PHONY

January 2020 Issue 1 Fakes&Fashion





Editor's Letter

Dear discerning reader,

This magazine was started because every fashionista faces a problem right now. A topic, far too taboo for the established magazines, nonetheless lurks at the lips of every one of you. Here, at last, is a magazine dedicated to fashion fakes! PHONY promises to bring that topic unstintingly into the light, examine it with a magnifying glass...and identify its nylon stitching and lack of authentic label! Fakes surround us in fashion, and it's easy to forget just how big this industry, which runs both beneath and parallel to high fashion, actually is. This magazine and my work are not aimed at shaming fake products and their manufacturers; obviously I understand any wish to buy clothes and accessories from the high fashion market, and I am simply trying to prove that fakes play a significant role in the fashion industry - they are to be respected as much as feared, and certainly not dismissed! The production of fakes is pushing certain brands to explore more intricate and harder-to-mimic ways of producing of their luxury goods. Fakes have been known to work as inspiration for some collections. Fake goods can even engage consumer interest in real brands; it's almost a form of anti-advertising, but it works. This magazine is, therefore, more of a celebration of enterprise and affordability than anything else. While fakes often come from murky backgrounds, with unclear production methods involving what are frequently underpaid workers, they open up high fashion to a market of consumers who often cannot afford to wear the brands that usually lend their glamour to the rich and famous alone. It is often said that a great artist steals; could it be that the creators of fakes are contributing just as much to global glamour as the designers they slavishly (or, sometimes, hilariously unslavishly) recreate?



In these pages, we interview shop-floor assistants of high-end brands about their experiences with fake returns, we test your eyesight and ability to tell what's real and what isn't, we explore some high-profile celebrity fake-fashion 'scandals', and we look at the murky world of fashion imitation in our central opinion feature, where we weigh up the value of lower-end fashion brands copying the ideas and styles of the legends. Finally, we have for you our own fake-product photoshoot. Never has polythene looked so enticing!

Happy reading, and remember - there are many ways to look fabulous...

Jamour

Editor-in-Chief Anna Samonova

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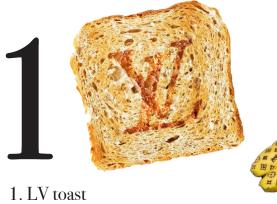






TOP 20

MOST TACKY Louis Vuitton Monogram things







3. LV bed linen



2. Luxury branded bananas by Kazuki Guzman

4. LV trash bag



6. LV car



5. LV toilet



9. LV nails



7. LV tattoo



10. LV house









A View From The Barricades

Phony gets the lowdown on what people who work in fashion stores think of fakes. Spoiler: they don't think very much of them...

akes aren't simply useful to those with little money but big ideas about how fashionable they should look. The dark side of fakes isn't just how they're sometimes made, it's how they're often used in criminal activity, returned to fashion stores in the hope of recouping a monster refund! We spoke to four store clerks - Kiara, who worked at Harvey Nichols, Paulina, who works at Fendi, Rami, who works at Hermes, and Jurgita, who works at Dior - to ask how they were able to negotiate the scammers...and what they think of wearing fake products in general. (Their views do not necessarily reflect the views of *Phony* Magazine!)

How often have people attempted to return you a fake?

Kiara:

I was working part-time at Harvey Nichols for around two months. I couldn't tell what was happening during the days when it wasn't my shift, but once I remember a woman tried to return a bag to our store, saying that she had changed her mind on it. The head sales assistant took it out to make sure the condition was perfect and that there was no sign of wear, but she noticed that the logo was a bit unusual. To cut a long story short, the bag appeared to be fake, because we checked the identity number inside and it wasn't found on our system. We didn't accept it, of course!

Paulina:

Not often at all. Since I work in Fendi it happened just once in five years. A woman tried to return the bag claiming that she purchased it on Bond street. Our manager cheked it and it appeared to be a fake.

Rami:

I can't tell for sure, because we always protect our products by asking the client for the original receipt from the place of purchase. Due to this measure, we've never had such an issue with fake products.

Jurgita:

In the last two years, people have tried funny business with returns a few times, but every time they failed.

people How easy is it for you to tell a you a fake? Which items are easier to fake, or faked more often?

Kiara:

I'm not sure if I can answer this, because I'm not a professional in any brand and I think you just have to have an experience of working with the items so you would know for sure what the real one looks like. But of course if it looks weird, I assume that it's fake.

Paulina:

It's quite hard to fake most of Fendi's items as they are handmade, which makes it expensive and not really worthwhile to do. Most items that are copied are bags.

