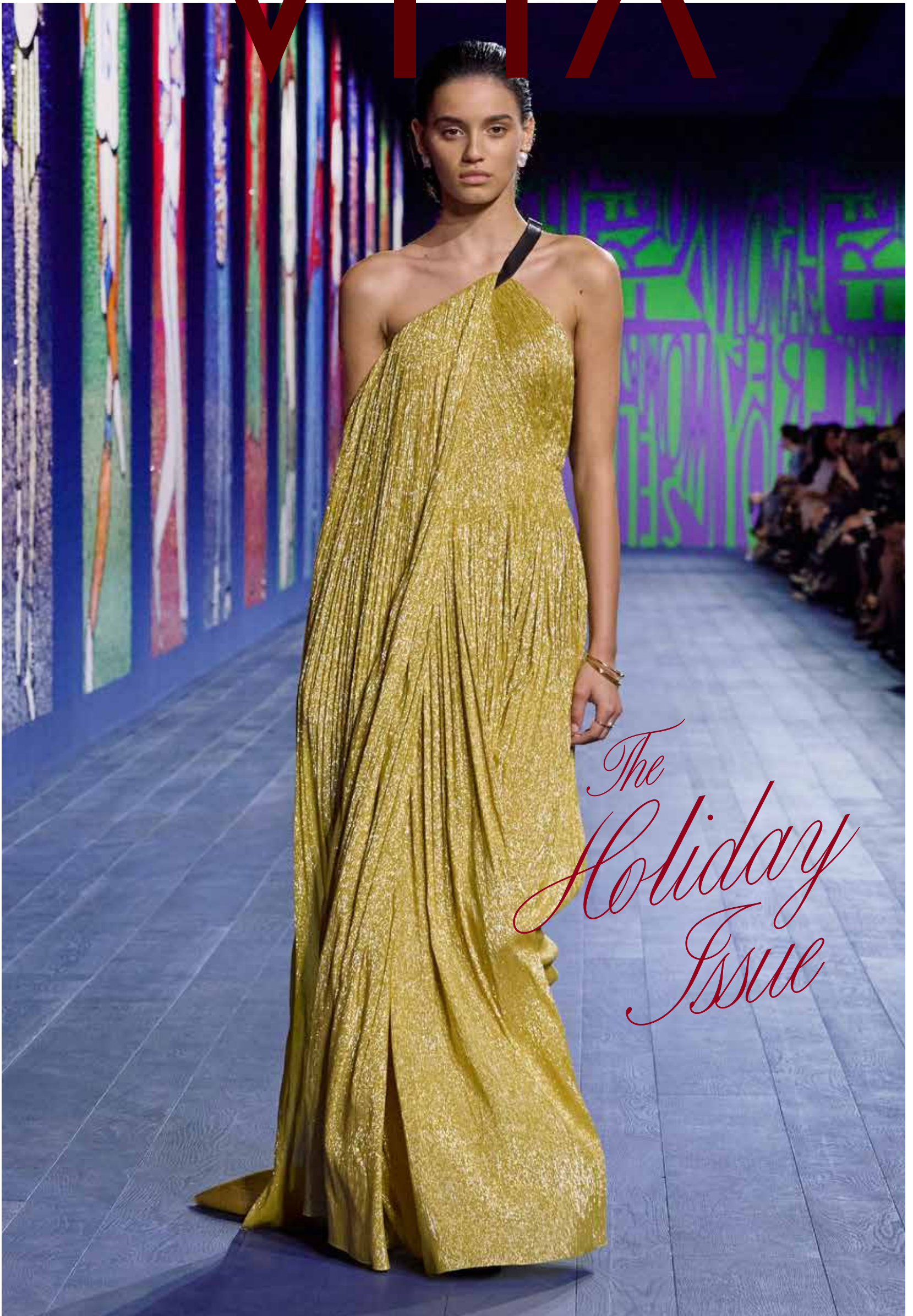


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CULTURE What does wearing the keffiyeh mean today?

