21st Century Fashion Campaigns & Femininity: How Fashion Reinforces Traditional Gender Identity Concepts

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Abstract

Fashion campaigns are often used to communicate and normalize gendered ideals. Luxury fashion brands are especially influential because their campaigns shape not only consumer perceptions but also broader trends within the fashion industry. Previous research has found that fashion often intensifies sexual differences by exaggerating gender stereotypes rather than eliminating them (Vinken, 2025). However, as time has passed, greater focus has been placed on equality, which has led to the purpose of this study. This study examines how fashion campaigns have changed over time by analyzing Christian Dior's campaigns from the early 2000s and comparing them with campaigns from the post-2020 period. The research explores how these campaigns reinforce or challenge traditional concepts of femininity and gender identity. Findings suggest that Dior's campaigns have evolved in a generally positive direction. However, stereotypes and traditional femininity were not entirely absent. These findings highlight that luxury fashion brands are evolving in a more positive and inclusive direction. However, despite these efforts, the persistence of traditional gender roles demonstrates how difficult it is to fully eliminate their influence.

Introduction

Gender bias has existed in our society for decades. Although women's rights have improved over the years, and literature on gender discrimination has rapidly grown, inequities continue to persist across economic, social, and political domains (Heilman et al., 2023; Damann et al., 2023). Historically, society has expected women to be caregivers and men to be breadwinners (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Heilman et al., 2023). Until World War I, women were generally not allowed to work outside the home. As women gradually entered the workforce during World War I and World War II, they began to develop a stronger awareness of their rights and ambitions. During this period, the term feminism gained prominence. Historian Nancy Cott defines feminism as having three key components: support for sex equality or opposition to sex hierarchy, the belief that women's condition is socially constructed and historically shaped by human institutions and customs, and identification with and support of women as a social group (1987). Furthermore, she has defined feminism as an ideology accessible to both men and women, though not all individuals accept it (Cott, 1987). Women's rights began to emerge when women joined temperance movements and anti-alcohol campaigns in the early 20th century, addressing social problems in their communities (Tilly, 1989; Bordin, 1981). Without formal political rights, women organized, led, and mobilized, demonstrating that they could act publicly and politically. This laid the groundwork for women's suffrage and progressive reform movements. As more movements emerged, women gained more rights, such as the 19th Amendment, which prohibits denying citizens the right to vote based on sex, in the United States in 1920, and the Canadian Human Rights Act, which protects people from discrimination when they are employed by or receive services from federally regulated organizations, passed in 1977.

Despite the progress that women have made, recent research has found that gender discrimination still exists, especially in the workplace. Gender stereotypes, a widely held belief

about the traits of men and women rooted in traditional roles, affect women in the workplace (Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Heilman et al., 2023). According to psychologist Madeline Heilman and her colleagues, stereotypes are centered around two dimensions (2023). Agency, which refers to being task-oriented, assertive, competitive, and independent, is commonly associated with describing men. In contrast, communion, referring to a person being kind, nurturing, sensitive, and relationship-focused, is often associated with women. As a result, men are stereotyped as lacking communal qualities, while women are stereotyped as lacking agency. These stereotypes are cross-cultural and are still widely accepted by individuals (Abele et al., 2008). Additionally, in workplace settings, traits associated with men are often viewed as strengths, as employers tend to value competitiveness and independence over traits associated with women, such as sensitivity and a relationship-focused approach. These stereotypes put on genders not only affect women in the workplace, but are also generally accepted even in daily lives. Furthermore, although 40% of women are in the paid workforce and 40% of U.S. management positions are held by women, gender segregation still exists (World Bank, 2022; BLs, 2022). Women are overrepresented in “female-typed” jobs, such as teaching, nursing, and admin, and men still dominate top leadership. Only 10% of S&P 500 CEOs are women. According to a 2020 report by the United Nations Development Programme, half of the people worldwide still believe that men make better political leaders than women.

