

# T Introduces

A close-up of the painting "Portrait of a Carthusian" by Dutch painter Petrus Christus (1446) that shows the highlights and details in the subject's eye.



*Turning the  
Male Gaze Around*

An alternate perspective — gathered from the shifting psyche in the realm of menswear.

TO SET THE premise of the following exposition, it serves to revisit a key idea in feminist film theory: the male gaze. The theory, introduced in 1975 by filmmaker and scholar Laura Mulvey in her widely referenced essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", suggests the objectification of women in the cinematic universe when presented through the point of view of a heterosexual male protagonist. Beyond fictional screenplay, the male gaze rears its head in many forms in real life spanning across art, fashion and literature.

Despite having been christened more than four decades ago, the theory holds currency in the contemporary state of affairs. As feminists wave their flags in protest for gender quality, Mulvey's proposition is ammunition to their cause. Narrowing the gap between these disparities has proved a long drawn conversation, gradually inching closer to the ideal power play.

The general female sentiment has tirelessly fought for the eradication of the male gaze. Turning the conversation to the realm of fashion, particularly, zooming in on the shifts in menswear, the male gaze takes

"PORTRAIT OF A CARTHUSIAN", 1446, OIL ON WOOD, BY DUTCH PAINTER PETRUS CHRISTUS, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, THE JULES BACHE COLLECTION, 1949, IMAGE COURTESY OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART PUBLIC DOMAIN.

continued from page 30

on a rather palatable purview. In the male dominated landscape — of 371 designers helming 313 brands surveyed by the Business of Fashion across four fashion weeks in 2016, only 40.2 per cent were female — male designers primarily set the dress code for the male population. By definition, where a male is perceived as the object, the male gaze is turned on its head.

It is also here that there is an observable progress in the blurring of gender constructs. While the cross pollination between the way of dressing between female and male is no ground-breaking revelation, the extent of a seemingly effeminate influence in menswear warrants attention. In 1985, Jean-Paul Gaultier caused a stir when he put a man in a skirt. In the early aughts, when Kanye West stepped out in a custom-made leather kilt, it was cause for media fodder. Restricted by the archaic approach, menswear has thrived within an insular bubble — one that has seemingly popped in the recent seasons.

The runway showcases set the stage for the proclamation of a new male order led by a discerning slant in designer perspectives. Their propositions of what fills the wardrobes of the contemporary male tests the preconceived boundaries of masculinity. In the earlier years, the rather brazen approach showed itself in smatterings at independent designer labels. These days, the deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of menswear has even infiltrated into houses in the upper echelons of the fashion industry. A case in point: Gucci's renaissance under the helm of Alessandro Michele. At Gucci, see-through lace blouses, floral patterned ready-to-wear separates in vivid colour combinations and chokers as accessory choices, are all fair play. At its Fall/Winter '19 collection, Fendi extended its repertoire of revered "baguette" carryalls to its menswear line-up — a first at the Italian maison since the birth of the bag in 1997.

Last season, design luminaries Raf Simons and John Galliano veered into couture territory (primarily crafted for the female body) with the introduction of couture-grade duchess satin at Simon's eponymous label and the debut of an "artisanal" menswear collection at the Galliano-led Margiela.

There is an apparent shift in the mood in the air — a progressive shift purveyed, primarily by the turn of the male gaze onto the objectification of the male. The reactions too, carry less shock-value and more awe-inspiring. When Jayden Smith fronted Louis Vuitton's Spring '16 campaign donning a full womenswear look (skirt included), the decision was applauded in the fashion realm and beyond in the same way Ezra Miller's gender-bending fashion has propelled him onto the red carpet best-dressed lists.

Delving beyond superficial navel-gazing, the discussion of gender and dress code seeps deeper to contemplate the validity of the long-held relationship between the two. And the answers seem to stem from an unlikely origin — the perception of how a generation of men should dress, as determined by another. — Kames Narayanan

## OTHERWORLDLY



Omega Seamaster Aqua Terra Worldtimer in steel and blue rubber strap, \$12,300.