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On my to-gift list: help them keep the winter chill at bay in Kamik's Tundra rubber boots for men and women (\$80), and for kids (\$50). They feature a removable thermal guard liner that keeps toes toasty warm, even at 40°F. [Us.kamik.com](#)



Editor's DESK

A Note From Noa

We're having a New York moment, and I couldn't be more thrilled! While *VITA*'s print edition and its website, [Vitamagazine.com](#), have been in Canada for 20 years, this issue represents our first step to reaching readers south of the border. The magazine's mantra, "lifestyle content you care about," will hopefully resonate as you peruse these pages. Our inaugural holiday issue includes an interview with eco-conscious designer Mara Hoffman, a roundup of our favorite advent calendars and a conversation about a cultural garment whose sales have soared in the past year. Enjoy!

Noa Nichol EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Style Life

Mara Hoffman on what fashion needs right now

BY LAUREN WALKER-LEE

In an industry that constantly reinvents itself, Mara Hoffman has mastered the art of staying grounded. The designer's journey—24 years of creating and re-defining sustainable fashion—has turned her into a style icon who champions the balance between personal expression and environmental responsibility. She recently closed her label and is now reflecting on the industry she helped shape, considering how she can continue to advocate for and contribute meaningfully to the fashion conversation. She is, in the meantime, staying inspired through a blend of curiosity and a relentless drive for discovery.

"When curiosity drives an artist, it brings them into situations and in contact with people that evoke new ideas," Hoffman reflects. This pursuit of exploration has woven together her outer experiences and inner growth, propelling her forward. As she puts it, inspiration comes from "the inner realms"—keeping her work layered and ever-evolving.

As for her own personal style, the New York designer leans toward a mix of her own designs and vintage treasures, including priceless pieces from her father's wardrobe. "He never threw anything away ... I have so many pieces of Monte Hoffman, including his shirts from the '70s and '80s." This blend of sentiment and style isn't just practical; for Hoffman, clothing has alchemical properties, able to transform the way she feels and connects with the world. "I hold a lot of alchemy and emotionality in fabric," she reveals, sharing her preference for natural fibers and her discomfort around synthetic materials. For her, wearing clothing with personal history is a grounding reminder of the intimacy and soul of fashion.

With her enviable closet and archive, the pieces she won't part with (though she did let many lovely things go in a recent archival sale with Vestiaire Collective) include her Margiela Tabi collection from the 1990s, her dad's vintage shirts and a treasured Adrian coat from her own line. The designer is mindful of the allure of new pieces but believes in building a wardrobe that doesn't need constant additions. "Fashion is alchemy. It's a state of emotional up-leveling," she says, capturing the way a great piece can elevate both style and spirit.



"FASHION IS ALCHEMY. It's a state of emotional up-leveling"

Hoffman's partnership with luxury resale platform Vestiaire also allows her to bring beloved Mara Hoffman pieces to new hands. "It aligns so much with our ethos," she says. "After I made the announcement about winding down the line, Vestiaire was an ideal match for managing inventory thoughtfully." Shopping secondhand is an antidote to a large problem. "We're set for six generations with the existing clothing on this planet. There's need now for the adaptation of systems, not new things, and buying secondhand is part of the solution." The Vestiaire archive drop, still live online, includes pieces from Hoffman's personal stash and brand favorites like the Sloan dress and Juliana sweater.

The New York factor, too, runs deep for Hoffman, who says dressing in "the best city" is all about layering—both physically and on a psychic level. "New York's an incredible city with a lot of energy—good, bad, ugly, beautiful. You can wear anything if it's done with confidence: a tutu or a garbage bag, anything." Her own personal style leans toward masculine silhouettes and wearing men's clothing. "I think it gives me a sense of protection. It's one more layer of walking through this city." Reflecting on New York's influence on her designs, she emphasizes the city's unique fashion diversity. "In New York you can have everything existing at once on a fashion scale. Similarly, Paris is beautiful and pulled together—such an aesthetic to it—but it's a little more uniform. In New York, there's every possible expression at once."