Just as workplace expectations and social stereotypes continue to define how women and men are perceived, fashion campaigns serve as a cultural lens through which these gendered ideals are communicated and normalized. Fashion often intensifies sexual difference by exaggerating stereotypes rather than eliminating them (Vinken, 2025). Certain luxury fashion campaigns reinforce the idea of sexism, prejudice, and discrimination based on sex or gender. These advertisements stereotype women as dependent, as in submissive to men; caretakers, as in performing home or family duties; decorative, as in they focus on appearance and not intellect; and sexual objects, where their bodies are commodified to promote products and reinforce traditional femininity (Mensa & Deng, 2021). Recent research that focuses on the 21st century has continued to show that women are being stereotyped in these luxury fashion campaigns. This shows how, although we are promoting gender equality in our current society, what is done on social media and represented does not align. This leads to my research question:

In what ways do earlier 21st-century fashion campaigns, pre-2020, compare with recent fashion campaigns, post-2020, and media representations in reinforcing traditional concepts of femininity and gender identity?

Although much research examines how fashion advertising influences femininity and gender roles, it often focuses on analysis rather than comparing portrayals across periods of time. Many academic journals analyze traditional gender norms in fashion advertising, study modern inclusivity trends, and focus on a single time frame. This creates a gap for my research as it will focus on continuity and change, and how trends have actually shifted or challenged older norms. Furthermore, a study by Dr. Marta Mensa and Dr. Tao Deng stated that the future should analyze more posts, videos, and engagement metrics (likes, comments, sentiments)(2021). These are the aspects that will be analyzed in this research, which also helps to fill the gap.

Literature Review

Fashion Advertising as Mirror and Mold – Shaping vs. Reflecting Gender Norms

Gender stereotypes in advertising have been a subject of study for scholars for more than five decades. Despite this long period of study, gender stereotypes in advertising remain relevant as the changing role structures in family and labor have significantly changed variation in both male and female roles and how males and females are portrayed in advertisements (Grau & Zotos, 2016). Furthermore, in Stacy Landreth Grau and Yorgos C. Zotos's research, they discussed an ongoing debate between advertisers and sociologists about advertising's social influence, especially regarding stereotypes. There are two main perspectives: "mirror" and "mold." The "mirror" argument argues that advertising only reflects existing and dominant social values. It's like a magnifying lens, where advertisements exaggerate what already exists. However, they believe that advertisements do not change or shape society (Holbrook, 1987). In contrast, the "mold" argument argues that advertising does shape society and it creates social values (Pollay, 1986). Gerbner's cultivation theory, where media form people's perception of reality, can support the "mold" point of view (1998). Additionally, it argues that people adopt stereotypes they see in media into personal beliefs, values, and worldviews (Zotos and Tsichla, 2014). Therefore, advertising forms a "hybrid" of media, which shapes reality. Though Grau & Zotos argue that these two perspectives exist on a continuum, and advertising both reflects and contributes to cultural meanings (2016). They suggested that this long-lasting debate should reflect Kilbourne's statement: "Advertising is our environment. We swim in it as fish swim in the water. We cannot escape it… advertising messages are inside our intimate relationships, our home, our hearts, our heads" (1999). Therefore, advertising cannot be understood as merely reflective or purely influential, but as a powerful cultural force that mirrors and shapes societal understandings of gender roles.

Similarly, fashion has been identified as one of the major factors shaping ideas, especially relating to masculinity and femininity. Multiple studies have argued and brought up the point that gender is socially constructed, and that it does not solely rely on biological truths (Watson, 2018; Vinken, 2025; Arvanitidou & Gasouka, 2013). According to Watson, who examined Dolce & Gabbana and Louis Vuitton's Spring/Summer 2016 campaigns to explore gender representation in fashion advertising, Louis Vuitton's advertising campaign aligns with the idea that gender isn't something we are, it's something we do. Jaden Smith's skirt and soft pose in Louis Vuitton's campaign challenge the notion of "masculine performance," which portrays gender as fluid and performative rather than biological, allowing individuals to see how men can wear skirts. This campaign will then reflect on the world, showing individuals that wearing a skirt could be fashionable. Vinken has found that cross-dressing is a fundamental structure in the fashion of modernity, and at least for 150 years, fashion relies on deliberate juxtaposition of masculine and feminine codes/stereotypes (2025). These show how fashion constantly constructs gender by mixing masculine and feminine codes. For example, George Sand, a French female novelist, wore pants and smoked cigars despite legal restrictions (Vinken, 2025). These findings from previous research suggest that fashion advertising operates primarily as a "mold" as fashion campaigns actively challenge and reshape gender norms through the intentional interplay between masculine and feminine codes.