Rami:

As sales associates at the store, we can't decide what's fake and what's not; we usually advise complaining customers to send the item back to Paris. There, our experts can decide what should be done.

Jurgita:

It's easy to spot a fake handbag, as the stitching is of very poor quality, and also the logo looks poor or the handles are in the wrong position. We get it with handbags and shoes most often.

What do you think of fake luxury items - do you possess any yourself?

Kiara:

To be honest, I don't think of it as good or bad... but I just can't understand the idea behind

wearing a fake. If you can afford the bag, buy it; if you can't, buy another brand that you can afford. Nobody knows where and how the fake bag was produced, so it might be not ethically right to support this type of business. I see them being sold through Instagram very often, but I'd never buy them.

Paulina:

No, I don't. Some are very good but I would feel uncomfortable to own or wear a fake, especially considering the social circle I am in - it would be embarrassing! Most are instantly recognisable to the kinds of people I hang out with. They're just not worth it! They don't last, can't be repaired and most of the time it's apparent that they're not original.

Rami:

I don't believe in wearing fake items and I don't support them at all - it's a criminal act! There are people who worked hard day and night to design and create new ideas for us, only for these ideas to be stolen. The thing I always say is that any person who is wearing fake items doesn't feel comfortable or self-confident.

Jurgita:

I don't possess any. It is better not to have one at all than to have a fake. People who buy real ones can easily see you have a fake. People with a poor mentality and no education are more likely to buy fake items, to show that they're something they're not.



The Beautiful Fake People

elebrities are defined by not being like normal people. From their social media presence to their minglings with the powerful and their ubiquity within popular culture, they are almost a different species, at least in the minds of their fans (and haters). But the

single most immediately noticeable way in which celebrities are different is through their fashion. So, without further ado, let us consider some Heroes of Fakery. First on the honour roll is Posh Spice herself, Victoria Beckham, who in 1997 allowed the world to believe she'd shot to fame in a Gucci dress, rather than one from high-street retailer Miss Selfridge that bore more than a passing resemblance. A true

pioneer of wearing what you want, and saying what you want about it!

a celebrity wears a fake..."

tice on seeing one of the frequently-faked bra
ey are wearing, and how hardly a surprise - it is

"It shouldn't necessarily be a scandal when

The first thing you might notice on seeing one of the 'beautiful people' is what they are wearing, and how difficult it might be for an average member of the public to wear such expensive or even iconic clothes and accessories. What we can do is cheat the system and wear fakes, which is why it seems so unfair when celebrities, to whom money is no object, do likewise.

One of the most frequently-faked brands is Louis Vuitton, and this is hardly a surprise - it is both iconic and eye-wateringly expensive! It was surprising when Justin Bieber was caught in 2012 wearing what appeared to be a custommade LV jacket with a Levi's label on it! It couldn't have been both - perhaps our best hope is that it was neither, and Bieber was playing two brands at once...

It shouldn't necessarily be a scandal when a celebrity wears a fake, except that in wearing branded clothing, a celebrity is suggesting two things: that they are endorsing that brand, and that they have paid money for it. If it's later revealed that the clothing was fake, then it both embarrasses the brand, and reveals the celebrity as a fashion poser, which upsets the delicate balance of wealth and endorsement that sustains celebrity culture. Of course, it can be argued that this heavily consumerist and elitist paradigm might sometimes need to be upset or interrupted by the wearing of fakes. It might do us good to know that our heroes (and villains) are like us, and that it's possible to wear what looks like high fashion without spending a fortune. Perhaps the celebrities who do wear fakes have more of an honest relationship to financial good sense than those who don't!



Victoria Beckham

In her little "Gucci" dress she wore back in her Spice Girls days.

Another young star who's challenged boutique supremacy is Maisie Williams. The actress got in trouble in 2016 when her Supreme t-shirt turned out to be a knock-off. However, the backlash soon gained its own counter-backlash, as Williams' fans pointed out how she wasn't trying to be a brand ambassador, just a teenager who wanted to look cool while out shopping. This was undoubtedly a great moment for fake credibility!

Finally, we reach the high skullduggery and fabulous fashion crime that is celebrity-on-celebrity fakery. No less a man than Zac Efron was busted in 2016 wearing fake Yeezy Boots - Kanye West's line of sneakers. For Efron, being a man of wealth and influence wasn't enough; he had to subtly and devastatingly critique the notion of a moneyed elite flaunting each other's brands by embracing the Way of the Fake. Bravo!

