



# Art as a means to recreate luxury brands' rarity and value<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The present study analyses the different binding modes that link art and luxury brands in an attempt to determine the links between the two, in particular the role of art in the creation of luxury uniqueness.

Four main types of relationship were identified that link luxury brands and art following an in-depth analysis of the practices of the major global luxury brands. These binding modes are: Business Collaboration, Patronage, Foundations and Artistic Mentoring.

A model is presented which assesses the relevance of each of the 'art to luxury brand' binding modes, in accordance with the brand's timeline and the intensity of its engagement.

The study defines a typology of the links and ties between art and luxury brands, and explains how each contributes to the brands' incomparability, designed to neutralize the risks stemming from the industrialization of luxury.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last twenty years, luxury has emerged as an industry featuring corporate giants, extremely elaborate management processes (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Kapferer & Michaut, 2015), strict financial policies (Becker & Nobre, 2013; Som & Pape, 2015) and a sophisticated business model (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012). Luxury firms thus engage in practices similar to those observed on the mass market, with high launch and advertising costs, an ever-growing number of new products, shorter product lifespans, and the need for short-term financial results, whilst simultaneously seeking to maintain the perception of selectivity and rarity (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Sicard, 2010). The extensive body of literature on the subject concurs that the luxury sector is now a tiered market where exceptional elitist luxury coexists with accessible, trivialized, and demythologized mass luxury (Berthon, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon, 2009; Chattalas & Shukla, 2015; Dubois, Laurent, & Czellar, 2005; Lipovetsky & Roux, 2003). The world of luxury duly appears as an antinomian synthesis of financial logic versus aesthetic logic, and productivity constraints versus traditional craftsmanship, which could ultimately lead to a loss of rarity value and consequently a loss of prestige (Dubois & Laurent, 1994; Kapferer, 2014), especially at a time when a growing middle class in emerging countries is increasingly hungry for luxury goods (Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Granot, Russell, & Brashear-Alejandro, 2013; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003). This situation challenges the ontological dimension of exclusivity and rarity associated with luxury. The problem is that as a steadily growing number of consumers buy luxury goods, the perceived

value of the latter decreases for many of the customers who consider rarity to be the key component of a luxury purchase (Godey et al., 2013; Lipovetsky & Roux, 2003; Sicard, 2010; Wiedmann, Hennings, & Siebels, 2007).

Within the same timeframe, several major luxury brands have linked their name with the most *en-vogue* artists. Prestige brands are increasingly ready to put their identity in the hands of renowned artists and designers in order to appear avant-garde and elitist (Kapferer, 2014; Lee, Chen, & Wang, 2015; Thomas, 2007). Longchamp bags have been revisited by Jean-Luc Moerman; Marc Newson renovated the Jaeger-LeCoultre Atmos 561 clock; and James Rosenquist, Philip Starck and Richard Prince have all designed scarves for Louis Vuitton. Bridging art and luxury is not new: we just need to think of the Mondrian dress by Yves Saint Laurent, and the friendships forged between Louis Vuitton and the Impressionists, and between Coco Chanel, Stravinsky and Cocteau. The novelty is that these sporadic relationships have now become almost systematic (Fillis, 2011; Schroeder, 2006) and the worlds of art and luxury are growing closer every day.

These changes have led to the need for a clearer understanding of the relationship between art and luxury brands. Clarification of the relations between the two sectors could shed new light on the field of luxury, leading to a better understanding of key aspects of luxury brand management (Berthon et al., 2009; Emile & Craig-Lees, 2011; Granot et al., 2013). However, the question of the links between luxury goods and the arts is only marginally covered by scholars in the field of luxury (Bian & Forsythe, 2012), and one aspect that is almost never mentioned is the role of art in the construction of the scarcity value and uniqueness

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of luxury products (O'Reilly, 2011).

The overall goal of this study is therefore to examine the role of art in the creation of luxury uniqueness through an analysis of the different binding modes that link art with luxury brands. By binding modes, we refer to the type and nature of the relationship between an artist or an artistic event and a luxury brand.

The article is divided into three sections. Section one describes the situation relative to the brand paradox that luxury companies face, and the relational modes between art and luxury identified in the existing literature. Section two presents the literature to date with an analysis of the binding modes that connect luxury brands and art. The final section presents a conceptual model that encapsulates the structural links between luxury brands and the world of art.

