

The Research of Symbiosis Between Artistry and Commerciality of Virtual Fashion Products

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Abstract: In the context of the digital era, fashion products can exist in a form that is detached from the physical, virtual, and digital. The article explores the transformation of artistry and commerce in virtual fashion products in the new era, as well as the symbiotic relationship between artistry and commerce in virtual fashion products when the times change and construct a model. In the model, the interaction between designers, brand companies, and consumers in virtual fashion forms virtual products, surreal aesthetics, and virtual marketing, and each part needs to pass a balance point to achieve the symbiosis between artistry and commerce. Through the analysis of the three groups of relationships, this paper summarizes three balance points for the artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products, providing brands and companies with ideas for the symbiotic development of the artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products, and inspiring brands to better form new communication models and symbiotic values in the new era.

1. Introduction

The fashion industry as part of art and design has the dual attributes of artistic and commercial, and while meeting the functional needs of consumers, it also must provide certain aesthetic value. Fashion is more than just fashion, it is the infusion of culture and art into clothing, making them a vehicle for expressing one's views and personality. And at the same time fashion is mostly constructed through trend forecasting and market data analysis that predicts as much as possible the way and level of consumption, directly reflecting the interests of the designer or manufacturer. Therefore, the fashion industry has been facing a natural repulsive reaction between the profit-seeking nature of business and the purity of art, so more designers or brands began to find a balance between art and business. The practice of many brands and designers proves that business and art are not antagonistic, but more of a win-win relationship. Excellent brands are the perfect combination of art and business, such as Dior, Louis Vuitton and Gucci have found their balance in the contradiction between art and business. These brands respect art but have a keen and unique market vision, so each of their works can hit the heart of consumers and become a trend.

And the shift to cloud-based lifestyles in the post-epidemic era has forced the fashion industry to accelerate its digitalization. Virtual technology and virtual worlds have become important target markets for fashion brands to increase consumer engagement and meet their needs for fashion experiences. According to the 2021 Digital Fashion Report, published by Lyst, a UK-based fashion shopping search platform, in partnership with digital fashion company The Fabricant, approximately 3.5 billion people worldwide are digital fashion customers, accounting for more than 55% of total purchasing power^[1]. In this fast-paced digital world, the demand for "new" is growing, and fashion has begun to shift from physical to virtual, forming virtual fashion products such as virtual clothes and virtual shows. This transformation process makes the artistry and commerciality of fashion also transformed, so in the new era brands need to find a new balance between artistry and commerciality in virtual fashion products, to create more value for the brand.

2. The artistry and commerce of virtual fashion products

2.1 Definition of Virtual Fashion Products

With the further development of information technology and the accelerated integration of new digital technologies and the fashion industry, a new trend of virtual fashion has emerged in the fashion industry. Especially in the post-epidemic era, the rich forms derived from "virtual + fashion" have brought new life to the fashion industry, and its importance and necessity have become more prominent^[2]. "Virtual fashion" is a combination of digital technologies such as 3D, AR/VR, and blockchain in the physical fashion industry, and revolves around clothing design, dressing, and clothing culture. It is an emerging lifestyle that allows users to express themselves in a virtual world through their virtual images. Virtual fashion products can be physical or completely virtual and are generally sold and presented to users through online platforms. These products include virtual clothing, virtual accessories, masks, shoes and hats, virtual fashion collections, and virtual events. After a period of virtual products and online market integration evolution, digital clothing also from a single service for virtual characters advanced to wear in the "network of real" body of fashion products, thus opening a new online sales era of fashion track. More and more digital technologies are appearing in the fashion field, such as Gucci's collaboration with technology company Wanda to launch the first AR virtual shoes; LV's game software "Louis the Game" to sell the brand's limited-time digital fashion goods; British brand J.W. Anderson, American brand Ralph Lauren, NIKE, German brand ADIDAS, and French brand Parisian. British brand J.W. Anderson, American brand Ralph Lauren, NIKE, German brand ADIDAS, French brand BNP Paribas and other major international brands have entered the virtual fashion^[3]. Virtual fashion products can meet the spiritual experience of consumers and show and share their image on social media platforms while having the function of retaining value and circulation. Virtual fashion has flourished thanks to the innovative extension from real to virtual experience in all areas of social life: on the one hand, virtual fashion has digitally transplanted the system of fashion and enhanced fashion development, and on the other hand, it has innovated and developed that system in the way of the virtual world itself^[4].

