSON MARCH
For more information, visit bernard-loiseau.com.

New twist

Off-White debuts its beauty collection at Holt Renfrew

AT THE PRESENTATION FOR Virgil Abloh’s final Off-White runway collection, staged in Paris in February following the designer’s death last November, the boundary-pushing brand debuted a sneak peek of Paperwork, its first foray into the beauty category. A front row audience including Rihanna and actor Idris Elba watched as models paraded by with the words “face,” “babe” and “high fashion” stencilled onto their cheekbones in a variety of hues.

Before his passing, Abloh said he created Paperwork as “another canvas, another surface for human expression.” Genderless and ageless, the easy-to-use products are meant to arouse personal creativity and self-expression. Inspired by graffiti, Imprint face and body crayons are available in six shades including primary blue, red and yellow as well as brown, black and a minty green. Color Matter nail polishes, available in a variety of matte and glittering textures, can be layered together.

The fragrance collection was a creative collaboration between Abloh and perfumers Alexis Dadier, Jerome Epinette and Sidonie Lancesseur and its flacons are topped with bright red replicas of the knobs found in industrial fragrance factories. Solution No. 1 offers an interpretation of the smell of sand while No. 2 is an energetic contrast of freshness and woodiness. No. 3 updates the classic femininity of the rose and No. 4 is a streetwear-inspired whiff of leather, eucalyptus and lavender.

In Canada, the collection is making its debut through a series of pop-up shops at Holt Renfrew stores. Currently on display at the Yorkdale mall location in Toronto, it will move downtown to the Bloor Street flagship on Sept. 29 before its final stop at Square One in Mississauga, where it will remain throughout the holiday season.

— CAITLIN AGNEW
Off-White Paperwork Solution Fragrance, $230 at Holt Renfrew (holtrenfrew.com).

Setting the table

A partnership between artist Laila Gohar and Hay yields delicious dining decor

New York chef and artist Laila Gohar is having a moment in the decor world. Along with her sister, artist Nadia Gohar, she launched Gohar World in May. The line interprets tabletop accessories through a surrealist lens. Soon after, the sisters debuted a collaboration with Gucci Vault that saw them reimagine the look of some of their signature items including glassware and lace-trimmed linens. Now, Laila is preparing to unveil Sobremesa, another dinnerware collection developed with the Danish brand Hay.

“Sobremesa” is a Spanish term that describes the time after a meal when you catch up around the table. Its starting point was a meeting between Gohar and Hay founder Mette Hay. “Of course, it’s a collaboration with Hay, but it also feels like a personal collaboration between me and Mette. The direction of the collection was shaped very organically. There were all kinds of little objects lying around my studio when Mette visited me,” Gohar says. “I noticed what ones she was drawn to. I then used those objects as loose inspiration in terms of the colours and the forms.”

The result is a bright mix of linens (placemats with geometric colour blocking), ceramics (a pot and pitcher with the mottled look of vintage splatterware) and market essentials such as a basket tote and mesh bags for carrying fruit. “The pieces feel democratic,” says Gohar. “I wanted to make a line that people can use in their everyday life.”

— ANDREW SARDONE
The Laila Gohar x Hay Sobremesa collection launches Sept. 15.
For more information, visit hay.com.
Mushrooms are having a moment in fashion (turn to page 22 for a more in-depth look at how high-tech fungi are disrupting luxury leather goods). At the fall Alexander McQueen show, which debuted in Brooklyn, N.Y., creative director Sarah Burton’s exploration of the earthy marvels was more philosophical than practical. Titled Mycelium, the collection was a visual expression of the concept of connection, in the natural world and among creative communities.

“Mycelium has the most profound, interconnecting power, relaying messages through a magical underground structure, allowing trees to reach out to each other when either they or their young need help or are sick,” wrote Burton in the collection’s show notes. “The idea is humbling – beautiful – and, of course, a metaphor for interconnection and for community between people, between us all.”

Burton set the runway’s scene with a towering heap of rich earth piled into the centre of an expansive warehouse in the borough’s gentrifying naval yard. Around it, models wore looks that translated the theme to dresses with mushroom cap volumes or psychedelic embroidery and toadstool knits. Crystals and sequins mimicked sparkling spores on Chelsea boots and handbags.

In a moment when we’re craving all forms of reconnection, it was a poetic statement that captured the spirit of being at one with nature – and each other.

— ANDREW SARDONE

For more information, visit alexandermcqueen.com.
FASHION

I

Plaids and pleats are one of fashion’s most successful sartorial pairings. But even this enduring combination needs to be reinvented every now and then. For fall, upcycling mastermind Marine Serre took on the challenge by patchworking a trio of checks into the folds of a double-breasted coat. Maria Grazia Chiuri remixed Dior’s New Look by layering gingham over houndstooth on the house’s high-waisted skirt. Chopova Lowena’s colourful carabiner clip skirts give off medieval-meets-punk flair. Equally playful are the appliquéd mirrors that decorate an otherwise preppy Wales Bonner piece, as well as Japanese brand BAPE’s embroidered logos. Burberry keeps things classic by paying homage to its British heritage with an oversized tartan. – NADIA PIZZIMENTI

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SPORT UTILITY

The latest designer-activewear pairing is Roksanda Ilincic and Fila

No matter how many collaborations the fashion world throws at us, there is always an initial bit of skepticism about whether two strong brand identities will come together as one. In the case of FILA x ROKSANDA, the dialogue between both labels successfully found common ground in Belgrade-born, London-based designer Roksanda Ilincic’s blown up proportions and Fila’s timeless technicality. Colossal duvet-style coats, puffed-up anoraks and colour-blocked windbreakers are worn atop sportif leggings, T-shirts and bras. With this collection, Ilincic joins a growing list of luxury labels that have teamed up with sportswear brands (Gucci and Adidas; Michael Kors and Ellesse; MM6 Maison Margiela and Salomon) to develop pieces that trend beyond high-fashion’s runways. – N.P.

For more information, visit roksanda.com.

CHECK, PLEASE

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BEHIND THE SEAMS

This fall’s fashion tomes chart the careers of three of the industry’s leading men

DEEP EDIT

British Vogue’s editor-in-chief Edward Enninful pens this heartfelt memoir about his rise to fashion fame as a Black, working-class immigrant, and gives readers an exclusive look between the covers of three decades of photoshoots and catwalk adventures. A Visible Man: A Memoir by Edward Enninful, $41 at bookstores and online (penguinrandomhouse.ca).

LENS CRAFTER

The hyperreal and provocative photography of Steven Klein has filled the pages of top publications for decades. Phaidon’s release is the first and only monograph documenting the last 30 years of his sexually-charged work. Steven Klein by Mark Holborn, $250 at bookstores and online in November (phaidon.com).