Evolution of Gender Stereotypes in Fashion Advertising

The concept of "culture lag" refers to the phenomenon where society changes, but advertising lags (Grau & Zotos, 2016). In 2016, both traditional and progressive approaches

coexisted simultaneously, as seen in Watson's examination of Dolce & Gabbana (D&G) and Louis Vuitton Campaigns (2018). In Watson's research, Dolce & Gabbana's "*Italia is Love"* (Spring/Summer 2016) campaign was found to reinforce patriarchal fantasy. The campaign showed that women perform beauty and men consult it. In the advertisement, fashion transforms women into symbols of luxury, where their beauty and clothing demonstrate the wealth, power, and masculinity of the men around them, aligning with Leisure Class Theory, which portrays women as symbols of wealth and idleness (Veblen, 2009; Watson, 2018). After women began gaining equality, society developed new forms of control, including beauty standards. D&G's campaign reinforces the idea that women must be beautiful. Furthermore, masculinity is not something men simply "are"; it's something they constantly have to prove, and D&G's male models appear confident and muscular, reinforcing dominance (Malebrache & Sonovan, 2013). In contrast, Louis Vuitton's (LV) Spring/Summer 2016 Campaign ("Series 4"), featuring Jaden Smith alongside three female models, reflects a gender-fluid approach. In the campaign, Jaden Smith was in a soft pose and wore a skirt, feminine fabrics, and a leather jacket, which shows that gender codes are fluid and constantly being renegotiated. Additionally, the three female models were in strong, assertive "fight" poses, also shaping the idea that gender codes are fluid. Although gender identity develops through psychological stages in childhood, it's not fixed (Freud, 1925). Gender identity encompasses both personal identity, which is how you perceive and define yourself, and social identity, which is how society recognizes and categorizes you (Bolin, 1996). The Louis Vuitton campaign supports these beliefs. However, the coexistence of D&G and LV campaigns in 2016 shows that change isn't universal or inevitable, which relates to the idea of how we have a "cultural lag".

Despite the long-standing stereotypes in fashion advertising, a gradual shift towards more inclusive and positive role portrayals has been identified (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Hampton & Bryan, 2024). This shift is evident in men's fashion, where designers are increasingly blending masculine and feminine elements. For example, in Yves Saint Laurent Men's Summer Collection 2022, Anthony Vaccarello, the creative director, seamlessly incorporated pieces inspired by women's clothing, creating a playful cycle where gendered fashion swaps and overlaps (Vinken, 2025). This demonstrates that gender codes in fashion are becoming more fluid, not just for women, but also for men. Yet, despite these androgynous fashion attempts, Arvanitidou and Gasouka stated that both the unisex style, which attempts to erase gender differences, and the androgynous style, which attempts to merge them, end up reinforcing instead of removing gender differences (2013). However, this progress is uneven and inconsistent across brands. While some brands have shifted towards more progressive representation, others continue to rely on traditional stereotypes. Mensa and Deng found that luxury brands, such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton, and Dior, heavily rely on decorative object stereotypes (where individuals are valued only for their appearance, not their intellect), whereas Gucci and Prada mostly avoid them (2021). This finding contrasts with Watson's research, as Watson identified that Louis Vuitton had shifted towards more gender-fluid portrayals. This suggests that even brands that position themselves as progressive may still rely on some traditional stereotypes, or that representation varies across different campaigns within the same brand.

Persistent Objectification and Stereotypes in Digital Media

Sexual objectification theory is when women are portrayed as sexual objects to be looked at, which may cause an increase in their body surveillance (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). For

example, women frequently monitor their appearance. Mensa and Deng examined 700 Instagram posts, including 350 from luxury fashion brands and 350 from consumers, and found that consumers post more sexualized content than luxury brands (2021). This suggests that consumers have internalized objectification, as they are doing it themselves. Mensa and Deng found that luxury brands are actually more restrained than consumers; 73% of brand posts show women fully clothed compared to 56% of consumer posts. Additionally, 50% of brand posts and 34% of consumer posts show no sexism (Mensa & Deng, 2021). These data reflect how consumers are increasingly influenced by the fashion campaigns that luxury brands post online, especially on Instagram. Instagram encourages sexualized self-disclosure; the platform is designed for visual display of bodies and lifestyle (Mensa & Deng, 2021). Furthermore, women were found to be significantly more likely than men to display sexualized images (Doring et al., 2016). The fact that consumers post more sexualized content than brands suggests they've internalized the objectification message. Similarly, Crane's study on how women interpret Vogue fashion photography and advertising found that women resist some objectifying images but still internalize beauty standards (1999).

Beyond just being "sexualized," women are also stereotypically portrayed as dependent, caretakers, decorative, and sexual objects (Mensa & Deng, 2021). Women being stereotyped as dependent means that they are passive, serve men, and lack authority, and caretaker means that they perform domestic roles and care for the family. Decorative describing a woman means valued for appearance and not their intellect, and sexual object is used to sell products and body emphasized over personhood. Women being decorative have been shown in D&G's campaigns in 2016 (Watson, 2018). Furthermore, diversity and underrepresentation have also been identified as problems. In Crane's study, participants viewed 18 selected 1997 Vogue photographs, and African American women felt underrepresented and distanced from white-centric imagery (1999). As years have passed, Mensa and Deng's study still found that racial representation was a problem (2021). Brands reinforce White hegemonic ideals, marginalizing other races. This shows how, after years of studies, the problems identified in the past are still recurring in the present, which shows that little change has been made. Hampton and Bryan found a gradual increase in diversity, but persistent gaps remain (2024). There is limited representation of older women, plus-size individuals, and certain ethnicities (Hampton & Bryan, 2024). Furthermore, fashion advertising has been found to contain unrealistic standards (Crane, 1999; Hampton & Bryan, 2024). Some advertisements still use heavy editing and focus on extreme thinness and flawless skin, creating stress and unrealistic standards that individuals want to live up to. Together, although fashion advertising has evolved over time, many of the same issues continue to persist.

Femvertising and Commodification of Empowerment

Since the 2004 Dove "Real Beauty" advertisement, we have seen advertising that showcases the empowerment of women. Later on, this became known as femvertising, when brands use messages of female empowerment to promote equal rights for women. This has been practiced in advertisements for 20 years, and its goal is to challenge stereotypical portrayals of women, such as housewives, sexual objects, and more (Fohl et al., 2025). Despite the good intentions of femvertising, Hampton and Bryan have identified that while advertisements can challenge norms and promote empowering ideas, they often do so in ways that primarily benefit the brand rather than the cause itself (2024). For example, if brands recognize that femvertising advertisements generate more sales and profit, they will utilize them.

This challenges the ethics of using femvertising. Additionally, Fohl et al. have also recognized that femvertising is a profit-oriented strategy that is framed within societal goals, rather than a purely unselfish practice. Furthermore, Gomez-Borquez et al. found that female consumers now expect accurate representation, prompting brands to adopt the concept of femvertising (2024). This possibly results in why femvertising exists, as they want to make more profit. The systematic review also stated that research shows much of femvertising can still be performative or “faux feminism”, prioritizing sales over change (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024). Although these advertisements might focus mainly on the empowerment of women for profit, in a way, it’s beneficial as there are more advertisements that focus on women's empowerment. However, stereotypes persist in advertising across all eras (Gomez-Borquez et al., 2024).