ADJUSTING the time on your watch can be quite a chore, especially for the frequent traveller who needs to keep tabs on different timezones at different hours of the day. Similar to a GMT or a dual timezone watch (which is able to showcase a second timezone within the same watch face), a Worldtime watch accomplishes the task of simultaneously telling time in 24 other areas of the world, other than home, relieving one from the trouble of setting time on the go. When Omega introduced the Omega Seamaster Aqua Terra Worldtimer to its usually sports-inclined portfolio in 2017, it stood out as the brand's most complex, highly luxurious watch in solid platinum, and limited to only 87 pieces worldwide. This year, the new Worldtimer watch returns with no limited number. The latest edition remains almost identical to the 2017 model, save for subtle tweaks in materials, and is now available at a more affordable price point. — Lynette Kee



## Uncommon Scents

THE NEW MULTI-BRAND boutique Amaris offers the antidote to the usual department stores scents. In the chic, open concept store, you'll find classic fragrance brands that are easy to sample, like Joy by Jean Patou, Molinard, a grand dame of Grasse perfumery favoured by Queen Elizabeth herself, and English vegan perfume house Miller Harris. Names that might be newer to the market include State of Mind, a brand that blends fragrances with the rituals of tea-making, and independent French house BDK Parfums, whose

Amaris offers chic scents from boutique houses in an inviting, open concept store.



founder grew up in the world of perfumery. Standout fragrances that we sniffed included the delicious Vanille from Molinard and BDK's audacious Tubéreuse Impériale, which has been likened to the smell of chewing gum. If you want to do a blind test of the scents to pick one that you naturally gravitate towards, book a private fragrance profiling session at the boutique. — Renée Batchelor



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: OMEGA; AMARIS (2)



## BEYOND THE GATES

THEORETICALLY, THE WORD “rosette” is the French diminutive of the rose. But culturally, it is a motif that has assumed a multitude of meanings throughout Europe and the East over the centuries. Harry Winston incorporated gold rosette motifs into the neo-classical design of his namesake flagship store in Manhattan as a symbol of optimism, opportunity and prospects. The result was a store that resembled a gateway into a vault of precious jewels, which till today stands as the most iconic of the houses of Winston. Today, gold rosettes adorn the front gates of all Harry Winston boutiques as a tribute to Winston’s spirit of optimism. In its latest jewellery collection, the American jeweller took inspiration from one of

The Winston Gates collection borrows the silhouette of a rosette for its key motif.

the oldest icons in its history books to share a slice of prosperity to the wearer. Tipping its hat to the origin of this floral symbol, the collection, aptly named “Winston Gates”, presents a selection of medallion pendants, earrings, bracelets and rings, each displaying a sculpted 10-petaled rosette in platinum, yellow gold or rose gold, complete with hand-selected diamonds that sit at the centre of the motif, as well as along the circular border that frames the design. The new jewellery collection illuminates Harry Winston’s extraordinary legacy with a contemporary air, signifying a new connection between the house of Winston and its family of consumers.

— Lynette Kee



## An Artistic Point of View

EVER SINCE ALESSANDRO MICHELE took the reins as creative director, Gucci’s ode to the past has never been more ubiquitous than it is today. Past collections, for instance, have been featured at some of the world’s prominent historical sites. Following previous partnerships with Dia-Art Foundation in New York City and Palatine Gallery in Florence’s Palazzo Pitti, Gucci recently collaborated with American film director, artist and screenwriter, Harmony Korine, on a limited-edition publication, titled “Gucci by Harmony Korine”. Set against the UNESCO World Heritage-designated ancient Roman towns of Ercolano and Pompeii, Korine first shot the ‘80s-inspired collection before rendering them into illustrations for the photo book. In between trippy hues, ghostly figures and blurred human silhouettes, Korine also lends his idiosyncratic flair to the books’ spines.

— Sng Ler Jun

The limited edition publication features Gucci’s pre-fall 2019 collection set against the backdrop of the ancient towns of Ercolano and Pompeii.



“Gucci by Harmony Korine” is available at Gucci Garden in Florence and the Gucci Wooster Bookstore in New York.



A model of the crown worn by Empress Farah Pahlavi for her coronation in 1967.

## CROWNED GLORY

THE EXQUISITE GEM-SET creations of French jeweller Van Cleef and Arpels hold a prestigious reputation amongst royalty. In 1966, when the maison was elected to craft a crown for then empress Farah Pahlavi’s coronation in Teheran, it was the highest conceivable honour. The resultant crown was an awe-inspiring masterpiece set with 1,469 diamonds, 105 pearls, 36 emeralds, 34 rubies and spinels conceived by the man Pierre Arpels himself. The crown and its beholder, Farah Pahlavi, have since written pivotal chapters in the house’s history. That crown is but one of Arpels’s many defining creations throughout the years. Within the 1906 room — an intimate storytelling space coined after the house’s founding year — in Van Cleef and Arpels’s Marina Bay Sands boutique sit a revolving door of curated exhibits, each telling a part of the house’s story. In June this year, the room — a first of its kind in Singapore — housed a replica of empress Pahlavi’s crown amidst pieces from its private collection. A set of museum pieces taking its inspiration from couture are due to take over the next round of exhibit at the 1906 room. — Kames Narayanan

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HARRY WINSTON (3); GUCCI (3); VAN CLEEF & ARPELS