In Praise Of Copying

Our editor, Anna Samonova, considers why it is that we buy knock-off products by lesser brands - and why it's important that they keep the copies coming.



know what you're going to say. "You love fakes. Your wardrobe's full of them. I bet you only wear fakes!" In fact, I have never had any outright fake items in my wardrobe. This essay isn't about me, though. It's about fashion. It's about *copying*. Because it's one thing to try and pass off a Dior handbag as genuine,

label and all, when it's been produced in a Beijing back-alley - this is a game that we're all aware of, and can fully understand - but the more insidious fashion

"They say great artists thieve; well, so do a lot of fashion designers, it seems."

crime, some argue, is to closely mimic, to copy without faking, to be *inspired* by while ripping off and bathing in reflected glory. They say great artists thieve; well, so do a lot of fashion designers, it seems.

Let's make it about me for a bit, though. In truth, I have bought items from high-street fashion stores which I'd describe as extremely similar to those sold in the stores of luxury brands, particularly in situations where the item was seen as a must-have for one season only. Often I'd think that, aside from the colour scheme, the influence was too clear to ignore. In my style, I usually prefer to wear or buy items which can serve me for years, but in situations

> where I'm unsure if I need an oversized puffer jacket for £3000, I'll just go to Zara instead. This makes me feel calm: first of all, I haven't invested a lot of money into something I

wouldn't wear later, but I'm still feeling trendy. Indeed, this is why I don't buy counterfeit goods. I appreciate all of you who might, but I don't want to pretend that I can afford Gucci, if there are so many bags which look so similar, for instance Pinko. Not that Pinko are deliberately ripping Gucci off (or vice versa!) but they sell a similar product for a significantly lower price, albeit without the same cachet of the name.



Judge for yourself! The following pictures contain two examples of Pinko closely following in Gucci's footsteps. The branding is distinctive, but the designs certainly aren't. And the Pinko bags will cost you about the same as a fake Gucci - around £200.

With pearls again - Pinko repeats the trick! Far enough away to keep the lawyers off, but close enough to remind the eye, and steal away with a bit of that Gucci magic.

It happens in clothing - probably even more. Christian Dior, in their Fall 2019 ready-to-wear catalogue, strongly pushed the trend of check patterns, with red and black their most popular combination. The scarf-jacket from Dior costs approximately £3500, but I was recently able to buy a remarkably similar pattern from Zara for £35.





On Kylie Jenner's rather unavoidable mobile app, she has a fashion page, where she puts the costs of goods that she purchased, and then

"Ultimately, I don't see the lucrative world of fashion imitation as such a bad thing."

Of course, the fashion greats are great for a reason - their designs are, often almost imperceptibly, more timeless, more perfect, more...well,

shows an alternative, which sometimes looks absolutely identical but is still a branded clothing - again, often much cheaper. While you might fairly accuse Ms Jenner of showing off her riches rather - "here you go, proles, you can buy the knock-off" - it is striking how regularly she is able to find (or have her fashion advisers find) inexpensive imitations. That is assuming that they are imitations, of course - but it's usually a fair assumption; after all, it's a designer's job to know what every other designer is doing, otherwise they can hardly claim to be 'fashion' - they're simply clothiers. Be like Kylie: approach fashion with the attitude that similarities are never coincidental. (You do not need to be like Kylie in any other regard.)

classy. But they're also large and often quite slow-moving organisations with reputations to uphold and standards to keep, so they can fairly be accused, at times, of avoiding risk. And so, the battleground isn't just between these gods and their underling pretenders. Quite often it's about classy versus trendy; up-and-coming brands will coast high on the shoulders of the greats - sacreligious twists and all - and even overtake them in terms of high street sales; cheaper and newer, they'll get big before they're fully established as fashion houses. Now, to make this about me again, while I'm all for buying a well-judged copy, I don't usually go after clothes or bags that have gotten trendy, not only because I'll feel sad and regretful afterwards when they come out of fashion, but also because I happen to be an unashamed stan of the classics on the level of pure design. I would suggest that if you're torn between buying a Lady Dior or an Offwhite, choose the first. Your descendents, dependents or attic-scavengers will thank you. And if you don't have the money, get something from a nice, unfashionable highstreet store that happens to look more or less identical. Zara's open!