Methodology

A case study was conducted to analyze the changes in fashion advertising campaigns of the 21st century. Christian Dior was chosen for a close analysis. All analyses are based on the campaign's model’s position and presentation; the products are not part of the analysis. The campaigns will be analyzed according to categories identified in Mensa and Deng’s research (2021). In their research, they have identified sexual objectification categories and women in sexism stereotypes. The two tables above define the categories identified in Mensa and Deng’s research and will serve as a rubric for analyzing the Dior campaigns.

Sexual Objectification Categories	
Category	Description
Physical Presentation	Weight feature. Luxury fashion brands usually present models who are slim. Thinness is idealized.
Body Display	Women wearing revealing, hardly any, or no clothes at all, which is often associated with sexualized images of women.
Sexual Suggestive Poses	Behaviors that arouse sexual desire.
Feminine Touch	Model gently touching themselves (e.g. face or hair), their clothes, or an object in a soft, dedicated way.

Table 1.1 – This table shows what the sexual objectification categories are and what they mean by it.

Women in Sexism Stereotypes	
Categories	Description
Dependent	Describes when women appear passive and dependent on the man.
Caretaker	When women are presented as mothers and caretakers.
Decorative Object	A woman shown with or like an object rather than a real person. Her thinking and skills don't matter; only her body does.
Sexual Object	Women are used purely to sell products. They are treated as objects of desire, with their body or parts of it highlighted, rather than her as a person.

Table 1.2 – This table presents stereotypes of women and their descriptions.

It is important to note that each campaign may reflect the stylistic choices of different photographers. However, despite variations in photographic style, all campaigns must align with the brand identity and standards established by Christian Dior. Therefore, the selected campaigns are treated as representations of the brand's visual messaging and values.

Case Study – Christian Dior

2001-2011

John Galliano, a British designer, was the creative director of Christian Dior's women's collection during the early 21st century. He ran the Dior house from 1996 to 2011, mainly shaping the early-21st-century campaigns (Cosgrave, 2025). In a Vogue article, Sarah Mower describes Galliano as someone who challenged the rigid traditions of French haute couture (2015). Galliano was creating collections that felt like theatrical productions, introducing emotion, excess, and fantasy (Mower, 2015). Despite his rigorous changes and challenges to the French haute couture house, analysis of the fashion campaigns shows strong hyper-femininity. Marketing fashion campaigns from Gallinao's era represent women as highly stylized, theatrical femininity. There were many corseted dresses, exaggerated hourglass, and dramatic poses.

Figure 1.1
Angela Lindvall photographed by Nick Knight in May, 2001, Vogue

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 are both Spring-Summer (SS) fashion campaigns. The 2001 fashion



campaign, photographed by Nick Knight (shown in Figure 1.1), reflects a new era of fashion through its rigorous poses and confrontational visual style. However, it simultaneously reinforces traditional gender roles for women. Rather than presenting the model in soft or elegant positions typically associated with femininity in luxury fashion, the campaign depicts Angela Lindvall in more stylized and unconventional poses, suggesting a shift toward a more assertive visual aesthetic. In the first image on the left, the model lies inside a car, wearing minimal clothing, with her legs raised in a dramatic, carefully arranged pose. She is gripping the waistband of her pants, which further draws attention to her body. This reflects the category of Body Display, as the model's limited clothing exposes much of her body and directs the viewer's attention to her physical appearance. Additionally, although the pose appears relaxed, it draws strong attention to the model's body, particularly her legs. By focusing on the model's body rather than the product or her individuality, the image reflects the stereotype of women as Sexual Objects, where the female body is used primarily to attract attention. Furthermore, the composition and glossy lighting intensify the visual focus on her body. Her facial expression, appearing fatigued and dazed, further contributes to a sense of vulnerability and sensuality, which aligns with the category of Sexually Suggestive Poses. Overall, Figure 1.1 reinforces the idea that the female form remains central to the advertisement's visual appeal.