ORIGIN STORY

This book explores Azzedine Alaïa’s formative years, from his native Tunisia through his early days in Paris and his breakthrough New York show in 1982. Archival photos and interviews with the late designer’s friends capture how he became an industry darling. – N.P. Alaïa Afore Alaïa by Laurence Benaim, Olivier Saillard and Carla Sozzani, $130 at bookstores and online Oct. 4 (rizzoliusa.com).
SUN SEEKER

Montreal’s Solios debuts a home for its solar-powered timepieces

The purpose of Solios’ new Montreal boutique is not to sell watches. Not immediately, at least. Instead, visitors to the startup’s first brick-and-mortar store in Verdun will find a minimalist space anchored by a bar where they can sip a coffee while learning about Solios’ efforts to make itself the most sustainable watch brand on the planet.

“The watch industry is an old industry that has not evolved much in recent years, and like the fashion industry, it can be polluting,” says Samuel Leroux, who co-founded the Montreal-based company with his friend Alexandre Desabrais in 2018. The worst eco culprits in the watch world are the lithium-ion batteries used in most quartz watches. Most of them eventually end up in landfills.

To remedy this, Solios went all-in on solar technology, creating a line of watches that will run indefinitely without ever requiring a new battery. This, however, was just the beginning of its greener approach. From incorporating recycled steel and vegan leather to collecting and recycling thousands of old, unwanted watches to becoming the first B-Corp certified watch brand in the world, doing better for people and the planet is at the heart of Solios’ business model.

All of these sustainable efforts, however, aren’t necessarily obvious when you look at the brand’s sleek, Scandi-inspired timepieces. The founders hope the boutique will provide an opportunity for customers to learn about the ways they are working to change the game, eventually end up in landfills.

To read the time on Beam Me Up!, Mr. Jones’ newest watch, just follow the frightened pig. A collaboration between the U.K.-based watchmaker and French author-illustrator Xavier Broche, its dial features a hypnotically swirling textural dial inspired by Japanese birch forests.

“I love the challenge of unifying the creative, playful side of watches with functional time-telling in an unexpected way,” says Crispin Jones, the company’s eponymous founder, who works with an eclectic roster of international artists to create his designs. A lack of instant readability is a small tradeoff for each concept’s colourful ebullience. – J.F.


OUTSIDE INFLUENCE

These watches pay tribute to the natural world with dials inspired by birch forests and oyster beds

TAKE FLIGHT

The hypnotically swirling lines of this watch’s dial are inspired by the eyes of the eagles that soar over the Swiss Alps near Chopard’s headquarters. Alpine Eagle (4mm Lucent steel), $17,800 at Chopard (chopard.com).

SHINE ON

With a case and bracelet in cheerful yellow ceramic and a uniquely faceted sapphire crystal, this piece encapsulates the joy of summer sunshine. Rado True Thinline Great Gardens of the World Chapter (Summer), $2,700 through rado.com.

SHELL GAME


FOREST BATHED

Crafted by artisans in Grand Seiko’s Shizukuishi studio, this Red Dot Award-winning watch features a textured dial inspired by Japanese birch forests. Grand Seiko SLGH005, $11,800 through grand-seiko.com.

SKY LIGHT

The dial of this watch is made from a slice of million-year-old meteorite, offering whoever wears it a one-of-a-kind style statement – and a new perspective on time. – J.F. Zenlea Ula Dive Time and Space Meteorite, $1,375 through zeneawatches.com.
SCENT MEMORY

Montreal-based Jovian elicits an emotional response through fragrance.

Scent bypasses logic, reason, your rational conscious mind and gets into all the good stuff underneath,” says David Bernstein, the founder of Jovian, a Montreal-based all-natural perfume company. The fact that smell and the reaction it arouses are so closely linked has a lot to do with the layout of the brain: odours travel a direct route through the limbic system, including the amygdala and the hippocampus, which are the regions related to emotion and memory. It’s a primal process that Bernstein likes to tap into. “I’m trying to get the entire formula conspiring to bring you to an altered state,” he says.

Made exclusively using natural aromatics, each Jovian scent comes with its own set of implied emotions and intentions. For example, Colours (which contains notes of bitter orange, galbanum, jasmine sambac and nutmeg) was created to evoke feelings of regal gardens or an opulent vacation. Bernstein also partnered with the Brooklyn, N.Y.-based astrologer and writer Jaime Wright to describe each aroma’s astrological function. “For some people, to understand their astrology gives them that sense of agency over these intangible things,” Bernstein says.

Bernstein started his company in 2020, exploring the convergence of fragrance and aromatherapy during his first COVID-19 lockdown. Two years in, he’s updating his offering with new bottles, new labels and new sizes. Part of his overarching mission is to democratize fragrance, taking the luxury item off its pedestal by keeping the price of full-sized bottles under $20 while remaining committed to exploring the poetic nuances of scent. “There are some perfumes that are designed to kind of impress the wearer or the buyer with their virtuosity,” he says. “I’m not always interested in perfection.” – CAITLIN AGNEW

For more information, visit jovian.website.

ALL EYES ON YOU

From brow boosters to de-puffers, these treatments pamper your peepers

HEALING HAND

German skincare brand Augustinus Bader was founded by its namesake, a world-renowned biomedical scientist and physician, in 2018. Its luxurious eye cream features TFC8, a patent-pending ingredient originally created to treat wounds, and addresses the usual eye-related concerns including fine lines, dark circles and puffiness.

Augustinus Bader The Eye Cream, $260 at Etiket (etiket.ca).

AQUA FIT

Bioderma’s micellar water, a French-pharmacy favourite, is now available in a formulation especially for the eye area. It removes stubborn makeup, reducing the rubbing that can exacerbate skin sensitivities, while softening, moisturizing and strengthening skin and lashes.

Bioderma Sensibio H2O Eye, $18 at drugstores and through bioderma.ca.

LASH LOVE

Inspired by the success of its hair-density serum, the Ordinary recently launched a version specifically for long and luscious lashes and brows. Clinical results showed significant improvement to the look of lash and brow volume, fullness and density, as long as the serum is used consistently both morning and night.

The Ordinary Lash + Brow Serum, $15.80 at Deciem (deciem.com).

LAYERED TAKE

These silicone eye masks from Canadian brand Consonant are meant to be paired with your go-to eye cream or serum and can be cleaned and reused up to 52 times. Simply apply your product, layer on the masks and voilà – an instant spa moment. – C.A.

Reusable silicone eye masks, $20 at Consonant Skin Care (consonantskincare.com).