Her advice for fashion lovers? "Start by re-connecting with your wardrobe—take stock of what you own before seeking out something new." If you do want something fresh, Hoffman suggests secondhand shopping, where treasures abound. "There are so many beautiful, barely worn or unworn clothes out there; you can be sustainable without sacrificing style." V



MARA HOFFMAN SPRING 2024 EDITORIAL



HOFFMAN CELEBRATED HER VESTIAIRE PARTNERSHIP WITH VESTIAIRE U.S. CEO SAMINA VIRK DURING A CLIMATE WEEK EVENT. PARTY PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMMA MILLIGAN

As a steward of the planet, Hoffman has an interwoven sense of responsibility in her work; she embraced sustainability long before it was buzzy. For her, it's about an awareness that starts with the individual but reverberates through the entire industry. "Both the brand and the consumer need to wake up to what is actually happening," she says. Her advocacy for responsible fashion includes every step of the process, from materials to manufacturing to end-of-life solutions. The future of fabrics is an integral part of the conversation, and where Hoffman envisions a kinder fashion world that makes full use of existing resources. Her vision of the future leans into the recycling-tech firms like Circ, which are aiding in circularity by creating solutions for textile waste, separating out natural fibers for re-use.

The Making of This Issue

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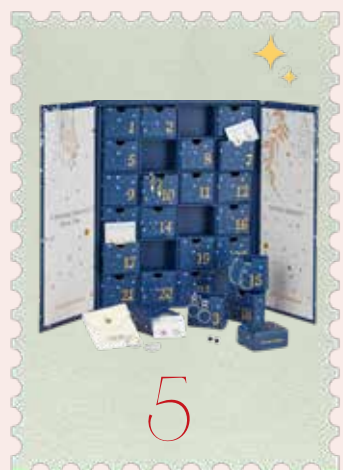


On my to-get list: Rado's "tock"-worthy True Square Automatic Open Heart watch (\$3,150) is a *White Christmas* dream. [Rado.com](#)

Christmas COUNTDOWN

Take advent-age of these festive calendars

BY CHRISTINA ARMANIOUS & NOA NICHOL



1. LA MER THE ATELIER ADVENT CALENDAR, \$600 Bring the spa experience home with 12 days of iconic skincare treasures, including the world-renowned Crème de la Mer. Cremedelamer.com

2. CLARINS 24-DAY ADVENT CALENDAR, \$140 Five curated routines for face, body and makeup, all designed to enhance skin radiance through December and beyond. Clarins.com

3. SISLEY PARIS ADVENT CALENDAR, \$825 Each compartment, designed in collab with British artist Fee Greening to capture the essence of Paris, is filled with luxe skincare, makeup, fragrance and hair products. Sisley-paris.com

4. REVOLVE BEAUTY ADVENT CALENDAR, \$150 Twenty-seven best-selling beauty and skincare products, featuring a selection of full-sized items. Revolve.com

5. STERLING FOREVER 24 DAYS OF JEWELRY, \$499 Featured on past Oprah's Favorite Things lists, this includes 24 stylish earrings. Sterlingforever.com

6. COMPARTÉS GARDEN CHOCOLATE TASTING CALENDAR, \$110 Each limited-edition gourmet chocolate is crafted with ripe ingredients from California's lush orchards, featuring unique notes like raspberry rose and lavender honey. Compertes.com

7. IN GOOD TASTE RED, WHITE & ROSÉ WINE ADVENT, \$127 Sip your way through December with 24 bottles featuring a mix of red, white and rosé wines sourced from Italy, Spain, South Africa, Argentina, Australia and California. Ingoodtaste.com

8. JO MALONE LONDON LIMITED-EDITION ADVENT CALENDAR, \$495 Twenty-five scented surprises, including seasonal colognes, mini candles, bath and body favorites. Jomalone.com

9. SAJE WELL WISHES ADVENT CALENDAR, \$121 Back by popular demand after selling out in record time last year, this features fan-fave essentials and new surprises, including an ornament diffuser and all-new Peppermint Twist products. Saje.com

10. BURT'S BEES 12 DAYS OF JOY, \$30 A fun mix of holiday-inspired and classic flavors of the brand's beeswax lip balms. Burtsbees.com

11. KANEL SAPIÓ ADVENT CALENDAR, \$69 Twelve expertly curated spice and salt blends, each paired with 24 unique recipes for a true tasting adventure. Presented in elegant glass jars with cork stoppers, the set also includes a handmade brass spoon. Kanel.com

12. VOSGES HAUT-CHOCOLAT/NORDIC FOREST CHOCOLATE CALENDAR, \$325 Premium chocolates and gourmet treats, including blood orange truffles and world-famous Italian nougat. The final drawer, brimming with festive confections, makes Christmas morning even more special. Vosgeschocolate.com

