

Research Report: Virginie Viard

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Many know the luxury powerhouse of Chanel and what it is known for but to really understand a brand it's important to look at the creatives behind it. The famous house of Coco Chanel is known worldwide for its luxury garments, accessories, and fragrance. Looking closely into the history of the brand, it has broken many barriers and made changes in the world of fashion that set the future we have today. Coco Chanel started her brand in 1910 and made timeless statements in the fashion industry; after her death in 1971 her house was turned over to Karl Lagerfeld until his death in 2019. Karl Lagerfeld successor Virginie Viard has been the creative director since 2019 and has been keeping the brand up to standards by utilizing its roots in modern society.

Virginie Viard was introduced to fashion at an early age by her grandparents who were silk manufacturers. She went on to study Theatre Design at the Cours Georges and sharpened her skills alongside Dominique Borg, a well-respected custom designer. She started her career in fashion in 1987 as an intern for Chanel and has been at the brand since with a brief opportunity to work for Chloe as a custom designer from 1992-1997. According to Business of fashion "it is the first time a female designer is at the helm of the luxury house since its founder, Gabrielle Chanel." In any industry male domination plays a major role. After Karl Lagerfeld death it is important for Virginie Viard to continue the legacy of Chanel while leaving her personal footprint.

If taking a closer look at the brand imaging of Chanel, we can recall 5 timeless pieces contributed to the fashion industry. Chanel is known for tweed suits, two toned shoes, the little black dress, the handbag, and the most famous fragrance Chane N5. "Criticisms toward Viard, however, go far beyond the clothes. For Lagerfeld, producing a runway show was a visual

adventure and nothing (really, nothing) felt out of reach. From a fake supermarket with Chanel-labeled goods to a man-made beach to a real rocket ship that took off at the end of the show, witnessing a Chanel runway show was a spectacle for fashion connoisseurs or non-fashionistas alike. Viard's rendition of this Lagerfeld experiential set design has also fallen short.

(GELHOREN pp.1).” In another perspective, looking at Virginie Viard first collection it is easy to point out the common trends of Chanel. One might say it is important when a new designer for a brand is revealing a new collection it's essential for consumers to know even with new direction the brand will retain its roots while moving with the fashion train. Karl is well known for his visual and prestige design, many can agree Viard is bouncing off Karl while adding her personal touches.

Virginie Viard release her first collection in 2020 called Cruise in Grand Palais, Paris. Viard did not hold back on the visual as she staged the runway to mimic a Beaux-Arts style train station; the models strut the runaway on the train platform alongside the tracks. The message Viard was sending to consumers and the media was “the promise of an adventure” (Fisher pp.1) and was well executed. With anything new, time must be given to consumers and the media to understand the vision. Over the years, as Virginie Viard continued to design for Chanel she has gain respect for her craft, which is well deserved.

IMAGES:



Figure 1- [1950s | CHANEL](#)



Figure 2



Figure 3

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