## 2. Research background: art in the face of the luxury brand rarity paradox

Researchers have long highlighted the role of products and brands as a means of self-expression (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959), satisfying the need for uniqueness in the customers' mind (Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy, 1982; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). This is especially true of luxury goods. Luxury brands convey an important symbolic sense of social stratification and hierarchical organization (Han, Nunes, & Drèze, 2010; Park, 2014; Wilcox, Kim, & Sen, 2009), with subtle, discreetly embedded symbols that display their superiority (Kapferer, 2012; Lipovetsky & Roux, 2003). The decision to purchase a luxury product depends not only on the material needs satisfied by the product, but also on social needs (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005). Conspicuous consumption conveys social status (Eastman & Eastman, 2011; Van Herpen, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2009; Veblen, 1899), social association (Braun & Wicklund, 1989; Wang & Griskevicius, 2014) and social dissociation (Corneo & Jeanne, 1997; Han et al., 2010), with high prices frequently perceived as a differentiator of social status (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Rucker, Dubois, & Galinsky, 2011). Luxury goods thus reflect rank in society due to their rarity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), highlighting their customers' uniqueness (Amaldoss & Jain, 2005; Emile & Craig-Lees, 2011; Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010). A common denominator in this wide-ranging field of research is the acknowledgement that a key motive for luxury goods purchases is the access it gives consumers to exclusivity and rarity, which boosts self-esteem, expresses identity and signals status (Hung et al., 2011). Consequently, the paradox of the luxury brand is that the very nature of a luxury product implies scarcity, whilst at the same time, luxury firms need to grow sales by extending their products' presence and availability of. A paradox is a proposition which contains, or appears to contain, a logical contradiction (Högström, Gustafsson, & Tronvoll, 2015) and, by extension, a situation in which two opposing aspects conflict (Chailan, 2015). The luxury brand paradox is thus one of massification and popularization vs. rarity (Wetlauffer, 2001).

For this reason, luxury marketers need to do something vastly different to get the luxury dimension across to consumers and to underscore the exclusive dimension of their products (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016; Lee et al., 2015). Traditionally, luxury's scarcity has been linked to the artisanal aspect of the product, extremely high prices, limited supply, and a very selective distribution network. However, in an industry where sales are estimated at 250 billion euros (Bain and Company, 2015), this is no longer enough. The rarity aspect has thus been reviewed and combined with other, subtler factors such as art. For this reason, many luxury brands have systematically and significantly strengthened their ties with art and artists in recent years. To give just a few examples, Anselm Reyle designed Dior bags, Stuart Vevers re-interpreted some Escher drawings for Loewe, Piet Mondrian's color blocks served as an inspiration for Céline handbags, and Daniel Buren created silk scarves for Hermès. The aim is to re-introduce exclusivity, inspiring consumers by using art as a distinguishing feature (Braun & Wicklund,

1989; Chattalas & Shukla, 2015) since art remains widely associated with a set of social and cultural codes that restrict its intelligibility.

While in many ways it has in itself become a consumer product (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008; Schroeder, 2006), art is difficult to define since it encompasses a plurality of meanings and experiences. For some, art is primarily an experience - "*The touchstone of all art is thus seen to be the aesthetic experience and not a definition*" Berleant (1964) - while others - inspired by Heidegger's theory of art - consider it as a learning process (Berthon et al., 2009). Setting aside these opposing views on the nature of art, there appears to be an innate tendency in humans to appreciate and pursue aesthetic pleasure (Townsend & Sood, 2012), and the inherent non-functionality of aesthetics (Heine & Phan, 2011) can be meaningfully understood in terms of consumer perceptions of aesthetic product features, creating a link between high aesthetics and a luxury image (Berthon et al., 2009; Chailan & Valek, 2014). However, while many luxury firms have adopted an art-related strategy, the literature is relatively silent on the types and meaning of the links connecting art and luxury brands. On the other hand, careful analysis of a large body of literature helped us to identify three distinct approaches that link luxury brands with the world of art.

The first approach, which is also the most historically traditional, is sponsoring. For Joy, Wang, Chan, Sherry, and Cui (2014), "*the luxury brand is the patron of art*". This patronage may take the form of direct financial support for activities of general interest, museum exhibitions or actions linked to art (Kapferer, 2014).

Second, luxury brands can also develop art-related collaboration to produce products through a business relationship (Baumgarth, Lohrisch, & Kastner, 2014; Lee et al., 2015). As artists take part in the design of certain luxury products, it elicits a value of otherness, being elsewhere, in a different time and a different world (Chen, 2009).

The creation of foundations is also frequently mentioned (Baumgarth et al., 2014; Joy et al., 2014; Kastner, 2014) as a third form of liaison. Foundations provide a lasting bond between the luxury brand and art. For some scholars (Chen, 2009), luxury brands even become hybrid institutions, embodying elements of both art galleries and museums.

Given its many facets, art is therefore a valid support for an approach based on exclusivity, rarity and difficult access (Meisiek & Barry, 2014). However, of the 1516 arts-related papers identified by O'Reilly (2011) in his review of management journals, only 116 relate to 'art and business'. A better understanding of the links between art and luxury brands thus remains a key issue.

## 3. Method and data

Our study adopts a micro-process oriented approach, echoing calls (Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003; McGuinness, 2008; Salvato, 2003) for an 'activity-based' view of branding in the broader field of management. An activity-based view focuses on the detailed processes and practices that constitute the day-to-day activities of organizational life (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015; Johnson et al., 2003).