13. CHARLOTTE TILBURY'S BEAUTY TREASURE CHEST OF LOVE, \$297 This calendar is stacked with 12 award-winning products hidden inside jewel-handled drawers. Charlotteitilbury.com

14. DIPTYQUE PARIS' ADVENT CALENDAR, \$495 This year, the calendar, filled with 25 scented treasures, is modelled after a sewing box. After the festivities, use it to store treasured possessions. Diptyqueparis.com

15. VOLUSPA 12-DAY CANDLE ADVENT CALENDAR, \$165 Includes an exclusive wick trimmer and 12 petite pedestal candles from the best-selling japonica and holiday collections. Voluspa.com

16. PENHALIGON'S BAKER'S BOX OF DELIGHTS, \$570 Twenty-four celebrated signature fragrances, including the TikTok-viral Halfeti perfume. Penhaligons.com

17. SWAROVSKI ANNUAL EDITION ADVENT CALENDAR, \$1,500 Transform your Christmas tree and home into a sparkling wonderland filled with ornaments and figurines depicting enchanting snowy scenes. Swarovski.com

18. ELEMIS THE ULTIMATE SKINCARE ADVENT CALENDAR, \$300 A skincare lover's dream, this advent calendar features 25 of Elemis' most beloved face and body products. Discover new favorites or revisit iconic essentials like the plumping Pro-Collagen collection and the illuminating Dynamic Resurfacing range. Us.elemis.com

19. WILLIAMS SONOMA CHRISTMAS POPCORN ADVENT CALENDAR, \$71 Make the countdown to Christmas a tasty experience with 24 days of premium popcorn kernels, gourmet seasonings, and delicious recipes from the family-owned Wabash Valley Farms in Indiana's popcorn country. Williams-sonoma.com

20. LUSH 29 HIGH STREET CHRISTMAS ADVENT, \$210 Santa and his helpers bring cheer to Lush's first store with a refillable calendar packed with bath treats. Lush.com

21. DIOR LA MALLE DES RÊVES, \$4,400 Last but certainly not least, the luxurious Malle des Rêves advent calendar, limited to 120 pieces, features, in a golden-latched trunk, 24 exclusive Dior perfumes, skincare and beauty essentials for December's festivities. Dior.com