RED ALERT

Valentino adds new lipstick shades to its burgeoning beauty collection

Earlier in 2022, Valentino delighted makeup lovers when it introduced its first cosmetics collection. The extensive launch included 40 shades of foundation, 55 lipstick colours, powder compacts and a mascara. At the core of Valentino Beauty is a celebration of the house’s signature red, which was introduced in 1959 when founder Valentino Garavani first included the hue in a couture collection. This season, the makeup line adds five new crimson lipstick shades to its fiery palette including two versions of the classic Rosso Valentino hue, one in a warm matte finish and the other in a cool seductive satin. – C.A.

Valentino Beauty Rosso Valentino high pigment refillable lipstick, $52 through valentino-beauty.ca.
Double Serum
Boosts the efficacy of your anti-aging cream

All the power of 2 serums-in-1 to act visibly on the signs of aging. 21 plant extracts, including powerful turmeric extract. The skin’s 5 vital functions are boosted and signs of aging are visibly reduced after 7 days.  

UNCOMMON THREAD
A Paris atelier scales up its embroidery techniques to enhance fashion-forward interiors

The façade of Le 19M, the Paris hub for Chanel’s artisan workshops (Style Advisor, May 2022) is a concrete screen meant to mimic the weave of textiles. Inside, embroiderer Atelier Montex is similarly exploring how one of fashion’s most intricate crafts can be translated to interior design. Its offshoot, Studio MTX, calls its work broderie architecturale. It aims to blow up the three-dimensional details of its clothing techniques to fill contemporary spaces with striking screens and window treatments. Atelier Montex was founded in 1939 and became part of Chanel’s Métiers d’Art in 2011. Its embroidery is an essential part of the work of many of Paris’ haute couture houses, from Balenciaga mini dresses covered in black beaded fringe to sequin camellias on Chanel bolero jackets. In 2013, the architectural offshoot Studio MTX was launched. “The architectural department inherited the innovative and game-changing spirit of Montex,” says Mathieu Bassée, Studio MTX’s creative director. “A unique combination of unexpected materials, a three-dimensional conception of embroidery and a very graphic signature.”

In interior pieces, what that looks like is a screen of ribbon strips cinched with gold tubes resembling oversized bugle beads or rayon window panels that are weighed down with brass rods threaded through the fabric. Its Circeo line suspends metal circles in lengths of grosgrain. “This creation has a very particular behaviour. It is nearly immaterial from a front view – only a few millimetres of matter – but it becomes quickly opaque when seen from an angle,” Bassée says. “Mostly used in residential projects, placed on each side of a large bay window for instance, they create a scenography and help frame the view.”

– ANDREW SARDONE

Studio MTX’s architectural panels are a more structured take on window shades.

GLOW UP
There were plenty of bright ideas at Milan’s first full-scale design week since 2019

CLOUD FORMATION
The Iris Pendant by Caine Heintzman for Vancouver’s ANDlight debuted hovering over the stairwell of an abandoned lavanderia that was converted to a bustling bar for the week.

For more information, visit andlight.ca.

CINCHED IT
Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec’s Belt lighting system for Flos recently won the Compasso d’Oro design prize. In Milan, the brand debuted a fabric version made of recycled material.

For more information, visit flos.com.

SHAPE SHIFT
To mark its tenth anniversary, Gabriel Scott asked a group of designers to reinterpret its Welles chandelier. Guan Lee’s take nestled faceted orbs in a concrete-like form.

For more information, visit gabriel-scott.com.

NEW ADDRESS
Avenue Road revamps a Toronto warehouse for its new home

Until now, German designer Sebastian Herkner’s most notable collaboration with Canadian furniture retailer Avenue Road was the Mainkai collection of lamps, which look like a glowing stack of nautical buoys. Later in September, however, the pair will unveil a much more substantial partnership: Avenue Road’s new flagship store in Toronto. The space, at 20 Wagstaff Drive in the city’s Leslieville neighbourhood, is a reimagining of a 180-square-metre former grocer’s warehouse. In addition to the showroom, the location will include a café and a studio where designers can access a library of material and finish samples. – A.S.

For more information, visit avenue-road.com.
COLOUR THEORY

Kyle Meyer works with textiles, photography and space to explore how location shapes identity.

This past spring, New York tourists visiting the Greenwich Village location of the famed Friends apartment building may have been surprised to find a new landmark across the street. There, an unassuming 19th-century carriage house was being transformed into a rainbow fantasy world by artist Kyle Meyer. With the blessing of a client who owns – and was about to renovate – the property, Meyer spent a few weeks draping the space in swathes of fabric before altering them with fibre reactive dye. Walking by, onlookers could catch a glimpse of the increasingly lushly hued interior of Meyer’s 95 Bedford project through the windows. “I was like, listen, I have to cover everything,” Meyer recalls of the conversation that kick started the prismatic project. “And it wasn’t until doing that, that it started to make sense. I began really connecting with the space and allowing myself to become one with it. I was just experimenting, and things started to reveal themselves.” Touring the work-in-progress, visitors could quickly understand the rural Ohio-born artist’s reverence for the building’s bones. Meyer spoke to his guests about the structure’s history and highlighted how each of its features – a fireplace, a sink – added their own contours to the expansive canvas.

Secrets, identity and exposure – and negotiations between the three – are predominant themes in Meyer’s oeuvre of textile art and photography. His sensitive and dynamic multimedia series Interwoven was born out of time he spent with the closeted and strongly persecuted LGBTQ community of Eswatini (formerly Swaziland). In the images, gay male models don historically feminized headwraps; drawing from his learnings as a local textile-making apprentice, Meyer shredded the pictures and wove them back together with the materials worn in the photos. “I’m trying to push textiles in a very different way,” he says, adding that his surroundings understand the rural Ohio-born artist’s reverence for the building’s bones. Meyer spoke to his guests about the structure’s history and highlighted how each of its features – a fireplace, a sink – added their own contours to the expansive canvas.

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“One thing that’s always on my mind is the mausoleum,” he says of this topic. “I try to push that all the time. I think that’s the most unexplored territory. There’s not much written about textiles and the space, but it’s a huge part of my practice.”

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öneessa Paloma Parker

For more information, visit thekylemeyer.com.

SPOT ON

Louis Vuitton revisits one of its most successful artistic partnerships

Ten years ago, Louis Vuitton introduced the first collaborative effort between Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama and Marc Jacobs, the designer who was the house’s creative director at the time. Now, the current artistic director of women’s collections, Nicolas Ghesquière, has reconnected Kusama’s iconic dots and unveiled a new range of handbags barings her most recognizable motif. Multi-coloured daubed-effect circles and bulbous metallic protrusions reminiscent of those featured in Kusama’s Infinity Room installations are incorporated into a variety of Louis Vuitton styles. Expect to see the curvy Twist, boxy Dauphine and cylindrical Cannes carry-alls in the merry melange. Set to arrive in stores in January, the brand promises a “transversal exploration” of its relationship with Kusama upon their arrival. – O.P.P.

For more information, visit louisvuitton.com.

EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP

Gallery boutiques are often overlooked repositories of creative style.

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

Located steps from New York’s Central Park, MAD’s programming emphasizes fashion, jewellery and decor. Its latest show, Queer Maximalism x Machine Dazzle, looks at the eclectic portfolio of the multidisciplinary artist, while its shop offers an equally varied selection of fine jewellery from around the world. Trovelore brooch, US$778 at MAD (madmuseum.org).

WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

Robert Houle: Red Is Beautiful opens at the WAG this October and will feature an extensive range of work by the Anishinaabe Saulteaux creative. Keeping with this local focus, its boutique boasts items such as rugged leather bags from Earth + Hide and a variety of silk scarves hand-dyed with last year’s yield of blooms from southeast Manitoba’s Masagana Flower Farm. Masagana Flower Farm scarf, $65 through wag.ca.

THE BARBICAN CENTRE

Since opening in London 40 years ago, this beloved Brutalist monument has wowed crowds with its eclectic and thought-provoking programming. It’s where the first major U.K. commission by Iranian artist Soheila Sokhanvari will open on Oct. 7. In store, you’ll find exclusive homages to the Barbican’s striking architecture such as a sweatshirt produced by Helsinki’s Apparel & Lovers. – O.P.P.

Apparel & Lovers Concrete Utopia sweater, £245 through barbican.org.uk.
**EARTHY POSSESSIONS**

The humble mushroom is being harnessed by designers and scientists as a solution to the leather-goods industry’s eco issues.

**PERSONAL TOUCH**

Two Quebec entrepreneurs create custom skincare by combining artificial intelligence and professional expertise.

In her early career as a cosmetologist, Rachelle Séguin realized how difficult it was for clients with multiple skin concerns to find products that worked for them. “If they were, for instance, an older person with acne or redness, they may not find anything on the market for them,” says Séguin, who is now a cosmeceutical chemist. Ditto those with aging skin and conditions such as eczema or psoriasis.

With the goal of creating products for every need, Séguin and her partner, entrepreneur Andrea Gomez, founded Omy Laboratoires, a Quebec City-based direct-to-consumer custom skincare line that uses proprietary photo-scanning “SkinAI” in conjunction with clients’ self-reported preferences, allergies and concerns to determine ideal formulas. Developed with dermatologists, Omy’s SkinAI quickly scans client photos for fine lines, breakouts, visible pores and more, before suggesting a custom routine from thousands of possible formulations.

Customers can talk through any questions over the phone with an Omy expert and have freshly made, personalized products shipped directly to them in refillable containers. It’s skincare with your name on it. – A.M.

For more information, visit omycosmetics.com.
BACK TO THE LAND
A globetrotting twentysomething returns home to Newfoundland to help other solo wanderers connect to her community – and themselves

Toni Kearney travelled across Canada and as far as Australia to figure out what she wanted to do in life. Eventually, right before the pandemic hit, she ended up back in her hometown of Conche (population 50) on Newfoundland’s northern peninsula. She returned to launch Moratorium Children, a retreat for people looking to recharge and reconnect with themselves. By inviting people to Conche and helping them explore the community, culture and landscape, Kearney has been able reconnect with herself, too.

Like most outpost communities on the island that relied on fishing for the local economy, Conche was hit hard when the moratorium on cod fishing was introduced by the federal government in 1992. People moved to find work and communities were abandoned.

“I grew up listening to all these stories about a place that didn’t really exist,” Kearney says. “People would talk about how the town hall would be packed or there’d be a community centre with dances. We had a really busy hockey arena. All these tales of how lively things used to be. And then you’re looking around as if you’re living in a bit of an apocalypse.”

That nostalgia got the 27-year-old thinking about how to reinvigorate her community – and how to make it a place people would want to visit. Moratorium Children is focused on solo travellers and Kearney’s team builds custom retreats for each guest that immerses them in the landscape and community. “You’re going to be undisturbed to really allow yourself to connect and engage at your own pace,” she says.

Guests hike, zip along the coast in a Zodiac boat, fish or swim in a rock pool, learn about local embroidery traditions or roll up their sleeves for a jam-making session, all while meeting and learning from community members. The retreats are anywhere from three to five days and end with a five-course candlelit dinner and farewell concert by local musicians.

Despite starting up during the pandemic, Kearney has hosted travellers from Canada, New York, New England and Germany. “At the core of it are people who have a really deep interest in local history and making authentic connections,” she says. “We want people to not just meet the locals but really meet the land and actually feel what I feel when I come home, which is the sense of complete tranquility.”

– MARYAM SIDDIQI

Stays from $750/night through moratoriumchildren.com.

GOING SOFT
For its new collection F.A.R., Away brings its minimalist spirit to outdoor gear

The idea of a soft-sided line of luggage from Away, a brand famous for its hard-shell rolling suitcases, was born before the pandemic. But the shift in travel habits over the past two years reaffirmed the company’s belief that there was a need for a different kind of bag. Whether spending more time outdoors or visiting destinations anchored in nature, “there is definitely more of an engagement in different types of travel and different end uses,” says Cuan Hanly, the brand’s chief design officer.

The new line is called F.A.R. (For All Routes) and it features functional and fashionable outdoor gear – totes, backpacks and duffle bags – made from recycled polyester. The goal was to create bags that are technically sound and durable without adding unnecessary weight or features. “A lot of products that exist in the outdoor sector denote durability by the weight of the item, and that’s often quite heavy,” Hanly says. “We did a lot of raw material research to get that balance of light weight with strength.” His team also did away with extraneous straps, loops and laces. “These extras often aren’t really needed, but they’re used to trigger ‘this is an outdoor product.” We really approached this with a minimalist, reductive intent and only put in features and functions that we felt brought solutions to our customers’ needs,” he says.

Available in playful colours – including Atomic Celery, Red Orange and Vivid Blue – that make finding your bag on a luggage carousel significantly easier, the pieces are designed to maximize space. Completing the collection are organizational cubes and pouches made with recycled nylon ripstop sized to fit “like bricks,” Hanly says, within the different sizes of carryalls.

F.A.R. bags and accessories, $35 to $280 through awaytravel.com.
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MESSAGE ON A BOTTLE

The work of artists and illustrators is enhancing the graphic look of wine labels to attract the attention of younger and more experimental consumers, a growing number of wineries are adopting creative approaches to wine labels, including embracing the work of illustrators. While conventional European labels traditionally depict stately chateaux and basic information about the vintage, more contemporary labels aim to inspire as much as inform.

“Illustration speaks really directly to the audience about the approach and personality of the wine or winemaker,” says Barry Imber, co-founder of Insite Design, which has been developing branding for beverage alcohol companies since 1993. Insite’s team works with the likes of Thirty Bench Wine Makers (whose labels feature flowing lines that suggest grapevine tendrils), and Dillon’s Small Batch Distillers (where you’ll see sketches of Manhattans and Negronis on bottled cocktails), helping with packaging and label design as well as brand identity and retail spaces.