To gain a better understanding of the way luxury brands converge with the arts to restore exclusivity and distance for their products, we focused on the links between art and some of the main French and Italian luxury brands. Together, these two countries account for around 55% of global luxury goods sales (Altgamma, 2015; Fontagné, 2013), representing the largest proportion of the global luxury goods sector for both historical (Lipovetsky & Roux, 2003) and cultural reasons (Morand, 2012). It was therefore logical to focus on luxury brands from these two countries.

The data come from an analysis of publicly available reports from companies that are members of the Comité Colbert in France and the Altgamma Association in Italy. These two associations include most of the key players in the luxury industry in each country, and have very strict membership criteria. Membership is by nomination only, providing a guarantee for brands who are already members that any new

members will uphold the standards in place (Kapferer, 2012). The luxury houses that are members of the Comité Colbert alone hold a quarter of the global luxury goods market, boasting a turnover of 39 billion dollars and 115,000 jobs in France (Fontagné, 2013).

152 product or service-oriented luxury brands were identified in total, of which 76 are Comité Colbert members and 76 are Altgamma Association members.

The study was conducted in three stages.

In a first step, the brands were coded and then divided into four categories, L/Luxury, NL/Non-Luxury, U/Uncertain, and D/Duplication. The codification and categories are presented in [Appendices A and B](#). This stage was necessary as:

Some brands are representative of the country in question yet cannot be considered as luxury brands. This is true of Agusta and San Pellegrino for Altgamma and Italy, for instance, and Bonpoint and Flammarion for Colbert and France.

Some members may or may not be considered as luxury brands, such as the Luce della Vite and Ducati brands for example.

Some brands occur twice, once as a main brand and once as an offshoot (e.g. Dior and Parfums Christian Dior). In this case the brand was counted only once.

To ensure that our brand identification was comprehensive and unbiased, two independent researchers were invited to codify the first classification to improve internal coherence and check the groupings' reliability. The intercoder reliability coefficient was 92%, which is an acceptable level. When there were differences of opinion about the brand, particularly in the U/Uncertain cases, the coders discussed the issue until a consensus was reached.

In total, 14 Italian brands and 13 French brands were eliminated.

The second stage involved investigating whether any of the remaining luxury brands were engaged in initiatives connected to the arts. By engagement, we mean that the brand publicly claims an activity or bond with an artist or with the art world. Two researchers from different countries conducted the investigation to maximize the available information on each of the brands. Two sources of information were analyzed for each brand, the website and the 2014 annual activity report. First, the annual reports were carefully read and analyzed. Whenever terms referring to artistic activities appeared, they were recorded and further research on the topic was conducted. The same process was then applied to the brand's internet site.

In the third stage, we coded the data in order to create a cognitive map (Miles & Huberman, 2003) and conduct qualitative data analysis. We drew up a summary of the first annual reports and sites with a codification matrix. After an initial examination of 16 brands, a coding grid was established to put the various artistic activities into clusters. We then established a terminology list to ensure coherence between our research project and the coding matrix.

#### 4. Results

The findings are presented in two stages, with two tables that summarize the data collected.

In the first stage, we analyzed how many of the Comité Colbert or Altgamma members' luxury brands promoted a project or a link with the world of art. [Appendices A and B](#) present the details of the study, while [Table 1](#) below summarizes the data resulting from this analysis.

Of the total number of 152 brand members in the two associations, 125 are luxury brands.

Of these 125 luxury brands, 67 brands, representing 53.6% of Altgamma and Comité Colbert members, are involved in an initiative related to the world of art.

In other words, more than half of the luxury brands in these two associations have a link with art. These figures suggest that the link between art and luxury brands is not simply coincidence, but

**Table 1**  
Altgamma and Comité Colbert luxury brands involved in artistic initiatives.

In number of brands	Altgamma	Comité Colbert	Total	%
Total number of brands that are members of the association	76	76	152	
Of which: Luxury brands	62	63	125	100
Featuring no arts-oriented action or link	26	32	58	46.4%
<b>Featuring an arts-related action or link</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>53.6%</b>

corresponds to a systematic, organized and institutionalized brand policy. As an institution is an established norm, custom or practice in a given society, we use the word 'institutionalized' to counter the notion of links due to chance.

Moreover, the development of collaboration between art and luxury brands is not related to the brands' nationality since there is little difference between Italian brands (58% have a link with art) and French brands (49% have an institutional link with art).

The second phase of the analysis examined the similarities and contrasts of the actions of luxury brands engaged in developing a liaison with the world of art, through a study of the different kinds of links between luxury brands and artistic initiatives. A connection consists of any type of link between a brand and art or an artist that appears on the luxury brand's website or is mentioned in the company's annual report, and is thus publicly acknowledged by the brand.