Kylie is that most prized of creatures, though: an unadulterated fashionista. If you look carefully at recent pictures of other, less fashion-fixated Hollywood stars or models, it can be surprisingly difficult to spot individual brands; the days of brash overcompensation are on the wane, as they no longer have to prove that they can afford Chanel; we know they can by now. They're usually wearing something from a brand we've never heard of, but of course, being the beautiful people, they look absolutely gorgeous. You might then say "they buy these less-known brands because they already have what everyone else wants", but have you ever asked yourself why you want precisely that bag? If it is about the design, then I can assume you're lying, because, as already discussed, there are so many alternatives not only to the bags but all your favourite designer clothes as well. You probably want it to show your class or status, when really, your duty to yourself is simply to look good, and the rest will (or won't) follow.

Ultimately, I don't see the lucrative world of fashion imitation as such a bad thing. The classic designers have their demographic, and the high-street stores have theirs; why can't people in the latter wear designs cribbed from the former? If the design is too close, well, the big houses know a lawyer or two. Taking clear but non-invasive inspiration from legends is both a form of flattery that maintains a narrowing hierarchy, and also democratises design, which is, ultimately, the point of fashion itself. Let there be fakes, yes, but also let there be copies.

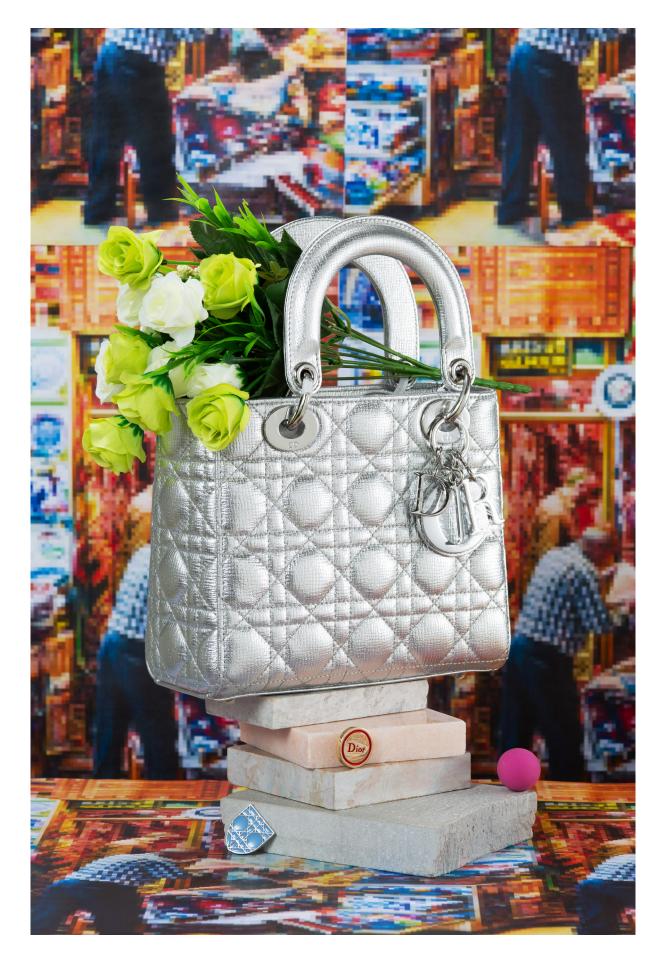


It wasn't just the bags that were real or fake here. The flowers, feathers and all other props were sometimes the genuine article and sometimes not. We were careful to combine real with fake in every single one of these pictures!