Imber says using a more contemporary aesthetic helps a winemaker grab a consumer’s attention. Its colour palette or the style of illustration, ranging from rudimentary drawings to more polished work, helps to convey a sense of authenticity. It can also speak to the consumer’s desire for unique, handcrafted products and play up the ways a wine can fit in with their other interests.

When it came to developing a label for Niagara’s Mason Vineyard (pictured below), Imber says there was a need to create a concept that was captivating and compelling. A veteran wine-maker at Domaine Queylus, Honsberger and the Farm, Kelly Mason started growing grapes in her own vineyard in 2012. The small batch winery is a passion project that occupies her hours outside of work at other Niagara properties. “There was a need to take on a sophisticated position, and leverage illustration to visually depict what she has created,” Imber says. Each bottle from Mason’s estate comes wrapped like a gift in paper featuring an intricate repeating pattern of geometric shapes based on building blocks. The motif is a reference to Mason’s name as well as the artisanal element her craft.

— CHRISTOPHER WATERS

CROSS CULTURES

A Kentucky bourbon embraces Scottish innovation

Cask finishing is a common practice at Scottish distilleries, where whisky is removed from the barrel used for its maturation process and placed into a different cask for increased depth of flavour, richness and complexity before bottling. Used sherry and port barrels are frequently utilized, but any oak casks that formerly held most spirits, wine or beer are permitted. The founders of Angel’s Envy borrowed this practice to make its new bourbon stand out and was the first distillery to release a Kentucky straight bourbon finished in port wine barrels. “Working with our bourbon, we knew we had a great foundation coming in,” says Angel Teta, Angel’s Envy’s national brand ambassador. “Using port barrels means we’re kind of decorating the walls a bit.” – C.W.

Angel’s Envy Whiskey, $80.25 in Ontario (angelsenvy.com)

HARD CORE

These homegrown ciders will appeal to wine lovers and craft-beer drinkers looking for an autumnal alternative

FRUIT FORWARD

Annapolis Cider works with growers in Nova Scotia’s Annapolis Valley to produce its range, including this crowd-pleaser.

The Classic is made by blending a dry cider with fresh pressed apple juice to add a pleasant fruity character.

Annapolis Cider Company: The Classic, $10/litre 355-ml cans through drinkannapolis.ca

FRESH MIX

This Naramata, B.C., cidery’s flagship release takes its name Flora from the Roman goddess of spring. Made from a blend of all eight apple varieties grown on the estate, the can-conditioned cider is naturally sparkling from the CO2 captured during fermentation.

Creek & Gully Flora, $7.47/355-mll can through creekandgully.com

GO BRIT

Based in Ontario’s Prince Edward County, Loch Mor created Untamed in the style of traditional ciders served in British pubs. A blend of cider apple varieties contributes to the dry and quaffable option. – C.W.

Loch Mor Cider Co: Untamed, $4.75/355-ml can through lochmorslider.com

WINE & SPIRITS

THE GLOBE AND MAIL STYLE ADVISOR

SEPTEMBER 2022
The Forget-Me-Not Bracelet

Idar Bergseth, renowned master goldsmith and jeweller, creates exceptionally designed handmade jewellery intended for everyday use, using time-honoured techniques.
Art of the matter

Creative references to painters, sculptors and artisans add beauty and depth to the fall collections.
Max Mara referenced Swiss sculptor Sophie Taeuber-Arp’s marionettes in the silhouettes of its pieces.

Dress, gloves, balaclava, price on request at Max Mara (maxmara.com).
NEW LENS
Portraits from the 1990s by fashion photographer David Sims are tiled across this oversized Louis Vuitton rugby shirt.
Shirt, trousers, price on request at Louis Vuitton (louisvuitton.com).
FIRST IMPRESSIONS
To present her collection, Tanya Taylor took over the former East Hampton studio of abstract painter Elaine de Kooning. Tanya Taylor blouse, $375; skirt, price on request through tanyataylor.com. Michelle Ross earrings, $205 through mnross.com. Proenza Schouler boots, $1,510 at The Bay (thebay.com).
PALETTE CLEANSE
The Fendi collection was a remix of the late designer Karl Lagerfeld’s own 1986 interpretation of the Memphis aesthetic. Dress, $3,150 at Fendi (fendi.com). Michelle Ross earrings, $184 through mnross.com. Maison Margiela shoes, $1,275 at The Bay (thebay.com).
STRING THEORY
Charles Lu’s dress embellished with a chain and punk tendrils showcase the designer’s appreciation for craftsmanship.
Yume Yume shoes, $450 through yumeyume.eu. Socks, $12 at Simons (simons.ca).
IN BLOOM
Toronto Metropolitan University student Sara He called her 2022 grad collection Heterogenius. Looks such as this floral composition highlight her visual arts background and playful approach to design.
Sara He skirt, top, price on request through @sarajewelhe on Instagram.
House of Etiquette gloves, $85 through houseofetiquette.com.
Yume Yume shoes, $350 through yumeyume.eu.
Drawing attention

Sarah Alinia Ziazi, who created an original mural during this fashion shoot, talks about finding inspiration in female forms

“I’m very focused on the female figure in my work. Not only because it is the most fun to draw, but because my representations of the female form are intersectional,” says Sarah Alinia Ziazi (pictured below). The Chennai, India-born artist’s use of primary colours is also a social statement. “The importance of using primary colours is to be able to create any colour available, which ties into the real-life aspects of humanity and how those colours impact how we perceive ourselves in our skin every day – and how that reflects what we go through in daily situations.”

The art world is where Alinia Ziazi, who grew up in Toronto’s Scarborough suburb, always imagined herself ending up. “I’ve been doodling, drawing and sketching my whole life,” she says. “I’ve always wanted to be in a creative field, and there was never any doubt in my mind that I would do anything else.” Set on attending OCAD University since the ninth grade, Alinia Ziazi graduated from the school’s illustration program in 2017 and began her career, freelancing and receiving commissions for magazines and public installations.

Most recently, the 28-year-old created murals for the new Modern Wing at the Drake Hotel in Toronto’s west end. The project, titled Primary Idols, features the silhouettes of three women in red, blue and yellow. “There’s a lot of themes of self-acceptance in my work,” she says. “The mural I created shows primary colours coming together and providing a safe space for women.”

As an artist of both Indian and Persian descent, culture and fashion often blend together to inform Alinia Ziazi’s artistic sensibilities. Nature also inspires the artist. “If you look at a tree, its shape mirrors that of a woman,” she says. “[The movement of] objects help put me into the mindset of mixing and matching elements, and that’s all very inspiring to me.” – SARAH MICHO

MESSAGE SERVICE


Rest assured

We’re often told that the best way to improve your appearance is to get a good night’s rest. But how do you maximize the wellness benefits of those – ideally, eight – hours of sleep? 

BY CAITLIN AGNEW • ILLUSTRATION BY NIKKI ERNST

Getting ready for bed is a ritual I’ve perfected over the past seven years. I’ve worked from home since 2015 and demarcating bedtime as a valuable moment for myself has been an essential work-life boundary. Prioritizing a good night’s sleep keeps me calm and grounded, improves relationships and helps me feel better about how I look.

I never really considered the impact of my bedtime routine until I realized that having my phone plugged in by my nightstand overnight encouraged mindless scrolling before bed, resulting in upwards of an hour of shuteye going up in smoke. Since then, I’ve taken an active interest in cultivating a sleep routine tailored to my idiosyncratic preferences. I delight in layering on the heavy creams, oils and skincare masks that are too greasy to wear in public. I look forward to slipping into nice pyjamas even when I’ve spent the day on my couch working in a pair of equally comfy sweats. About an hour before bed, I start winding down by taking my dog for a walk, drinking warm water with magnesium, washing my face, spritzing my bedding with a scented mist and turning on my humidifier. I make sure to pop in some earplugs before my head hits the pillow and always have a novel on hand to drift off to.

We know that getting adequate sleep is critical to our cognitive functioning and physical health but rest is under attack by the attention economy, when everything from video games to Netflix binges and social media doom scrolling are distracting us from the important shuteye we need. Dr. Charles Samuels, medical director of the Centre for Sleep & Human Performance and The Sleep Institute in Calgary, says that chronic sleep deprivation has been associated with everything from obesity to accidents linked back to human error.

“There’s no question that technology is a major barrier to sleep,” Samuels says. He explains that it’s not necessarily the blue light emitted from screens that poses a challenge to sleep, but the impact tech has on the brain when it’s used late in the day. “You get charged up, which the body and brain aren’t supposed to do prior to sleep. It’s quite disruptive.”

If you’ve ever been told that you look tired, you’ll know that sleep also has an impact on our appearance. “If you don’t get good quality sleep and enough sleep, it will definitely change your appearance and it can actually change the integrity of your skin,” Samuels says. The impact of sleep on skin is something that’s perpetually on the minds of skincare entrepreneurs and dermatologists such as Ariel Kaye, where she includes sleep as a key tool for healing from emotional trauma. “I believe that one of the most critical aspects of self-care is developing good sleep hygiene; getting quality sleep makes us happier and cognitively stronger and even lengthens our lives.”

Beach adds that including skincare application in a bedtime regimen can be a ritual that helps you rest better. “For a lot of people, skincare is a part of their sleep hygiene routine so they have consistency and they have predictability that allows their mind to start settling down and thinking about bed,” Beach says.

When Ariel Kaye founded her home-goods company Parachute, her goal was to help others live more comfortably, especially when it comes to sleep. Made with natural fibres, Parachute’s bedding is geared towards accommodating different sleep styles. “We encourage people to think about how they sleep. Some people sleep hot, some people sleep cold,” she says. “A percale is naturally cool to the touch and sateen, the smooth sensation can feel warmer and more cozy. And linen fits into both camps because it’s so breathable but it is a heavier fabric.” For bedroom textiles, Kaye says she looks to colours and patterns that are soothing, rather than bold prints and hues that can overstimulate the mind.

There are no shortage of options for those of us who want to try to improve the sleep experience beyond our bedding. Pyjama brands such as Lusomé Sleepwear use a performance fabric to help reduce the impact of night sweats. Apps including AutoSleep track overnight metrics such as heart rate and sleep quality.

Skin care products that promise to tap into the body’s overnight renewal processes abound including the new Kiehl’s Midnight Recovery Omega-Rich Cloud Cream or the Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair, a bedtime go-to since the 1980s. One of my favourites is Dermologica’s Sound Sleep Cocoon Night Gel-Cream. It contains encapsulated French lavender essential oil that’s motion-activated, meaning it releases scent when you stir in your sleep to provide a soothing aroma.

But you certainly don’t need to open your wallet to maximize the benefits of your sleep. The most critical step to getting a good night’s rest is actually more about what you’re not doing. In my experience, putting down your devices early and giving yourself ample time to unwind before bed can make a world of difference to your sleep quality and sense of wellbeing. As Parachute’s Kaye says, “It’s sort of like working out: showing up is the hardest part.”
Pearl wisdom

The season’s sculptural orbs capture how a prim accessory can take an unexpected turn

BY NATHALIE ATKINSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SATY + PRATHA

Erdem pearl flower earrings, $436 through erdem.com.
The most memorable scene in Spencer, Pablo Larrain’s 2021 biopic of Diana, Princess of Wales, is when the psychodrama reaches a dramatic crescendo at a Royal Family dinner. As her fairy tale crumbles around her, the princess, played by Kristen Stewart, frustratingly rips off her necklace and its enormous pearls go flying into her soup. She then frantically spoons them into her mouth – and swallows them.

This season, the fashion world is equally hungry for the look of gobstopper pearls, which proliferate as accessories, embellishments and whole garments. There are Wilma Flintstone-sized necklaces at Dolce & Gabbana and Versace. At Givenchy, pearls appear as cloud-like clusters on knuckle rings and are strung into ropes that are woven into a flapper dress. Erdem studs hems, necklines, suiting and even leather opera gloves with shimmering domed pearls in the manner typical of garments worn in traditional royal portraits.

(From left) Numbering necklace, $1185, Miu Miu necklace, $1650 at Ssense (ssense.com).
Simone Rocha pearl Perspex heart bag, $935 through simonerocha.com.
Fall fashion’s pearl proportions are so emphatic they’re almost kitsch and feel like a defiant departure from the prevailing cultural meaning where a strand of pearls is associated with demure debutantes and feminine propriety. Granted, the meaning behind the orbs has swung between posh and punk for a while. The penchant for pearls can be traced back to antiquity, when the mystique around the only gem to come from a living creature carried varied symbolism. Ancient Egypt associated pearls with Isis, the goddess of life and healing. Greek mythology suggests they were formed from droplets spilled as Aphrodite emerged from the sea. In Chinese legend, pearls fell from the jaws of warring dragons.

“It’s really the ultimate classicism of fine pearls that invites subversion – and has always done, at various points through history,” says jewellery historian Vivienne Becker, author of *The Pearl Necklace*. In renaissance court life, for example, Becker says that wearing rare and precious pearls was a form of propaganda, “a way of saying my nation, my realm is more powerful than yours because I’ve got more pearls on.” Using so many of them in a way that emphasizes their size (and fakeness) on the runways today is a way of making another type of statement. “I think it’s that anti-establishment mood that’s happening – a bit of rebellion combined with the changing views of femininity today,” Becker says. Musicians Pharrell Williams and Harry Styles, who have both been photographed in their own strands, would likely agree.