In total, 106 connections between luxury brands and art were identified (52 initiatives for Altgamma members and 54 for Comité Colbert brands). The figure of 106 art-connections is higher than the number of luxury brands involved (67), since one brand may intervene in more than one artistic field. For instance, Gucci is involved in some patronage activities as well as artistic collaboration, and also created a foundation, while in the same vein, Cartier has a foundation and also sponsors some artists.

Careful analysis and codification of the artistic initiatives of each member brand in the two associations allowed us to classify these connections in a series of clusters, giving rise to four categories, each of which corresponds to a type of connection or binding mode between the luxury brands and art. The four binding modes involve artistic mentoring, business collaboration, foundations and patronage.

The findings therefore only partially confirm the three dimensions – sponsoring, foundations and business collaboration – identified in the literature review. The analysis effectively led us to divide sponsoring into two distinct dimensions, namely, patronage and mentoring. There is a common root between patronage and mentoring since both involve financing an action that is external to the firm, and there is no acknowledged economic compensation. However, the findings show that there is a difference in the approach of luxury brands depending on whether their support is intended for the collectivity, for an individual or for a group of individuals. On the one hand, sponsoring is based on the ancient Roman practice of evergetism whereby the benefactor received honor and distinction by donating gratuitously to the community. On the other hand, mentoring promotes an approach that is more focused on the artist, their know-how or specific talent.

[Appendices C and D](#) present the study details for each of the two organizations and per type of initiative, while [Table 2](#) summarizes the data resulting from this analysis.

Analysis of the relationship between brands and art indicates that of the 106 identified connections between luxury brands and art, half involve luxury brands that are members of the Comité Colbert and the other half involve luxury brands that are members of Altgamma.

Artistic collaboration based on a business relationship – in other words, the luxury brand pays the artist to work for it, generally for a pre-established length of time – is the most common form of

**Table 2**  
Categorization of the links between luxury brands and art.

	Altagamma	Comité Colbert	Total	%
Number of arts-related actions conducted by the luxury brands included in the study	52	54	106	100
Of which:				
Artistic collaboration and commercial creations by artists	25	18	43	40.5%
Support for creation and artistic mentoring	2	7	9	8.5%
Patronage	18	21	39	36.8%
Foundations	7	8	15	14.2%

collaboration, followed by patronage. Artistic mentoring and foundations together represent a little under a quarter of all initiatives.

If we base the analysis on the length of engagement with the brand, foundations and patronage represent just over half of the initiatives. By their very nature, foundations and patronage involve very long-term commitments because they require a specific legal structure and a commitment to art in general which goes beyond an individual link with an artist.

By contrast, artistic collaboration and mentoring initiatives are geared towards one or more specific individuals and therefore do not necessarily involve a long-term relationship.

Table 3 explains each connection mode and provides examples.

**Table 3**  
The four arts-related binding modes adopted by luxury brands.

Artistic mentoring	
Definition	Mentoring is a relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. Artistic mentoring and support for artistic creation by luxury brands consists of aiding young artists to emerge or to become more established. Several luxury brands have introduced mentoring programmes, including Rolex, Fendi, or Breguet.
Example: Rolex	<b>Rolex</b> launched its artistic mentoring programme in 2002. Six renowned artists from six disciplines (dance, theatre, literature, music, drama and the visual arts) are designated as mentors to six young artists, supporting the latter to realize their projects. The scheme is called the 'Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative'. Every two years, a handful of artists at the top of their craft take an up-and-coming talent under their wing, in each of the disciplines.
Foundations	
Definition	A foundation is a legal categorization of non-profit organizations that typically donates funds and support, or provides the source of funding for its own charitable purposes. A foundation's purpose is to develop general interest with a non-profit goal. World-renowned luxury brands such as Cartier, Louis Vuitton and Prada have created foundations.
Example: Cartier	The <b>Cartier Foundation</b> is a Mecca of contemporary art. The foundation has brought to the fore major discoveries like the Japanese painter, Takashi Murakami and the Congolese artist, Cheri Samba. Its exhibitions feature artists who have rarely been invited to present their work in contemporary art institutions.
Artistic collaboration	
Definition	Collaboration is established through a classic business relationship between the artist and the brand. The artist agrees to create a product or a line for the brand within a given period of time and receives remuneration in return. This method has been used by several luxury brands, including Dior and Ruinart.
Example: Louis Vuitton	<b>Louis Vuitton</b> has developed effective partnerships to help the brand rejuvenate its label with artists such as Jeff Koons. This association has allowed Vuitton to extend its public to younger market segments and to renew its color codes, an important factor in the brand's strategy as it seeks to become less dependent on its trademark monogram pattern.
Patronage	
Definition	Patronage is the support, encouragement, and/or financial aid that an organization or individual bestows on another. Patrons operate as sponsors. Sponsorship of artists and the commissioning of artwork is the best-known aspect of the patronage system. Many luxury brands such as Hugo Boss or Louis Roederer invest in artistic patronage in various fields such as contemporary art, national heritage, dance, film and photography.
Example: Bulgari	Roman jeweler, <b>Bulgari</b> , partnered the Victoria & Albert Museum in London for 'The Glamour of Italian Fashion' (1945–2014) exhibition. This major exhibition takes a glamorous, comprehensive look at Italian fashion from the end of the Second World War through to the present day. It highlights the exceptional quality of techniques, materials and expertise for which Italy is now renowned.