Photography by Monica Dubinkaite Fashion editor Anna Samonova



Real Chanel Plastic, £8,000



Fake Dior, £250



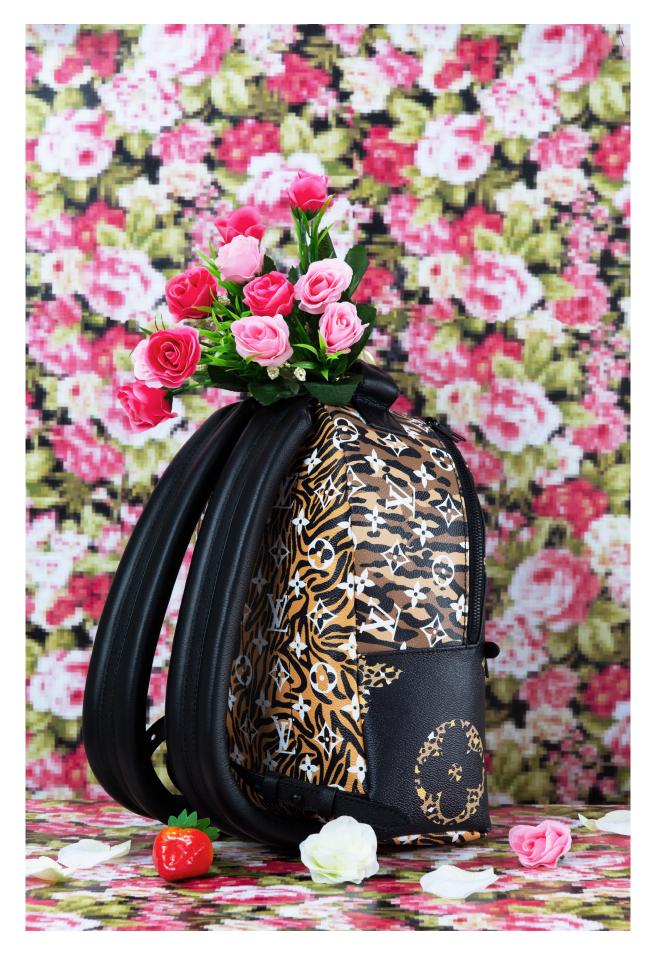
Fake Chanel 2.55, £220



Real Chanel Boy, £4,500



Real Dior, £4,300



Fake LV, £150



Fake Gold Chanel, £100



Real Celine Python, £3.500

FRONT ROW



Front Row is London's premiere destination for on-demand luxury, granting you instant access to rent the latest pieces, straight off the runway from the world's most coveted designers.

OUR BRAND

Officially launched in July 2016, as an invitation only service, Front Row now seeks to empower a wider base of fashion forward clientele. Our aim is to provide a lifestyle service that eliminates the age - old question "Will I ever wear this again?" With Front Row, you don't have to. Front Row's online platform enables you to keep up to date with the hottest designers and trends of the moment, whilst eliminating the need to purchase.

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FRONT ROW



Could YOU Work At Harveys?

A simple test that any store-clerk worth their salt could pass: can you tell what's real from what's not? Answers over the page!

Here are nine leather bags, clutches and purses from high-end designers. They all cost a lot of money and they all exude fine style - but not all of them are the genuine article. Hidden among this list are numerous convincing fakes, made of cheap materials, with design short-cuts and a lack of that sweet authenticity you're ultimately shelling out all your luxury budget on! Test your instincts - would you turn these away, if a customer tried to return them to you? And if you were in a buying mood, and you came across these, would you know when to say no? Or would you even care - maybe you're not one for total authenticity!



£4,065 of high-powered businesswoman minimalism

- if someone came for an interview toting this from Fendi, would it pass your sensors, or would you smell the forgery and pack its owner home without a second glance at her CV?



This Louis Vuitton Metis bag could set you back £1,685 - but would you be throwing away your money on a cheap knock-off? Maybe it wouldn't matter. Who wouldn't want to step into a Belgravia soiree with this beauty slung over their shoulder?

Now you are invited to authenticate a Bottega
Veneta Knot Clutch, which would set you back £1,575.
The owner is selling her peanut-shaped friend to the charity shop...and will it now be your peanut-shaped friend as well?





The grey-blue colour disarms, and yet the golden pyramids sparkle with the threat of uncontained Valentino power. Yours, should you wish to splurge £1,680 - but will your power fade with terrible realisation?

£1,125, and the immortal logo of Yves Saint Laurent can be yours to cherish on the side of this small but perfectly-formed bag. You might cherish it considerably less if you spotted any tell-tale signs of trickery, however...

6

Its price alone - £4,720 - should indicate what a statement this from Chanel is; sheepskin with a metallic finish and an ethereal glow, it will indicate you as a person of wealth and distinction. Unless, of course, it doesn't.

This is a more funky bag, weighing in at £1,140.
Dolce & Gabbana emerald green glimmer cannot hide its high-end appeal or class... but can it hide fraudulence on a terrifying scale?



Bringing the humble tote bag to the high end of high-street fashion, Dior's glimmering creation can be yours for only £2,490! But beware - have you been had, and is this barely more valuable than something from your local bookshop?



9



£1,400 of Gucci black leather elegance and golden glitz, this cute little bag packs quite the social punch... unless of course, it isn't real, and you get spotted! In that case you'd be ostracised faster than you can say 'gilt paint'...but is this the offending article, or the holy grail of chic shoulderwear?

6 - EAKE!

8 - KEYLI

7 - REAL!

9 - EVKEi

2 - EVKEi

- EAKEI

4 - EVKEi

3 - KEYFi

5 - FAKE!

I - KEYFi

YNZMEKS:





