

Deconstruction Fashion in Maison Margiela

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Abstract. What is the definition of beauty? Is there only one kind of beauty? This essay illustrates how Maison Margiela establishes a new understanding of beauty with the provocative notion of deconstruction by adjusting the full dimensionality of the relationship between people, brands, and products.

Keywords: List the; New Definition of Beauty, Deconstruction fashion, Maison Margiela.

1. Introduction

For decades, elegant clothing has played a crucial role in the Europe fashion market, but the foundation of Maison Margiela in 1988 challenged the traditions with his deconstruction designs. Its brand notion not only influenced the fashion designers but also the followers that beauty is not "one flower" but a garden of flowers that blooms under people's cultivation. This research is based on previous essays, an autobiography by Martin Margiela, and images of catwalks.

Deconstruction was initially a term in philosophy in the 1970s and referred to breaking stereotypes and creating a new context.^[1] In the fashion aspect, it has been described as a trend of giving an unfinished appearance and challenging traditional aesthetic style. This article examines the new beauty in fashion in Maison Margiela from cloth utilization, cloth, show forms, and brand ideology. The successful case of Margiela's deconstruction trend hopes to inspire more thoughtful designers to pursue their styles.

2. Cloth Utilization

In the 20th century, one cloth is purposely utilized on one or two occasions, but Maison Margiela develops clothes as multifunctional. After the Victoria period, when clothes were extravagant and dominated by excessive adornments, modern female garments became more convenient and comfortable. However, with the bright colors and narrow silhouettes, clothes could only fit for occasions; for example, girls' sportswear was particularly for playing a sport, and working dresses are only for jobs.

In contrast, Maison Margiela, founded in 1988, had distinct differences from the mainstream. Most clothes are often pigmented with monochromatic colors: white, grey, and black. Therefore, the colors of clothing are not that attractive; instead, the notion of deconstruction becomes the highlight. The Belgian designer Maison Margiela decides to apply symmetry and a combination of alternative elements to his designs.^[2] The neutral colors combine seem to embrace different genders and occasions. In the Maison Margiela 1989 first fashion, "the backdrop for the collection of white and nude belted coats, wide-legged trousers, and carrier bag tops, all frayed and unfinished, was a wasteland replete with graffitied walls and dilapidated buildings." [3]

The provocative design soon aroused the attention of the public. People started to recognize this brand for its functional value - multifunctional and multipurpose.

Why is it significant to have functional value? The function value is one of the elements of the constituent value dimension in the luxury brand; it measures the functionality of the physical objects and services. A luxury brand must have an outstanding physical manifestation. For Maison Margiela, they establish high functional value by designing multifunctional clothes, which are convenient for women's transportation. With the rise of deconstructionism, people realize that fashion means beauty and practicality.

In addition, the brand had already begun the fashion sustainability movement by deconstructing the waste textile or material in the late 1980s. In the 1989 winter show, Margiela used plate fragments and posters in the subway to create clothes, one of the products from his first series called "Artisanal". The line was known for recycling waste material and conducting secondary design.

In the old days, people did not have the idea of sustainability form in their minds, and luxury products were equal to extravagance. Maison Margiela was the first European brand that advocated it. Cutting, folding, collaging, and conducting deconstruction style extends the lifespan of rendered useless materials and brings more potential and creativities to plain cloth. The most famous product is the porcelain tableware in the 1988 collection. Martin makes a waistcoat conjures a narrative of fine porcelain plates reduced to useless shards, then re-valued as an object of beauty and rendered the object's functionality. Therefore, the deconstruction notion enhances brand functional value in Martin Margiela.

3. Cloth & Show Form

People know Maison Margiela for its innovative design and mysterious fashion shows for the mason market. Although Margiela's clothes are comfortable to wear, it promotes a whole new fashion trend in Europe, profoundly affecting the modern days.

In the late 19th century, all the luxuries were pursuing traditional designs with classic proportioned and elegant looks. Within this period, fashion seemed to hit the bottleneck - designs had no distinct differences. However, Maison Margiela reversed the situation. It came with a new aesthetic taste, widely known in the 20th and 21st centuries. Adding in the elements of deconstruction, Martin exposed seams, raw edges, asymmetric details, and deliberate unfinished clothing. It made a strong visual impact as opposed to traditional clothes. ^[4] The unique, stylish garments enhanced the experimental value for some individuals because it was so rare in the fashion market that they were distinct from the other brands. The so-called experimental value is a subjective value given by the consumers towards the brand and can be shifted by brand-related stimuli, such as brand identity, designs.....

Maison Margiela offers scarce plans in the European fashion market and thus promotes its experimental value. Raf Simon, currently the creative designer of Prada, was also inspired by Martin Margiela's show. He claimed in his autobiography, "As a student, I always thought that fashion was a bit superficial - all glitz and glamour, but this show changed everything for me. That show is the reason I become a fashion designer."

Not only the deconstructed clothes in Margiela but its catwalk became the fresh blood in the European fashion market. In the 20th century, European brands, such as Chanel, Prada, and Valentino, hired modes that could express joyfulness on the stage to infect the audience with actual feelings. Models on the stage resembled lively humans wandering on the street, and they were allowed to wave to the audience, dance in joy, etc. In contrast, Maison Margiela seemed to stand against the mainstream. In their shows, all models seem cold and expressionless and express no desire to interact with the audience. Those designs are operated to mend into the notion of Maison Margiela. The reason is that the founder Martin Margiela try to persuade people to focus on the creation instead of the models' faces. He also reemphasized the statement in his latest documentary: "I always wanted to have my name linked to the product I created, not to the face I have^[4]." Years later, Martin evolved his idea by covering masks on models' appearance. On the 20th anniversary show, models are covered with masks on their faces, dragging all the attention to their clothes. The action again influenced the globe and other luxury brands. It is hard to judge whether they intimidate Martin's style, but they follow the path of Maison Margiela. In 2022, Balenciaga, an Avant-grade luxury brand, established a show where Models' faces were covered with black metal. The deconstructed clothes with avant-garde design become Maison Margiela's symbol and attract tons of pursuers.

4. Brand Ideology

Similar to their cloth style - break, college, and form new elements - Maison Margiela's ideology is meant to challenge the traditional vision of beauty.

For example, Maison Margiela has always emphasized the notion of being gender neutral. With neutral colors, oversized proportions, and covered appearance, people can interpret that this is a brand destroying the gender stereotype. One of the Margiela dresses is aimed at potential female consumers, but men on the catwalk wear the garment. ^[5] A feminine object worn by a masculine model, of course, is a sign of being gender-free. The brand didn't just tell the consumers that they were challenging traditional beliefs. Instead, it used clothes as a medium to state its ideas by osmosis.

Another example is the show "La mode du XXL." The show remained Margiela's fixation through Spring into Fall of 2000. All the clothes were sized in 74 and 78 (big) regardless of gender. Oversize clothing covered the body curve, which blends the border of gender.

Even in 2009, when Martin decided to retire and elected John Galiano as the next creative designer, the brand did not stop pursuing "their dream". John Galiano was Dior's previous creative designer, renowned for his "over the top" and extravagant designs. Nevertheless, his radical designs seem like the opposite of the minimal, neutral clothing in Martin Margiela. John Galiano used his designs to demonstrate himself. He changed a madman's jacket into a wedding dress and embellished it with jewelry. Similarly, a white version of the same dress was sewn, and "covered a bright red coat with Arcimboldo- like, grotesque -embroidered seashells" ^[6], which complemented this hybrid collection. It seems that talented designer John Galiano further enhances the brand notion.

Follower claims that: "there are two types of people in the world: people who wear Margiela's products and people who do not." It seems a bit exaggerated but not for Margiela's devout "plagiarisms".

However, because it is a relatively new brand - funded in 1988, the historical value behind the brand is perhaps barren. Still, the brand did not establish a distinct symbolic value that is vital in constructing an enduring brand. Like Roll-Royce represents fortune and wealth in consumers' eyes, driving Roll-Royce automobile signals the owner's prestige; thus, Roll-Royce car is usually used to reinforce the owner's image. Unfortunately, Maison Margiela has a distinct brand notion but has not yet rooted a clear symbol in the mass market to link with specific characteristics.

5. Conclusion

This study sets out to understand how Maison Margiela redefines beauty with his constructionist concept in three aspects: cloth utilization, cloth, show forms, and brand ideology. This thesis has provided insight into deconstruction beauty and how the dimensionalities of luxury brands apply to Maison Margiela. Overall, this study shows that Margiela developed deconstructed clothes with multifunctional and innovative design, and the mysterious fashion catwalk, which are adequate for establishing their brand values. Those strategies could be taken as a consideration for the future fashion explorer. Hopefully, the brand will establish a distinct symbolic value that would enrich its brand value.

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