## 5. Luxury brands' art strategy: interpretation and analytical modelling

### 5.1. Research implications

The study confirms that relations between luxury brands and the art world are systematic and not simply due to coincidence. Art can introduce strong symbolic and aesthetic values to luxury perceptions, introduced to neutralize risks arising from the industrialization of luxury (Kapferer, 2014; Lee et al., 2015). Through art, the high symbolic value of luxury brands no longer stems simply from possession of the product, but is appendant to the mastery of exclusive and complex artistic codes. Art is ideally suited to this migration as its access is complex and its understanding difficult for outsiders (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008; Meisiek & Barry, 2014). Similar kinds of links with art are used by the luxury brands we studied, indicating that the four types of link identified - artistic mentoring, business collaboration, foundations and patronage - correspond wholly with the brands' need to enhance their status of exclusivity through art.

The study provides us with an interpretative framework to facilitate our understanding of the rationale behind each of the binding modes linking art with luxury. The findings point to two key dimensions of luxury brands' art strategy, namely, (a) the temporal aspect of the luxury brand's engagement with art, and (b) the depth and intensity of the engagement, i.e. whether the luxury brand desires a relationship with the artist as a person or with the art sector in general.

The duration of the commitment may be represented on an axis according to which the luxury brand seeks a permanent link and a long-term engagement, or a less constrictive and more flexible arrangement.



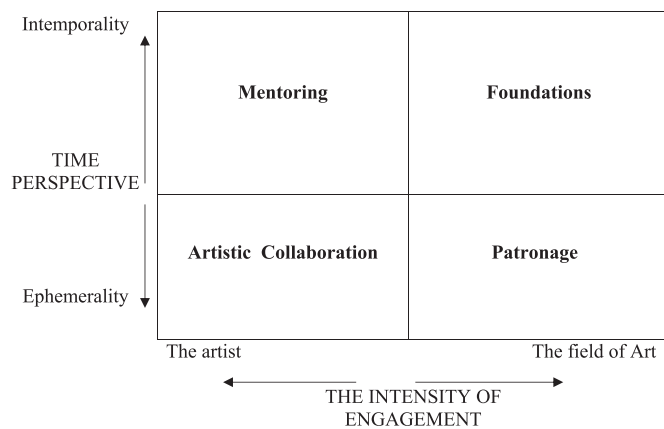


Fig. 1. Art-to-luxury brand strategies.

A second axis may represent the intensity of the engagement.

Fig. 1 summarizes the options offered to luxury brands in their art-binding process.

The model above suggests that art is enmeshed in an ensemble of very long-term strategic choices for luxury brands. This supports the suggestion of path dependency (Dierickx & Cool, 1989; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997; Thiéart, 2016) in the transformation of art into a source of sustainable competitive advantage for luxury brands. The notion of path dependency asserts that a company's history influences its future, and that time remains a primordial variable, one that is impossible to eradicate through additional financial investment. The analysis converges with numerous other studies indicating that firms which build their strategy on path dependency, causal ambiguity, social complexity and intangible assets outperform those that base their strategy on tangible assets (Barney, 2001; Mazur, 2013; Sanchez & Heene, 2010). This 'art-to-luxury brand' strategy is difficult to imitate since it is founded on company-specific history and know-how acquired over the course of time. As O'Driscoll argued (2006), a marketing-related competence developed within a company takes time, but once it is achieved, imitation by competitors is difficult because "history matters" (Sydow, Schreyögg, & Kock, 2009; Teece et al., 1997), forging specific know-how and expertise (Cravens, Piercy, & Prentice, 2000). An art-related luxury brand management operating mode is also very difficult for competitors to understand since a large part of its position is informal, linked to the oral transmission of experience and savoir-faire, as well as the malleability of the luxury company's internal structure. When the bonds between art and a luxury brand are intense enough, it becomes impossible to determine if the art in itself is a source of competitive advantage for the luxury brand, or if the outcomes it generates - for instance, modernity, word-of-mouth and exclusivity - are at the origin of the link between the artist and the luxury brand's perceived value. This indeterminability concurs with Hunt and Morgan (1997) and Hansen, McDonald, and Mitchell (2013) who identify causal ambiguity (Orton & Weick, 1990; Weick, 1976) as a key characteristic of competitiveness, since it prevents potential imitators from knowing not only what to imitate but also how to do it (Reed & DeFilippi, 1990). The causal ambiguity between art and luxury creates an intangible tacit barrier and a formidable defense system for existing luxury brands. This is because art-related luxury management is (a) complex, as it is composed of 'simple' elements - the luxury brand and the artist - combined with the internal knowledge required by the luxury company to get the most from the art-to-brand relationship, (b) specific to the luxury brand, being made up of brand elements that, by definition, are inimitable and associated with internally-built luxury features, and (c) tacit, because even if its existence is clearly visible and formulated, its functioning mode is not. This combination of complexity, specificity and tacitness makes the 'art-to-luxury brand' model hard to copy due to its idiosyncratic nature.