For designer Simone Rocha, who plays their luminosity against organza, tulle and, this season, knit balaclavas, pearls are a brand signature that adorn everything from gowns and crowns to the jewel-encrusted eye makeup on her fall runway. “They’re so ‘old lady,’ but I love to reinterpret them,” the Irish designer has said. Sometimes they’re abstracted and supersized for their sculptural quality such as in an oversized pearl evening bag. Elsewhere, Rocha preserves their stereotypical daintiness but deploys it in unexpected details, like the trim of knee socks.

Nadia Gohar, an Egyptian-born multimedia artist based in Toronto, is drawn to pearls by a similar appreciation for their duality. She and sister Laila, a New York food designer, recently launched a tableware collection called Gohar World. It applies their personal clothing style to dressing up a table. “And adding pearls to that mixes it up a bit,” Gohar says.

Pearls abound in a collection that encompasses striped poplin tablecloths (complete with shirt button plackets and collars), linen coasters, hand-carved mother-of-pearl cutlery and Battenberg lace doilies edged with organic freshwater pearls. “When you think of pearls, it’s usually of something so elegant, passed down, and your grandmother,” Gohar says.

The 2022 Pinterest Predicts report, an analysis of the social media platform’s search data, anticipated the Pearlcore trend not only in fashion but in the iridescence that’s dominating beauty and home decor products. The rise can, in part, be attributed to Netflix’s blockbuster Regency drama Bridgerton, where more is more when it comes to both the racy plot and the costume department’s fanciful use of pearls in chokers and towering wigs.

Becker says that, when trying to understand the pearl’s place in contemporary fashion, it’s worth remembering Coco Chanel’s groundbreaking mix of genuine and simulated pearls (she began creating *bijou en toc* – or fake jewellery – to accompany her seasonal collections in 1924). “Basically, she parodied the great pearl necklaces she’d seen when she was young being worn by the Belle Epoque socialites,” Becker says. “For her, they were a symbol of a society from which she was excluded. I think she was quoted as saying that they turned up their noses at her and this was her way of getting back.”

By debunking their preciousness and stripping pearls of their established social status, Chanel transformed them into fashion statements. “Symbols of a different kind of power,” says Becker. “The power of the modern woman.”

Fashion styling by Nadia Pizzimenti. Prop styling and clay sculptures by Kristen Lim Tung.
PRING SUNSETS ON PORQUEROLLES are the colour of rosé. They’re the same glowing pink as the slivers of quartz that squeeze out of a rocky millefouille of schist that forms the foundation of the Mediterranean island off the coast of Provence. They match the stucco on the villas that sparsely dot the landscape and the spiky succulents that fill their gardens.

The connections that your mind starts to make on Porquerolles are inevitable given the land’s biodiversity, where thyme, pine trees combed back by the wind and flowering shrubbery mingle on every hillside. They make it easy to understand why the French government bought up 80 per cent of the island in 1971 to protect it as a national park, an initiative that has managed to keep the population steady at around 200 full-time residents. The move also helps temper the impact of thousands of day trippers who arrive to mountain bike along its mostly car-free dirt roads to the beaches during the summer.

Shuffled among that protected land are four valleys that are Porquerolles’ only agricultural plots. On three of them, you’ll find the rolle, mourvèdre, syrah, tibouren and cinsault vines of Domaine de l’Ile, a winery that specializes in that Riviera sunset in a glass. Like the trees and the flowers and the rocks, its wines are uniquely of this place with a savoury character that captures the sea and the land and the wind.

They’re part of another story too, one that has its root in a place that feels a world away from this wild countryside: the fashion runways of Paris. Discretely printed on the wine’s back label are the capital letters: C-H-A-N-E-L.

Domaine de l’Ile is the fourth French winery – and the first outside of Bordeaux – that has been purchased by the fashion brand since the mid-1990s. Its future is tied to Chanel’s desire to preserve the best of French know-how in its fashion ateliers and beyond.

For the first time, the winery’s team invited a magazine to experience its entire French portfolio (the company also owns the St. Supéry winery in California’s Napa Valley). The journey from Porquerolles through Bordeaux by boat, airplane and a stable of vintage Land Rovers...
and land

emphasizes how challenging it is to manage wineries across such vast distances, varied styles and unique terroirs. It also highlights the level of craftsmanship and sense of community needed to meet its owner’s discerning standards.

BACK TO THE EARTH

On the well-travelled coast of Provence, Porquerolles still manages to escape the itineraries of most visitors from abroad. But it’s a familiar spot for Nicolas Audebert, who has headed up Chanel’s wine operation since 2004, when he moved home to France after 10 years of managing wineries in Argentina. Audebert grew up northwest of Porquerolles in Toulon and spent his summers sailing around the island’s towering cliffs. In 2019, he led the group’s acquisition of Domaine de l’Ile, which added a fourth winery to its roster of French properties including Grand Cru estates Château Canon and Château Berliquet in Saint-Émilion, and Château Rauzan-Ségla in Margaux.

The term “terroir” is well used in the wine world to build sentiment around how grapes absorb the characteristics of the environments where they grow. The appellations of each of Chanel’s wineries illustrate how drastically varied these agricultural lands can be. On the right bank of Bordeaux’s Dordogne river at Canon, you can climb down into the winery’s cellar and enter a warren of limestone caves. Above your head, the roots of its 34 hectares of merlot and cabernet franc vines have found their way through veins of clay to anchor themselves 30 metres below the soil. Moving along Rauzan-Ségla’s land from the Gironde estuary to its château sees clay give way to fine gravel and sand.

Porquerolles’ combination of Mediterranean sunshine, unrelenting winds, crashing waves and rich soil make environmental conditions a particularly influential force at Domaine de l’Ile. “You can make wine by technology but you arrive at a point where technology stops influencing the outcome,” says Audebert. “To reach the highest point of the pyramid, there’s a gap where it’s no more technology. It’s sense of place. It’s terroir. It’s something special. There’s that in Porquerolles. It’s South of France,
it’s Provence, it’s sunny, it’s island. It’s a wine that’s playing on the romanticism of the place and the uniqueness of that very special rock.”

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Chanel’s winemaking venture started in 1994 when the company purchased Château Rauzan-Ségla. Two years later, it bought Château Canon, effectively anchoring its winery operation on Bordeaux’s duelling riverbanks. All was quiet on the acquisition front until Château Berliquet was added to the mix in 2017. Operating Berliquet hadn’t been part of Audebert’s plan but its property, effectively in Canon’s front yard, came up for grabs.