2.2 The artistry of virtual fashion products

When traditional fashion products are transformed into virtual fashion products, their artistry is gradually amplified in the unrestricted digital space. The artistry of traditional fashion products is mainly expressed in the sense of art, culture, quality, nobility, and design shown through exquisite handicrafts, long history and culture, precious product materials, and unique product design. While virtual fashion products present their artistry around digital technology, under the influence of the virtual world, aesthetic needs gradually shift from real to surreal, from physical to digital aesthetics. The artistry of virtual fashion products is mainly manifested in the futuristic, technological, and design sense brought by its virtualized surreal aesthetics, digital product design, and cyber sense narrative language, as well as the artistry of exploring the aesthetic form of new media art from the perspective of fashion, unrestricted by any process, history, space, and material. In addition, the artistic nature of virtual fashion products brings fashion back to its essence, allowing it to explore and express our identities and personalities in a fun way, forming a diverse fashion aesthetic^[5]. In some ways, virtual fashion is the art that transcends fashion itself. In terms of content and form, it breaks away from traditional aesthetic codes and creates an immaterial, virtual realm of artistic values.

2.3 The commerciality of virtual fashion products

Fashion has always been an artistic expression based on commercial logic, which not only represents a lifestyle and a state of mind but also can change existing life patterns and behaviors, constantly creating new demands, giving rise to new products, and driving new industries^[6]. The commerciality of traditional fashion products is mainly expressed in the satisfaction of demand for functional value, use value, symbolic value, and aesthetic value, which is converted into the commercial value of fashion products. According to McKinsey's 2022 report "Value Creation in the metaverse," and with the advent of the digital age, global interest in the metaverse will surge in 2022, with more than \$120 billion (about 804.48 billion RMB) invested in the metaverse track to date, more

than double last year's \$57 billion more than twice the amount of investment last year^[7]. Ai media consulting data show that in 2021 China by the virtual human driven industry market size and core market size of 107.49 billion yuan and 6.22 billion yuan, respectively, is expected to reach 640.27 billion yuan and 48.06 billion yuan in 2025, showing a strong growth trend^[8]. People's consumption in the virtual world has reached an unprecedented scale, and the demand for fashion products has gradually shifted from actual functional needs to digital experience needs and spiritual needs. Therefore, the commerciality of virtual fashion products is mainly reflected in the immersive multi-sensory experience, rich product types, individual self-expression, and interactive fashion space, which brings the business opportunity of establishing a new way of communication and interaction between brands and consumers and brings the business value of co-creation between consumers and brands. Virtual fashion products can not only create a new virtual fashion life in the web 3.0 era but also expand the communication methods of fashion marketing. Virtual Reality has brought a new digital revolution to the fashion industry due to its dual potential for experiential and interactivity, disrupting fashion products, visual promotions, and experience models. By experiencing digital fashion through virtual reality technology, consumers will become interested in the products because their curiosity is piqued. And when consumers experience an innovative consumer experience, they are more likely to have a higher level of goodwill and trust in the brand or retailer.

2.4 The symbiotic relationship between artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products

Virtual fashion products are both artworks with commercial value and commodities with artistic value. On the one hand, combining artistry will make the product aesthetically appealing, and the commercial flavor in virtual fashion products will be diminished through artistic aesthetic design to meet the spiritual needs of consumers. At the same time, according to the cultural life and business image to attract the attention of consumers, in the market to shape their artistic image^[9], only then will virtual fashion products have better dissemination, are close to consumers, and deep into the hearts of consumers. Therefore, artistry can better realize the value of commercial delivery and enhance commercial value.