Wearable Art

Design and artistic creation come together for a delightful mix

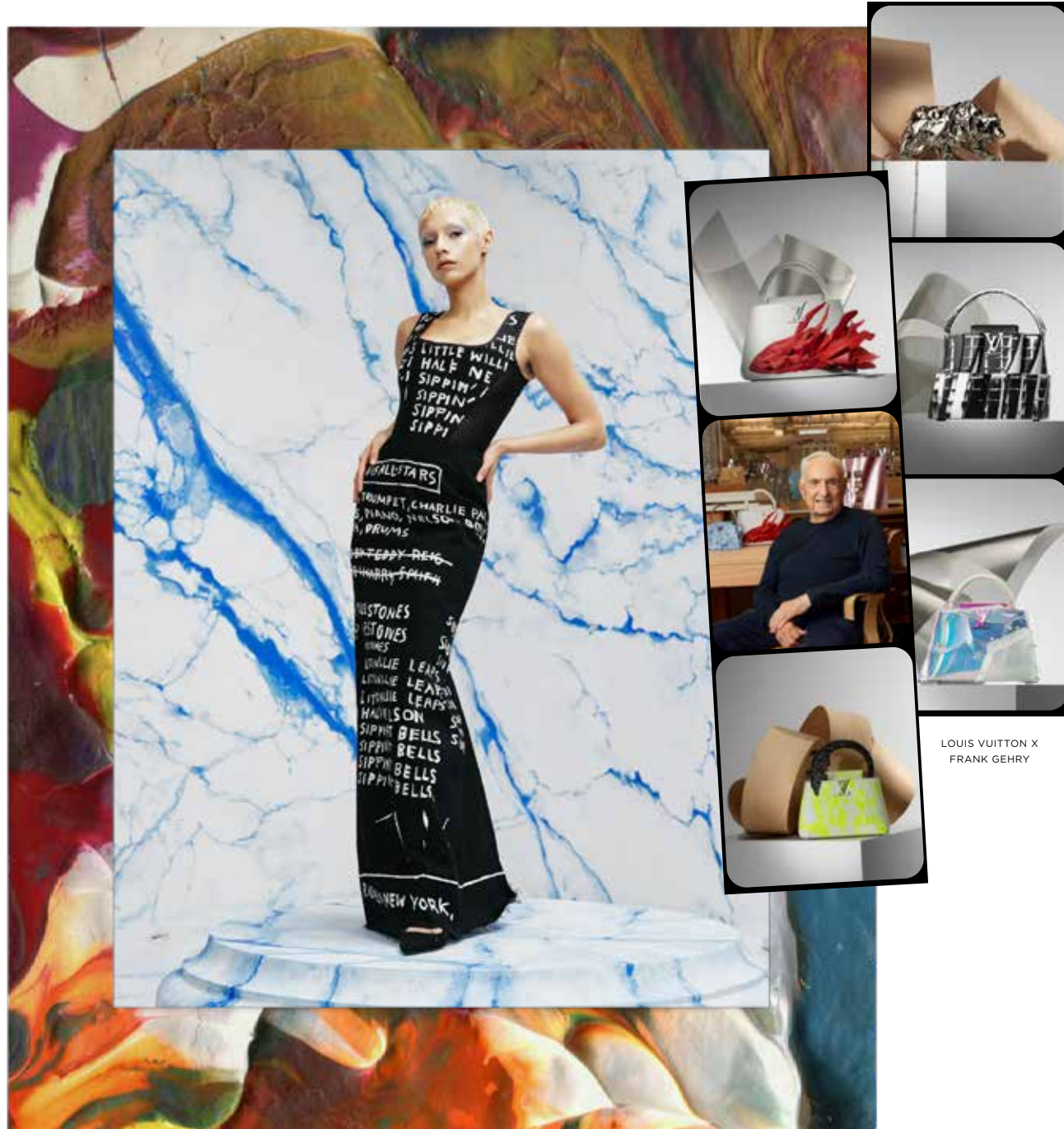
BY ALEESHA HARRIS

“Art is art. Fashion is fashion.” While late fashion luminary Karl Lagerfeld drew a clear line, in reality the categories of creativity are regularly intertwined.

Every season, designers and brands look to the world of art as a source of inspiration. Indeed, some of the most iconic fashion partnerships of all time—Louis Vuitton x Stephen Sprouse, Alexander McQueen x Damien Hirst, Louis Vuitton x Takashi Murakami—have asked artists to lend their flair to ready-to-wear and accessories. Despite Lagerfeld’s proclamation, fashion and art seem almost irrevocably connected. After all, isn’t a well-designed and constructed garment as much a piece of wearable art as it is a body adornment?

With the equation well-tested and proven a success, several new art collaboration and inspiration collections have landed this year. At Art Basel Miami Beach last winter, Louis Vuitton unveiled the latest iteration of its Frank Gehry x Louis Vuitton collection. Part of a longstanding collab between the Canadian-American architect and the luxury French fashion house, the release includes handbags, trunks and perfume bottles celebrating three key themes of Gehry’s catalogue: architecture and form, materials and animals. Among the release, the recognizable Louis Vuitton handbag silhouette The Capucines, a structured tote of varying sizes with a single top handle or strap, was featured with glass-like petals crafted from resin in the Capucines Mini Blossom design, and the remarkably three-dimensional Capucines MM Floating Fish.

Since 1988, Louis Vuitton has invested in growing its tie to the art world—a bond originally forged when Gaston-Louis Vuitton, grandson of its namesake founder, first commissioned artist collabs for fragrance bottles and specialty ads. To date, LV has partnered with a roster of artists and designers like Yayoi Kusama, James Rosenquist, César Baldaccini, Sol LeWitt and Olafur Eliasson.



LOUIS VUITTON X FRANK GEHRY

CHOPARD L.U.C XP ESPIRIT DE FLEURIER ROSE



But artistic crossover doesn’t just reside in the high-fashion realm. Swedish retailer H&M recently tapped into the legacy of artist Jean-Michel Basquiat for a collab with New York-based fashion designers Ev Bravado and Têla D’Amore. Released in summer, the range offered 30 pieces from tees to trousers, each featuring imagery—including rarely seen artworks—from Basquiat’s catalogue.