Audebert doesn’t talk about these wineries like the conglomerates other luxury houses assemble. “We speak about individual wineries owned by the same house, like a wine art house owned by Chanel,” he says. “Chanel gives us the possibility to be independent, to develop every property in its own way with no compromise.”

Part of maintaining that independence is respecting each winery’s history. “It helps Canon, Rauzan, Berliquet, Domaine de l’Ile to work at the highest level but they stay individual,” he says. “They have their own history before Chanel. Rauzan is Rauzan and it’s [been] Rauzan for [hundreds of] years.”

Canon’s origin story is, perhaps, the most dramatic of the wineries. Founder Jacques Kanon was a privateer, essentially a pirate who had been given permission to pillage on behalf of the French king. Domaine de l’Ile traces its roots to François Joseph Fournier, who made his fortune in Mexican gold and used it to buy Porquerolles for his new bride as a wedding present. The plots his family held onto after the sale to the French government were used to develop the winemaking business.

“We share the same philosophy. It’s about [putting] precision and elegance into the wine. It’s easy in the wine world to be big, to be powerful, to be showing off, to be impressive,” says Audebert. “There’s a lot of châteaux here [in Bordeaux] with that huge allée of trees going to a big château with gold on the roof – it’s not us.”

Audebert himself is the other common link. “It’s interesting to have complementary properties. We learn lots one from the other one,” he says. “Of course, it’s challenging because it’s different sites, different speeds, different levels of evolution. Berliquet, it’s a story we just started. Rauzan, we are established 25 years ago. For my team, it’s challenging to keep the...
properties separated with DNA (and the) way of making things, but they interact a lot and they learn."

**A COMMON CRAFT**

On the city of Bordeaux’s Garonne riverfront, across from Place des Quinconces, is a long wooden dock lined with Chris-Craft powerboats. The sleek craft have all been rebuilt by Le Chantier Naval Nicolas, a local operation that has been restoring the collectible boats since 1982. When Audebert wants to travel between his Bordeaux wineries, he could make the hour-long drive between Saint-Émilion and Margaux. But Audebert grew up on the water and sometimes he prefers to commute via these stylish speeders. He can disembark at a fishing hut on stilts that was built on Margaux’s shore to welcome Château Rauzan-Ségla’s guests for tastings of its silky blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc and petit verdot.

Aside from the rush of cruising down the river, Audebert appreciates Chantier Nicolas as a likeminded enterprise that’s meant to preserve – and exchange – French savoir-faire, a philosophy that’s central to his work in viniculture. This viewpoint also forms how he sees his wineries fitting into Chanel’s fashion and beauty system.

“I think there’s a lot of connections. When you go to the Chanel flower fields in Grasse, they are agriculture, they depend on the climate, the date of harvest,” he says about factors that affect the volume and intensity of Chanel’s Provençal yield of roses and jasmine for its perfumes. “They turn that into a product that the master blender will put with other [ingredients]. It will change the way he’s building the components – every year differently – to create something consistent. We do exactly the same thing here.”

Nicolas Audebert (right) occasionally makes his way to work on a Chris-Craft boat. From Bordeaux’s city centre, he can travel to Château Rauzan-Ségla’s fishing hut on the riverfront (top). The winery (far right) was the first wine property that Chanel acquired.
Personal Style

A few months ago, I was examining my late grandfather’s pocket watch. Missing the glass and the hands, it wasn’t much to look at but I held a kind of reverence for it. My grandfather was a train conductor in Denmark and this watch was his constant companion. Reviewing it closely, I hit a button I had never noticed before and the back popped open for the first time revealing my grandfather’s initials and that of another, etched by hand into the silver lid.

I hung it on the wall. The open lid created a shelf, no bigger than a loonie. On it, I placed a tiny sculpture: a bullet casing, detailed with a pattern of stylized daisies by artist Micah Adams. Together, the objects form a personal tribute to family stories of wartime in Denmark. That’s what they mean to me, at least.

As friends dropped by, everyone commented on how pretty the two looked together and marvelled at their delicacy. Art can be like that. Deeply personal for one person, a moment of beauty and wonder for another. It’s part of what drew me to working in art. I love being surrounded by objects and images that are full of layers of meaning, with stories that grow and develop over the course of your life.

As artworks have come into my home, I intertwine fine art with heirlooms and other possessions, whether it’s a flea market trinket, found photos or a stunning pair of heels that are too high for me to wear more than once a year. As a curator, I’m always thinking about new ways to weave art into the fabric of day-to-day life. Incorporating an artist’s work into public space where people can be surprised and delighted is my favourite type of project. Whether it’s bringing sculptures by An Te Liu and Letha Wilson to Prince Edward County, a Ken Lum installation to Toronto’s Drake Hotel or working with feminist installation artist Judy Chicago to restage her sculptures as a dinner party, I’m often seeking new opportunities to share contemporary work with audiences large and small.

Personally, I’m drawn to works that are made from “non-art” materials: Shaheer Zazai’s abstract compositions, made entirely in Microsoft Word, an elegant sun-bleached velvet from a jewellery display window by Carlos Reyes or Karilee Fuglem’s acetate sculpture that reflects light patterns across the wall. They all remind me to look for the magic in everyday objects. Living with these works is a constant reminder to not take things at face value, but to remember that our perception of things can evolve.

I didn’t set out to collect these works or build an art collection around these ideas. In a sense, I like to think these things found me. As I was drawn to specific works, the threads that tied them together started to weave into a collection strategy that continues today. Art is about learning – and living with art is about learning constantly.

There are lots of ways to live artfully. You don’t need a large painting behind your sofa. Our homes can be a sanctuary but they can also be places of play. It’s amazing how you’ll see something new in an artwork if you move it to a new location. Even something you’ve lived with for years can feel totally fresh in a new place, in new light. When my son was little, he would periodically relocate an object or artwork I had left on a table and replace it with a Lego figure he had just put together. There would always be a hurried few minutes of tracking down the piece he had removed. Sometimes I returned it to its former home. Other times, the spot where it had landed gave the piece new life and I left his Lego where it was.

Next time you’re throwing a dinner party or having friends over for drinks, use it as an opportunity to move things around. Bring an artwork or treasured photo from your bedroom into your entertaining space. Take out your grandmother’s silver serving pieces and use them as a centrepiece to hold flowers or fruit. Nothing has to be permanent. You can put it back tomorrow if you like. But in the meantime, it may become a great way to start a conversation about the value of looking at things from a new perspective.

Art Toronto runs from Oct. 27 to 30. For more information, visit arttoronto.ca.

Creation story

Curator MIA NIELSEN, the director of this fall’s Art Toronto, makes her case for incorporating art into life’s daily rhythm

ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN TAMAKI
Extraordinary moments happen on ordinary days. Let's set the stage for the extraordinary to happen every day.