Figure 1.2
Stella Tennet photographed by Nick Knight in April 2006, Vogue

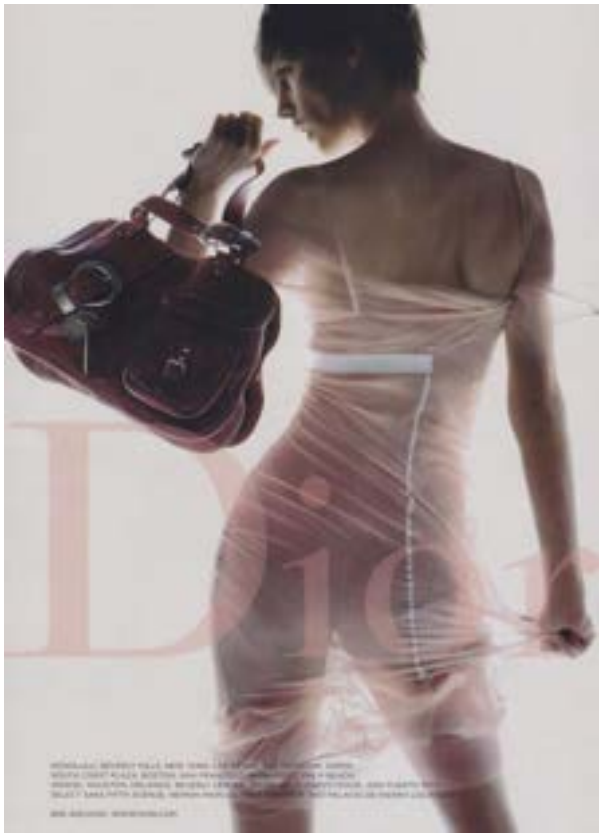


Figure 1.2 is a Dior campaign that highlights the bag in the photograph; however, visual emphasis is placed on Stella Tennet, the model. She is dressed in a nude, sheer lace dress, which creates a soft, ethereal effect. While this styling draws attention to the bag, it simultaneously reinforces traditional stereotypes of women as delicate, decorative, and primarily valued for their appearance. The dress, which almost appears as if she is not wearing anything, emphasizes her body rather than her personality, skill, or agency. This aligns with the Decorative Object stereotype, in which women are presented more like objects than real people. Additionally, the campaign reflects multiple sexual objectification categories described in Table 1.1. The advertisement demonstrates Physical Presentation, as in the previous campaign, the model has an extremely slim body type that reflects the fashion industry's idealization of thinness. Additionally, the fashion industry has focused on using white models rather than being diverse. This reinforces unrealistic expectations of women's bodies. Additionally, the advertisement also aligns with Sexual Suggestive Poses, as it chooses to present the product in a way that emphasizes the model's body more than the purse. Furthermore, Feminine Touch was shown in the campaign, as the model is gently holding the purse and touching the lace dress. Overall, the advertisement prioritizes aesthetic appeal and sensual imagery.

2012-2015

After Galliano left the fashion house of Dior, Raf Simons became the creative director for the women's collection from 2012 to 2015. Simons approached Dior as a living, evolving fashion house (Alexander, 2012). He focused on creating relevance and wearability, emphasizing practicality within luxury. Overall, Dior's imagery under Simon moved toward intellectual modernism rather than Decorative Objectification (Halgate, 2012).

Figure 2.1 represents a Fall campaign under the creative direction of Simon. The photo represents Diana Kruger and Raf Simon, the designer himself. Unlike Galliano's theatrical and overtly sexualized portrayals, the model in this campaign is presented through controlled elegance. Although her body is not dressed up as overly revealing, her extreme thinness continues to reinforce the physical presentation category, maintaining a narrow and idealized beauty standard common within luxury fashion. While Simon's seated position does not directly show that he has authority or dominance over Kruger, the visual composition suggests a hierarchical dynamic. Kruger's doll-like stance, with the floral architectural setting, makes her seem like a carefully curated aesthetic object, aligning with the decorative object category. Furthermore, during Simon's era at Dior, there was more diversity among the models. In Figures 2.2 and 2.3, Asian and African American models are featured. Although there was also some diversity during Galliano's era, it was inconsistent and not as relevant. Furthermore, in group photos, where more than one female model is featured, the sexual positions are reduced, and the model becomes more of an object to show the clothes, as shown in Figure 2.3. Instead of positioning the models in ways that draw attention primarily to their bodies, Simons appears to emphasize the overall setting and the product presentation.