Already akin to a wearable piece of art on your wrist, timepieces are another form of fashion that taps into the world of art. For its aptly named Art Journey collection, Swatch featured pieces from Roy Lichtenstein, René Magritte and Muhammad ibn Ahmad Al-Battûfî on its quartz-movement watches, while Swiss brand Rado borrowed the creative eye of Kunihiro Morinaga, a design collaborator of Beyoncé, for a recent collection of watches. Featuring a unique photochromic treatment, the True Square timepieces (\$2,700 at Rado.com) come alive in the sun, shifting from a transparent dial to black.

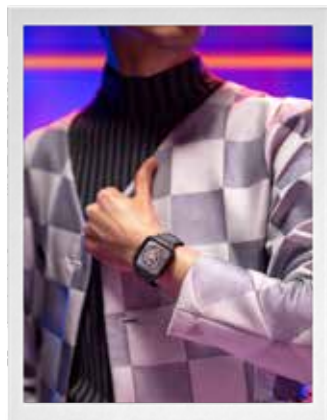
“When we traced the idea of clocks back to their origins, we arrived at the sundial,” Morinaga explains of the inspiration. “I wanted to transform people’s perception of time through light and shadow into a product. Through this timepiece, I hope that even for a moment you can feel the way light and time have passed, as people did in ancient times.”

At the haute horologie level, Chopard looked to both the beauty of nature, and the artistry of enamel work, for its L.U.C XP Esprit de Fleurier Rose pieces. “This collection honors the undisputed queen of the garden, the rose, which we celebrate for both its beauty and scent at Chopard,” says Caroline Scheufele, co-president and artistic director. “Much like art, these unique timepieces are an extension of one’s style, taste and appreciation for one of the rarest and most beautiful artistic crafts at Chopard.”

Art-fashion collaborations marry fine art and savoir faire to turn a practical piece into something that’s both gallery worthy and worthy of wearing. Win-win. V