## 5.2. Managerial implications

The delicate balance between luxury and unlimited availability is extremely hard to successfully achieve as, by its very nature, luxury is luxurious and excessive, and is intentionally unavailable to mainstream consumers (Lipovetsky & Roux, 2003; Morand, 2012; Wetlaufer, 2001). Our research thus has several implications for luxury brand strategists since it demonstrates that the power of symbolic luxury is fueled less by rarity and more by the theatrics of art.

Luxury no longer resides simply in having and owning, but rather in the ability of brands to reinvent the luxury paradigm for consumers who yearn for ever greater uniqueness in their experiences (Kapferer & Laurent, 2016; Rucker et al., 2011; Shukla, Banerjee, & Singh, 2016). In this vein, art has become a major component of luxury brands' essence and of the strategies reinforcing the brands' scarcity and uniqueness, and consequently their legitimacy and credibility. The establishment of systematic links between art and luxury has resulted in luxury consumers seeing themselves indirectly elevated to the rank of art lovers and connoisseurs.

It is therefore imperative for each luxury marketer to fully embrace the artistic dimension of luxury to ensure that the brand also performs and delivers the unique, rarity-related satisfaction that luxury consumers most desire and crave.

A judicious art-related strategy, once truly established in a luxury company, makes replication by competitors very difficult due to the indeterminability of cause and effect, and the time it takes to build the relevant competencies. The association of art with luxury also result in it being perceived as intemporal (Kapferer, 2012).

In practice, a luxury brand can position itself appropriately by choosing the binding mode which best matches its (a) long-term strategy and positioning and (b) its willingness to act in the field of the arts in general or with regard to specific artists in particular, based on such factors as history, financial resources and the brand's own aesthetic criteria.

The time and resources allocated to setting up such a strategy should also be carefully considered. Each of the four binding modes has intrinsic qualities and can be considered as an effective option. In terms of cost, foundations and patronage are certainly the most expensive options, while the development of artistic mentoring tends to be the most time-consuming approach.

## 6. Conclusion

This study shows how and why luxury brands systematically create and develop art-oriented policies.

In order to reduce the negative effects of the ever-growing demand for their products and services, which ultimately leads to a decline in their rarity value and uniqueness, luxury brands have built a new art-related paradigm, detached from the mechanical execution of mere product performance. The study shows that this paradigm revolves around four types of collaboration involving luxury brands and art, namely, Business Collaboration, Patronage, Foundations and Artistic Mentoring.

Art helps to neutralize the risks linked to the industrialization of luxury since it preserves a certain distance from the non-luxury world. Art therefore refocuses the luxury brand on its mission, conveying exclusivity and uniqueness, and thus allowing the brand to accentuate its distinguishing characteristics and affirm its timelessness. Art embodies luxury, which becomes an experience of esoteric artistic knowledge whose comprehensibility is complex, subtle and accessible to a select few only. Moreover, art is able to continually renew itself, especially when it is contemporary. This implies that its followers must constantly relearn the keys if they wish to access the new knowledge created, enabling luxury brands to relentlessly extend the distance with mass consumption. Thanks to the alchemy between luxury and art, the brand shifts from the world of ordinariness to that of extraordinariness. There

is an obvious marriage of convenience in the proximity of luxury brands with the world of art.

We believe that art is now central to the structure and strategy of luxury brands in their bid to harness the ever increasing demand for luxuries, whilst still selling the power of symbols and magic.

It is hoped that other approaches could develop a more general framework of the advantages and consequences of art to luxury branding policies by examining the role of the cultural environment, the structure, and the size and geographic origins of luxury firms as catalysts or impediments to art and luxury brand development.

#### Appendix A. Analysis of Colbert Comité members' brands

Colbert Comité members brands	Codification	Comments	Linkage(s) with the arts
Baccarat	L		Yes
Berluti	L		No art-oriented linkages
Bernardaud	L		Yes
Champagne Bollinger	L		Yes
Bonpoint	NL	<i>Children's clothes</i>	NR
Boucheron	L		Yes
Breguet	L		Yes
Bussière	NL	<i>Press and media management company</i>	NR
Caron	L		No art-oriented linkages
Cartier	L		Yes
Celine	L		No art-oriented linkages
Chanel	L		Yes
Parfums Chanel	D	<i>Extension of a brand already represented</i>	NR
Château Cheval Blanc	L		No art-oriented linkages
Château Lafite-Rothschild	L		YES
Château D'Yquem	L		No art-oriented linkages
Chloé	L		No art-oriented linkages
Christian Dior Couture	L		Yes
Parfums Christian Dior	D	<i>Extension of a brand already represented</i>	NR
Christian Liaigre	L		No art-oriented linkages
Christofle	L		Yes
D. Porthault	L		No art-oriented linkages
Dalloyau	L		No art-oriented linkages
Delisle	L		No art-oriented linkages
Diane de Selliers Editeur	NL	<i>Publishing house</i>	NR
Ercuis	L		Yes
Eres	U then L		NO art-oriented linkages
Faienceries de Gien	L		Yes
Flammarion Beaux Livres	NL	<i>Publishing house</i>	NR
Parfums Frédéric Malle	L		No art-oriented linkages
George V	L		No art-oriented linkages
Givenchy	L		Yes
Parfums Givenchy	D	<i>Extension of a brand already represented</i>	NR
Guerlain	L		Yes
Hédiard	L		NO art-oriented linkages
Hermes	L		Yes
Parfums Hermes	D	<i>Extension of a brand already represented</i>	NR
Hervé van der Straeten	L		No art-oriented linkages
Hôtel du Palais	NL	<i>One hotel in Biarritz</i>	NR
Hôtel le Bristol	L		No art-oriented linkages
Hôtel Plaza Athénée	L		No art-oriented linkages
Hôtel Ritz	L		No art-oriented linkages
Jean Patou Paris	L		No art-oriented linkages
Jeanne Lanvin	L		Yes
John Lobb	L		No art-oriented linkages
Champagne Krug	L		Yes
Lacoste	U then L		Yes
Lancôme	L		Yes
Le Meurice	L		Yes
Lenôtre	L		No art-oriented linkages
Leonard	L		No art-oriented linkages
Longchamp	L		Yes
Lorenz Baumer Joaillier	L		No art-oriented linkages
Louis Vuitton	L		Yes
La Maison du Chocolat	NL		NR

Martell	L		Yes
Mellerio dits Meller	L		NO art-oriented linkages
Oustau de Baumaniere	NL	One hotel in Les Baux	NR
Champagne Perrier-Jouet	L		Yes
Pierre Balmain	L		No art-oriented linkages
Pierre Frey	L		No art-oriented linkages
Pierre Hardy	L		No art-oriented linkages
Pierre Hermé Paris	L		No art-oriented linkages
Potel et Chabot	L		Yes
Puiforcat	L		Yes
Cognac Rémy Martin	L		Yes
Robert Haviland & C.	L		No art-oriented linkages
Rochas	L		No art-oriented linkages
S.T.Dupont	L		Yes
Saint-Louis	L		No art-oriented linkages
Taillevent	U then NL	One restaurant	NR
Van Cleef & Arpels	L		Yes
Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin	L		Yes
Yves Delorme	L		No art-oriented linkages
Yves Saint Laurent	L		Yes
Yves Saint Laurent Parfums	D	Extension of a brand already represented	NR
<b>Brands: 76</b>	<b>L 63/NL 13</b>		<b>NO 32/YES 31</b>

#### Appendix B. Analysis of Altgamma members' brands

Altgamma members' brands	Codification	Comments	Linkage(s) with the arts
Acqua di Parma	L		Yes
Agnona	L		No art-oriented linkages
Agusta Westland	NL	Helicopter manufacturer	NR
Alberta Ferretti	L		No art-oriented linkages
Alessi	NL		NR
Alias	L		Yes
Allegrini	NL	Multimedia channel/web portal	NR
Artemide	L		Yes
Aurora	L		Yes
B & b Italia	L		Yes
Baratti & Milano	L		No art-oriented linkages
Bauer il Palazzo	L		Yes
Bellavista	L		Yes
Biondi Santi	L		Yes
Bisazza	L		Yes
Boffi	L		No art-oriented linkages
Bottega Veneta	L		Yes
Brioni	L		Yes
Brunello Cucinelli	L		Yes
Buccellati	L		Yes
Bvlgari	L		Yes
Ca'del Bosco	L		Yes
Caffarel	L		No art-oriented linkages
Danese	L		No art-oriented linkages
Driade	L		Yes
Ducati	U then NL	Motorcycles	NR
Emilio Pucci	L		No art-oriented linkages
Ermenegildo Zegna	L		Yes
Etro	L		Yes
Fendi	L		Yes
Ferrari	L		No art-oriented linkages
Ferrari f.lli Lunelli	L		No art-oriented linkages
Flos	L		Yes
Frette	L		Yes
Gianfranco Ferre	L		Yes
Gucci	L		Yes
Hotel Bellevue Syrene	U then L		NO art-oriented linkages