Figure 2.1
Featuring Diana Kruger and Raf Simons. Photographed by Norman Jean Roy, Vogue, September 2012.



Figure 2.2
The photo features Fei Fei Sun. Photographed by Craig McDean, Vogue, July 2013.



Figure 2.3
The photo featuring Kai Newman, Leila Nda, and Tami Williams. Photographed by Peter Lindbergh, Vogue, March 2015.



However, despite the reduction of sexually suggestive poses, there were still images that continued to show traditional feminine roles. Figure 2.4 shows the model lying on top of and kissing the statue modeled after Michelangelo's David. Although the woman appears physically dominant, by having power on top of the statue, she's sexualized through clothing and pose. The female sexuality is emphasized through the fishnet stockings, heels, and mini skirt. Her power is tied to erotic appeal, which aligns with the Sexually Suggestive Poses category of sexual objectification. This campaign doesn't focus on the clothes they are trying to sell, since the front of the clothes aren't even shown. The 2012 to 2015 era of Dior under Raf Simon's lead reflected a shift towards reduced sexualization. However, objectifying representations had not fully disappeared.

Figure 2.4
Featuring Elza Luijendijk. Photographed by Steven Klein, Vogue, July 2013.



2016-2025

Maria Grazia Chiuri became the creative director of Dior's women's collection in 2016. Chiuri was the first woman to lead Dior's women's fashion, and she is known for bringing feminist themes and modern political messages into Dior's traditional classic codes (Castelo III, 2025). Her designs often included slogans, embroidered statements, and bold ideas that mixed heritage with contemporary social commentary.

Figure 3.1 shows two women walking on the street wearing Dior's clothes. One is

wearing mainly leather, and the other is wearing mainly lace. Lace has long been associated with traditional female roles, as it conveys softness, fragility, and delicacy, while leather represents modern femininity, conveying strength, rebellion, and softness (Rani, 2024). Furthermore, with the model on the right wearing a t-shirt saying ‘DIO(R) EVOLUTION,’ this image shows how Dior is changing. In Figure 3.2, the runway model is wearing a shirt saying “We should all be feminists”, showing Dior’s support of feminism.

Figure 3.1
The photo features Grace Elizabeth and Taylor Hill. Photographed by Patrick Demarchelier, Vogue, December 2016.



Figure 3.2
The photo shows a model on the runway during Paris Fashion Week for the Spring Summer 2017 collection. Photo by Giovanni Giannoni/Penske Media (Getty Images)



Despite more efforts being made to reduce traditional feminine roles, femininity is still tied to elegance and visual appeal. Models in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are wearing dresses. Additionally, in Figure 3.3, Bella Hadid is wearing one of Chiuri's signature pieces, which mixes sports and romance. She is in a Dior jumpsuit with a filmy overskirt. However, this clothing is still tied to the traditional elegance of women. The jumpsuit is made of silky material, and the over-skirt is made of lace. Both of these materials show femininity's elegance. In Chiuri's early fashion campaigns, the category of physical presentation was reinforced by featuring tall, slim models. However, in 2019, they started featuring more diverse body types and many athletes. Figures 3.4 and 3.5 feature Black models that don't necessarily have the slim, tall, and thin body type. Both models show power and strength in a way that is breaking previous stereotypes and categories. Additionally, in Figure 3.5, the model is no longer wearing an overskirt, removing the sense of femininity from the jumpsuit.

Figure 3.3
Featuring Bella Hadid. Photographed by Mikael Jansson, Vogue, March 2018



Figure 3.4
Campaign featuring Simone Biles. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz, Vogue, August 2020



Figure 3.5
Campaign features Jeneil Williams, track-and-field star. Photographed by Zoe Ghertner, Vogue, March 2022.