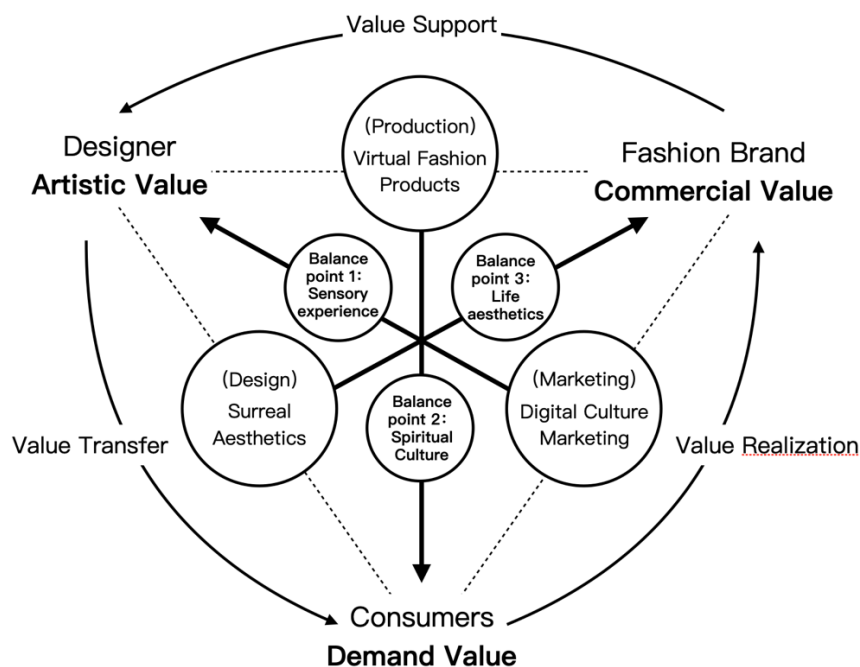


Figure 1 Model of the symbiotic relationship between artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products

On the other hand, the commercial nature of fashion products is the premise and basis for the realization of their artistry, which needs to be further supported by consumers' continuous product consumption to achieve value realization and provide value for the artistry of the products. The

symbiosis between the artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products cannot be separated from the consumers. The demand value of consumers connects the artistic value of designers with the commercial value of brand enterprises, forming an overall the symbiotic relationship. Thus, this paper constructs a model of symbiotic relationship between artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products based on the perspective of designers, brand companies, and consumers (see Figure 1). The model presents that in the virtual fashion environment, fashion brands will realize the symbiotic value cycle process from virtual products, surreal aesthetics, and digital culture marketing respectively. Brands need to find three balance points in the relationship between digital marketing and artistic value, surreal aesthetics and commercial value, and virtual products and demand value to achieve the symbiosis of the artistic and commercial value of virtual fashion products while helping companies to better balance artistic and commercial aspects to achieve a virtuous value cycle of production, design, and marketing. The commerciality and artistry of virtual fashion products are not two completely separated aspects, but a symbiotic whole that depends on each other. Thus, commerce can be used as a means of presenting art, and art can promote commerce.

3. The symbiotic balance points of artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products

For the art and commerce of virtual fashion products, "1+1 does not necessarily equal 2", but if the art and commerce of virtual fashion products are effectively integrated, the effect can even be greater than 2. In the development of traditional fashion products, the balance between art and business is sentiment, cross-border experience, circle culture, marketing methods, and so on. And the balance point between art and business of virtual fashion products changes from actual demand to spiritual demand; from real experience to virtual experience; from real aesthetics to surreal aesthetics, thus promoting the collision between art and business in the new digital life era and maintaining the symbiotic and balanced development of art and business of virtual fashion products.

3.1 Balance point one of sensory experience

Digitally, virtual technology has changed the way people approach and discover their bodies in every way, whether it's the way they touch or the way they match their clothes and bodies. Therefore, to make artistry and commerce better symbiosis in virtual fashion products, it is necessary to first coordinate virtual fashion products with consumers' demand value by using virtual sensory experience as a balance point. Brands need to increase the artistry of their products through virtual reality technology and help consumers experience the artistic and functional value of their products to attract them to understand more about the products and then generate consumption. Specifically, brands can focus on virtual sensory experience as a balance point for virtual product interactive experience and virtual shopping experience in the form of innovation, so that users can change clothes, pose in various shapes, experience the vivid light and shadow performance of various materials and the versatility of products in the network environment at will. For example, in May 2019, The Fabricant launched the NFT virtual fashion "Rainbow Dress", in 2022 the ZEPETO platform and ZARA collaborated to launch the meta-universe clothing collection "Meta Collection", and in 2022 XIAOHONGSHU and XINTIANDI teamed up with nine Chinese brand designers to launch 18 new limited-edition virtual fashion products, which can be "worn" through VR/AR technology in social media platforms, gaming environments, and virtual worlds. In addition to clothing, the Gucci Virtual 25, a virtual shoe launched by luxury brand Gucci in collaboration with technology company Wanna Fashion in 2021, and the Skin Vial NFT digital virtual sneaker, which can be changed in style, was released by Nike in April 2022^[10], have also become important components of digital fashion. They can also be used to try on virtual shoes online using VR/AR technology and share them with friends by taking photos and videos.