SWATCH X LICHTENSTEIN



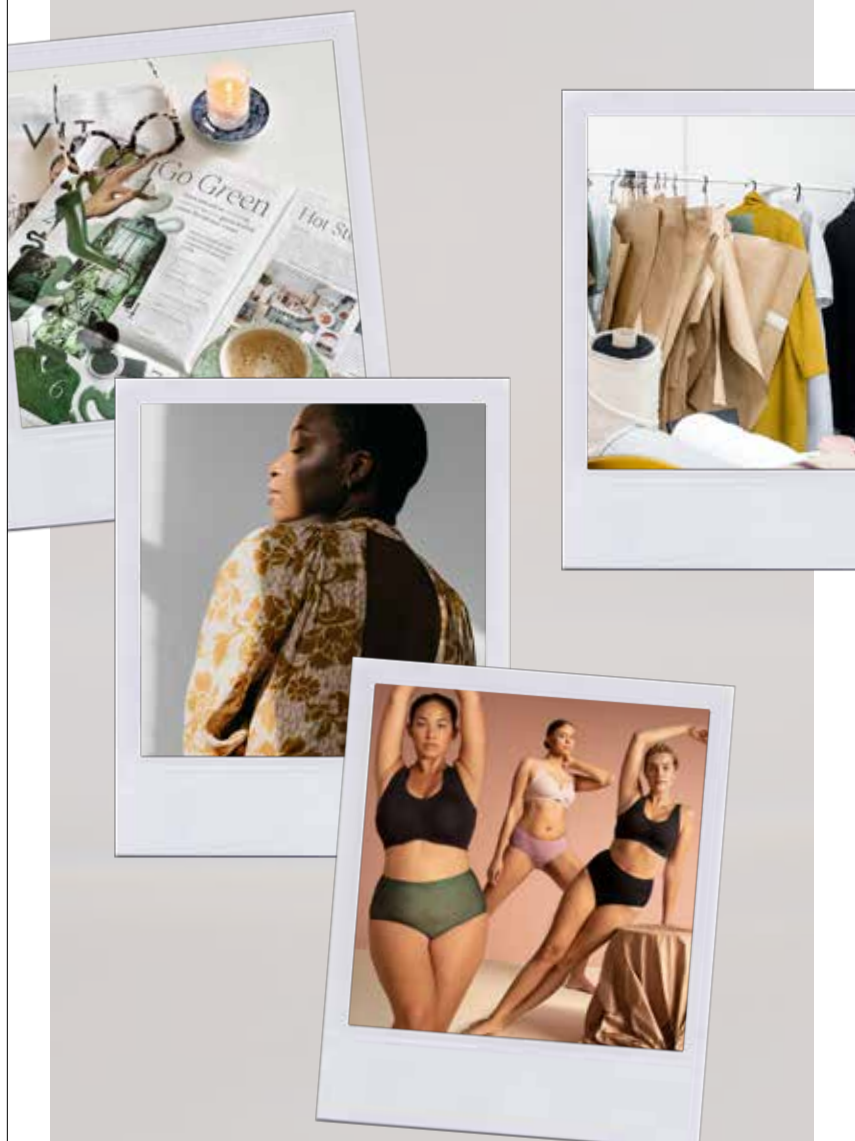
RADO’S TRUE SQUARE X KUNIHIKO MORINAGA



H&M RECENTLY TAPPED INTO THE LEGACY OF ARTIST JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT FOR A COLLAB WITH NEW YORK-BASED FASHION DESIGNERS EV BRAVADO AND TÊLA D’AMORE

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Appropriation or Allyship?

What does wearing the keffiyeh mean in today's fashion and political landscapes?

BY NOA NICHOL

By now you know: calling a dressing gown a kimono or braiding your hair in cornrows could be considered cultural appropriation. But when it comes to the keffiyeh—a headdress traditionally worn by men in parts of the Middle East and whose sales have surged in the past year, both in the region and the diaspora—have the rules shifted?

For Palestinians specifically, the keffiyeh has been a symbol of identity and resistance since the 1930s. As Wafa Ghnaim, a Palestinian dress historian, researcher, author, archivist, curator, educator and embroideress, explains, its roots lie in practicality. “The keffiyeh, also known as the hatta, was, for example, worn by Bedouin men to protect against the desert’s harsh elements.” Eventually the scarf’s pattern—famous for its black-and-white checks—became a rallying symbol during the 1930s’ Arab Revolt against British colonial rule. “It transformed into a uniform of resistance and solidarity,” says Ghnaim, who is also the founder of the Tatrez Institute, which stewards a collection of more than 180 traditional dresses and headdresses from the Middle East rescued from estates, households, vintage shops and even dumpsters around the world. “It was no longer just practical; it was political.”

Fast forward to today, and the keffiyeh’s meaning has taken on broader significance, stretching beyond its roots—and beyond the region it comes from. Following the recent resurgence of violence between Israel and Hamas, sales of the keffiyeh soared by 75 percent on platforms like Amazon (problematic, as we’ll see), as people don the scarf to express solidarity with Palestinians. For some, it’s a powerful act of allyship. For others, it raises various red flags.

Janice Deul, publicist, fashion/culture activist and founder of @diversity_rules, says cultural appropriation has become a buzzword in recent years, especially in fashion. “It happens when elements of a culture are taken without understanding or respecting the history and significance behind them,” she explains. In the case of the keffiyeh, she believes there’s a fine line between allyship and appropriation. “If people are wearing it without knowing its history or treating it as just another accessory, it dilutes its meaning.”

Morgan Cooper, founder of Ramallah-based Handmade Palestine, which works with local, mainly female artisans, bringing their creations, including hand-crafted jewelry, gift items and keffiyehs, to international consumers, echoes this sentiment. “When I first came to Palestine [from the U.S.] 20 years ago, I never saw anyone outside the region wearing a keffiyeh. Now, you can find it everywhere,” she says, adding that she does feel concern over how the keffiyeh has become a fashion statement for some. “If you’re wearing it in solidarity, that’s great, but when it’s used purely for style, that’s where cultural appropriation begins.”

“For some non-Arab Westerners, especially Gen Z, it has morphed into a broader political statement—almost like wearing a pride flag or a Black Lives Matter pin”

For Justin Chow, a University of Toronto graduate in religion and psychology, the keffiyeh evokes a complex mix of emotions. “It’s more than just a symbol tied to the Palestinian cause,” says Chow, who is allyship advisor at Allied Voices for Israel and co-founder of United Against Antisemitism. “For some non-Arab Westerners, especially Gen Z, it has morphed into a broader political statement—almost like wearing a pride flag or a Black Lives Matter pin. But the keffiyeh carries heavy associations, especially with figures like Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organization.”