Campaigns that feature a male and female have also evolved to use fewer stereotypical portrayals. However, some campaigns continue to portray the identified stereotypes. Figure 3.6 shows two actors who are married in real life. In this campaign, Mathew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker are both professionally dressed and appear to hold equal power. There are no indicators that Parker is dependent on Broderick or that Broderick has authority over Parker. Therefore, this campaign shows that men and women have equal power and doesn't perpetuate stereotypes. The only indicator of femininity is Parker's skirt. Despite the positive evolution of male-female relationships in Figure 3.6, in Figure 3.7, the traditional roles are once again emphasized. Figure 3.7 shows another two celebrities who are married in real life. However, despite looking in love, Brooklyn Beckham pose shows male dominance over Nicola Peltz Beckham. In the Vogue caption, it says, "Brooklyn Beckham succumbs to the charms of his wife [...]" (Borrelli-Persson, 2025). This suggests that he has failed to resist her beauty and that she has seductive power. This image continues to reinforce male dominance.

Figure 3.6
Featuring Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker. Photographed by Annie Leibovitz, Vogue, April 2020.



Figure 3.7
Featuring Brooklyn Beckham and Nicola Peltz Beckham. Photographed by Daniel Martensen, Vogue, February 2023.



Conclusion

Advertising and media reflect and shape societal values, making fashion campaigns a powerful medium for influencing perceptions of gender roles and identity (Grau & Zotoz, 2016). Watson's research suggested that brands may still rely on certain traditional stereotypes, even when they position themselves as progressive (2018). Similarly, Mensa and Deng have also found that sexual objectification categories and stereotypes persist (2021). The case study analyzed the Christian Dior fashion advertisement campaigns from the early 21st century to the present. The analysis focused on both Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter campaigns from 2001 to 2023, spanning several changes in creative direction. It showed that, over time, the depiction of traditional gender roles and femininity evolved to show more equality. Madeline Heilman and her colleagues identified that in a workplace, agency is commonly associated with men, while communion is often associated with women (2023). The stereotypes eventually affect women in their daily lives, even outside of work (Abele et al., 2008). Fashion campaigns, a cultural lens through which gendered ideals are communicated and normalized, often intensify sexual differences by exaggerating stereotypes rather than eliminating them (Vinken, 2025). Analyzing Dior campaigns from 2001 to 2023 reveals that communion remained a dominant stereotype associated with female figures; however, its portrayal has gradually evolved over time.

During Galliano's era (2001-2011), fashion campaigns were theatrical and visually striking. However, many sexual objectification categories were present, and stereotypes were seen throughout the campaigns. In Simons' era (2012-2015), fashion campaigns shifted toward a more modern, diverse aesthetic, reducing some forms of sexualization, though beauty

standards remained restrictive. Despite small changes, dominant beauty standards continued to prioritize thinness and portray women primarily as decorative figures. The most significant changes occurred during Chiuri's era (2016-2025), especially reflecting greater awareness of gender equality in fashion through t-shirts featuring feminist messaging and more diverse model representation. Despite the positive developments over the years, some elements of objectification and traditional gender norms continue to persist in fashion advertising.

It is difficult to completely eliminate gender bias and gender differentials in fashion campaigns. However, it is important for these campaigns to represent men and women as having equal power, agency, and value. By making conscious efforts in the choice of models, garments, photography aesthetics, poses, and the overall tone of the campaigns, brands can challenge traditional stereotypes and promote more balanced and equitable representations of gender.

Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations in this research. Future research could examine more secondary evidence, such as articles discussing recent fashion campaigns or public responses to these campaigns on social media. Studying these perspectives would be valuable because they reflect how audiences interpret the campaigns and how such advertising may influence perceptions of gender roles. However, research using social media comments also presents challenges, as many comments lack meaningful content. Therefore, future studies should carefully select appropriate platforms and focus on comments that provide substantive discussion.

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