3.2 Balance point two of spiritual culture

The "invisible reality" and virtual reality are making consumers more and more "digital", and virtual fashion products are being created to meet the spiritual needs of consumers. A new self-identity in the virtual world will bridge the gap between the actual self and the ideal self, allowing

consumers to express multiple self-identities and explore new ways of living their virtual image. Therefore, based on achieving the balance point of sensory experience, the brand needs to coordinate the surreal aesthetics with the commercial value of the brand with spiritual culture as the balance point, so that the sentiment, story, personality, and emotional value of virtual fashion products can be better conveyed to consumers through art so that consumers can have spiritual and cultural resonance, enhance consumers' loyalty to the brand and form the behavior of value realization generation. Fashion brands can achieve the symbiotic effect of art and business through virtual exhibitions, virtual images, and virtual art creation in the form of spiritual and cultural balance points. For example, 2020 Nintendo's Animal Mori Friendship Club allows consumers to build different avatars in the virtual world, as well as purchase appropriate clothing and products based on personality traits to create a personal avatar and reinvent their self-identity in the digital world through virtual reality technology. The virtual exhibition and virtual art creation both through virtual reality technology, the aesthetic value and spiritual and emotional value of the product immersion implantation and display in front of consumers, can better let the commercial with art into the communication behavior with consumers, to achieve the purpose of brand communication and branding. For example, the first 360° panoramic interactive VR film "Dance Freedom (Soul Scene)" jointly released by Gucci and i-D magazine in 2017, the 2017 L'Oreal high-altitude VR experience advertisement "Only The Brave" and the 2021 online creation game platform "Roblox " and fashion brand GUCCI launched GUCCI virtual exhibition "Art Garden", they are VR technology to enable users to participate in the experience of the brand's products and brand culture, and enter the advertising scene, exhibition space and even become a model, to increase the depth of communication between the brand and consumers.

3.3 Balance point three of life aesthetics

As technology develops and lifestyles change, the focus of virtual fashion product marketing may no longer be on selling goods, but on achieving a spiritual and cultural equilibrium point. Brands need to coordinate digital marketing with artistic values by using life aesthetics as a balance point, integrating artistry into commercial activities, and making consumers feel the dreams, beautiful visions, and lifestyles built by virtual fashion products. Brands can create value-added customer experiences through gamification marketing and virtual shows, thus reconstructing the interactive relationship between brands and consumers and forming a symbiosis between the artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products. First, the gamification of fashion marketing makes the players' role not only as consumers but also as creators of fashion through the virtual program to experience the transformation process of fashion from art to commodity. Consumers will understand and indulge in a fashion more comprehensively and experience the aesthetics of life built by the brand in the virtual world. For example, in 2021, Balenciaga collaborated with Unreal, a major game engine, on the "Afterlife: Tomorrow's World" virtual game, which allows players to experience the Fall 2021 collection as virtual characters. The game is a lightly interactive way to engage users in exploring the brand and promote the brand's culture and new products in depth. At the same time, virtual space can create a more artistic display space without the restrictions of real-world materials, time, and space, etc., and can interact with the audience, thus enhancing the spread and attention of virtual fashion products. For example, ICY 2020's multi-dimensional space digital fashion week has changed the traditional show format through virtual reality technology, enabling users to interact with virtual characters such as clothing, models, and designers through VR/AR technology and build interactive scenarios with storytelling and visuals. This approach not only brings new experiences for consumers but also brings a new form of symbiosis between the artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products.

4. Conclusion

The digital era of Web 3.0 has given rise to the emergence of virtual fashion products, which are a quality option for brands to connect with new consumers, new lifestyles, and new market environments, while brands can deepen the way they communicate with consumers in the virtual

world through virtual fashion products. By sorting out the symbiotic relationship between the artistry and commerciality of virtual fashion products, this paper analyzes that the artistry of virtual fashion products in the new era is manifested in the surreal aesthetics of virtualization, digital product design, and the narrative language of Cyber sense, while its commerciality is manifested in the immersive multi-sensory experience, rich product types, individual self-expression, and interactive fashion space. Artistry is at the root of virtual fashion products, but at the same time, virtual fashion products are also rich in commercial aspects that satisfy the needs of consumers. This paper then constructs a symbiotic relationship model of virtual fashion product artistry and commerciality, proposing that when artistry and commerciality need to develop symbiotically in virtual fashion products, brands will achieve a balance of three relationships between digital marketing and art value, surreal aesthetics, and commercial value, and virtual products and demand value through sensory experience, spiritual culture and life aesthetics in the virtual environment, ultimately promoting virtual fashion The symbiosis and co-prosperity of product artistry and commerciality. These three balance points with you will enable the brand to better interact with consumers, shape the brand image, spread the brand culture, and enhance the market effect, to achieve the symbiotic value of art value, commercial value, and demand value of the three parties to enhance.

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