Hotel Capri Palace	U then L		NO art-oriented linkages
Hotel de Russie	L		No art-oriented linkages
Hotel l'Albereta	NL	One 4* hotel	NR
Hotel l'Andana	L		No art-oriented linkages
Hotel Lungarno	U then NL	One 4* hotel	NR
Hotel Principe di Savoia	L		No art-oriented linkages
Hotel Seven Stars Galleria	U then NL	One 4* hotel	NR
Hotel Splendido	L		No art-oriented linkages
Hotel Villa d'Este	L		No art-oriented linkages
Illycaffè	NL	Coffee manufacturer	NR
Isaia	L		No art-oriented linkages
Kartell	L		No art-oriented linkages
La perla	L		Yes
Living Divani	L		Yes
Loro Piana	L		No art-oriented linkages
Luce della Vite	U then NL		NR
Masi Agricola	NL	Winemaker	NR
Masseria San Domenico	NL	One spa & hotel	NR
Max Mara	L		Yes
Missoni	L		No art-oriented linkages
Moroso	L		Yes
Omas	L		No art-oriented linkages
Ornellaia	L		Yes
Persol	L		Yes
Rene Caovilla	L		No art-oriented linkages
Riva	L		No art-oriented linkages
Rubelli	L		Yes
Salvatore Ferragamo	L		Yes
Sanpellegrino	NL	Mass market mineral water	NR
Sergio Rossi	L		Yes
Segnana	NL	Mass market wines & spirits	NR
Stone Island	L		No art-oriented linkages
Technogym	NL	Gym equipment & machines	NR
Tod's	L		Yes
Valentino	L		No art-oriented linkages
Venini	L		No art-oriented linkages
Versace	L		Yes
Vhernier	L		Yes
Zanotta	L		Yes
<b>Brands: 76</b>	<b>L 62/NL 14</b>		<b>No 26/Yes 36</b>

## Appendix C. Comité Colbert's luxury brand links with the arts

Patronage	Foundation	Artistic Collaboration	Mentorship
Champagne Bollinger	<i>Bernardaud</i>	Baccarat	<i>Bernardaud</i>
<i>Boucheron</i>	<i>Cartier</i>	<i>Bernardaud</i>	<i>Boucheron</i>
<i>Breguet</i>	Château Lafite-Rotschild	<i>Boucheron</i>	<i>Breguet</i>
<i>Cartier</i>	Guerlain	<i>Champagne Perrier-Jouet</i>	<i>Hermes</i>
Champagne Krug	<i>Hermes</i>	Champagne Veuve Clicquot	<i>Louis Vuitton</i>
<i>Champagne Perrier-Jouet</i>	<i>Louis Vuitton</i>	<i>Christian Dior</i>	<i>Van Cleef &amp; Arpels</i>
Chanel	<i>Martell</i>	Christofle	<i>Yves Saint Laurent</i>
<i>Christian Dior</i>	<i>Yves Saint Laurent</i>	<i>Cognac Rémy Martin</i>	
<i>Cognac Rémy Martin</i>		Faienceries De Gien	
Ercuis		<i>Givenchy</i>	
<i>Givenchy</i>		<i>Hermes</i>	
<i>Hermes</i>		Lacoste	
Jeanne Lanvin		<i>Lancôme</i>	
<i>Lancôme</i>		<i>Louis Vuitton</i>	
Le Meurice		<i>Martell</i>	
Longchamp		Puiforcat	
<i>Louis Vuitton</i>		S.T.Dupont	
<i>Martell</i>		<i>Van Cleef &amp; Arpels</i>	
Potel & Chabot			



Van Cleef & Arpels  
Yves Saint Laurent

#### Appendix D. Altgamma's luxury brand links with the arts

Patronage	Foundation	Artistic Collaboration	Mentorship
Bauer Il Palazzo	Bisazza	Acqua Di Parma	<i>Bellavista</i>
<i>Bellavista</i>	<i>Brunello Cucinelli</i>	La Perla	<i>Brunello Cucinelli</i>
<i>Bottega Veneta</i>	<i>Ermenegildo Zegna</i>	Alias	
<i>Brunello Cucinelli</i>	<i>Fendi</i>	Artemide	
<i>Bvlgari</i>	Gianfranco Ferré	Aurora	
<i>Ca'Del Bosco</i>	<i>Gucci</i>	B & B Italia	
<i>Ermenegildo Zegna</i>	<i>Living Divani</i>	Biondi Santi	
<i>Fendi</i>		<i>Bottega Veneta</i>	
Frette		Brioni	
<i>Gucci</i>		Buccellati	
<i>Living Divani</i>		<i>Bvlgari</i>	
Max Mara		<i>Ca'Del Bosco</i>	
Moroso		Driade	
<i>Ornellaia</i>		<i>Ermenegildo Zegna</i>	
Salvatore Ferragamo		Etro	
Tod's		<i>Fendi</i>	
<i>Versace</i>		Flos	
Vhernier		<i>Gucci</i>	
		<i>Living Divani</i>	
		<i>Ornellaia</i>	
		Persol	
		Rubelli	
		Sergio Rossi	
		<i>Versace</i>	
		Zanotta	

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