Chow, who is not Jewish, admits that seeing someone wearing the keffiyeh can make him feel a mixture of unease and caution. “I don’t assume the worst about



WAFI GHNAIM, PHOTOGRAPHED BY ASHRAF HUSSEIN

“This plurality—where the keffiyeh is simultaneously a symbol of solidarity, a target for hate and a perceived tool for intimidation—reflects the broader complexities of using cultural symbols in political contexts”



JANICE DEUL, PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARIE-LOUISE HODGE



HANDMADE PALESTINE



SHAI DELUCA, PHOTOGRAPHED BY JILL SCHNEIDERMAN

everyone who wears it—many genuinely want peace for Palestinians. But when I see someone wearing it, I wonder: do they fully understand the deep and painful history it carries? Or are they wearing it to provoke fear?”

Jill Schneiderman, an editorial director from Toronto, shares similar feelings. “As a Jewish woman ... before October 7 I didn’t have a strong reaction to the keffiyeh. But since the attacks, it has taken on a more intimidating presence,” she says. “I see it now at protests, and it feels less like cultural appropriation and more like cultural intimidation.”

Indeed, one of the challenges with cultural symbols like the keffiyeh is the blurring of boundaries between appropriation and allyship. Some argue that wearing the keffiyeh in solidarity with Palestinians should be celebrated, as long as it’s done respectfully. “Solidarity isn’t just a form of self-care; it’s an active verb,” says Ghnaim. “If you’re going to wear the keffiyeh, you need to be prepared to stand up for its history and significance.”

Deul, too, warns that many people engage in what she calls “performative activism.” “Wearing a keffiyeh is not enough,” she says. “If you truly want to support the Palestinian cause, you need to act, speak out ... not just wear a scarf.”

As alluded to earlier, the commercialization of the keffiyeh has further complicated its meaning. The rise in sales has attracted not only individuals expressing solidarity but also fashion brands and celebrities eager to capitalize on the trend (luxury goods maker Louis Vuitton, for example, sold a version of the keffiyeh in 2021, and, several weeks ago, Justin Bieber was photographed in Los Angeles wearing what appeared to be a keffiyeh). Cooper, who supports traditional Palestinian artisans, is troubled by the commercialization of such a significant cultural symbol. “For some, it’s become less about supporting Palestinians and more about profiting from their heritage,” she says.

Despite concerns over appropriation, the keffiyeh’s role in global solidarity movements cannot be ignored. Hazami Barmada, a former United Nations official, described wearing the scarf as a “superpower” that reconnects her with her Palestinian heritage. “It’s a symbolic link to children in Gaza, but wearing it also attracts verbal abuse,” she told one Reuters journalist. Ghnaim agrees, pointing to several violent attacks in the U.S. on individuals who were wearing the keffiyeh.

However, it also cannot be ignored that some, like interior designer and Toronto-based television personality Shai Deluca, feel wary—and disagree. “As an Israeli Jew, I see the keffiyeh ... as having evolved into a contentious emblem of political totalitarianism,” he says, adding that, to his understanding, the keffiyeh was “once a symbol of regional identity, co-opted from the Sudra—a rectangular piece of cloth that has been worn as a headdress, scarf or neckerchief in ancient Jewish tradition.”

Ghnaim opposes this, saying “It’s funny how Israel, many times in history, attempted to take that scarf as their own, and then when they failed, and we continued to wear it, and it has grown in its meaning, it’s now suddenly a form of intimidation.”

This plurality—where the keffiyeh is simultaneously a symbol of solidarity, a target for hate and a perceived tool for intimidation—reflects the broader complexities of using cultural symbols in political contexts. In the case of the keffiyeh, it’s clear that whether worn as a sign of support or misunderstood as a fashion statement, its impact is felt deeply by those connected to its history.

Indeed, the keffiyeh is far more than just a piece of cloth; as Deul says, “This isn’t a matter that’s black and white.” For some, it represents resistance, identity and hope. For others, it stirs feelings of unease and division. In a world where fashion and politics often collide, the keffiyeh stands at the crossroads of appropriation and allyship. And, whether it is worn in the streets at protests or the runways of fashion shows, it will spark conversations about culture, identity and responsibility. ▽



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