

TRANS

LATION

The Louis Vuitton fall-winter 2021 collection offers an inquisitive look at both modernity and antiquity. Nicolas Ghesquière, the creative mind behind it, tells us more.

Photos, RID BURMAN — Interview by LAURENT DOMBROWICZ

CitizenK Arabia: Tell us about Fornasetti, whose work is so present in this collection.

Nicolas Ghesquière: I've long wanted to incorporate Fornasetti's work in a collection. I like his story as an artist and how he took the visual arts off the page and into the world, translating pure illustration into design, decoration, printing, scenography, the list goes on. The sky was the limit for him. He even collaborated on work with architect Gio Ponti, and it's fascinating stuff. The uncompromising free thinker he was, he opened up new possibilities for the visual arts, and for this collection I wanted to use his black-and-white mythological illustrations.

What was the process for integrating Fornasetti's work?

It all happened very naturally. I was thinking about travel, a perennial theme at LV, and during a visit to the Louvre it all came together for me. The collection is a kind of stay-cation, an awe-inspiring trip back in time to antiquity when mythology held so much imaginative potential. For the unveiling, the Louvre made the Michelangelo Gallery available to us, a fabulous space displaying Etruscan, Greek, and Roman sculpture. Fornasetti just fit so perfectly into all of it.

Antiquity motifs are common in fashion, but typically in summer collections. I wanted to adapt antiquity to winter. Often it's through constraints that designers are able to take their work farther. We go on a journey from Fornasetti's 20th-century drawings all the way back to the stunning grace of classic Greek sculpture. On a side note, did you see that incredible archaeological discovery a few days ago? A fully intact ceremonial chariot was unearthed in Pompeii. Whenever the vibrant past comes charging back up

to the surface in our modern world, I always find it so moving. To come back to the collection, it's something of an odyssey, the quintessential journey, the quest. For me the pieces fall into three categories represented by three mythological figures. First is Diana, a goddess of conquest, which in our case is the new conquest of the female body, i.e. how women today are reappropriating their bodies. These pieces are the parkas, military-inspired wear, winter gladiator footwear, etc. Then there are Venus pieces, Venus symbolizing the feminine essence and the heart, with shiny, embroidered dresses, the more seductive pieces, etc. Finally, there are the Minerva pieces, Minerva symbolizing the quest for knowledge. These pieces include quilted dresses printed with the faces of philosophers and thinkers. There you have my "Three Graces" representing the body, the heart, and the mind.

Accessories at Louis Vuitton remain an integral part of the brand. How did you interpret some of these pieces?

There are our boots with the look of gladiator sandals, almost as a kind of trompe-l'œil. We have Fornasetti illustrations on the bags, made almost to look like cameo pendants. We use both his illustrations of thinkers and philosophers as well as those of female mythological figures who embody the key female values we've already discussed. Other Fornasetti illustrations include an important motif for the brand, keys. We have minaudières made to look like sculptures. My intention with this collaboration was to continue exploring the possibilities of crossing the LV brand with great visual artists, starting with Kansai Yamamoto, Grace Coddington, and today Fornasetti ●



Nicolas Ghesquière



Printed velvet dress,
LOUIS VUITTON x
FORNASETTI. Gold
metal *Perfect Match*
earrings, LOUIS
VUITTON



Printed wool coat and small patent calf leather hatbox, both LOUIS VUITTON x FORNASETTI.
Silk georgette quilted trousers, LOUIS VUITTON



Silk dress embroidered with pearls and sequins, printed jersey top and pearl and gold metal earrings, all LOUIS VUITTON.
Cannes Architettura bag, printed patent calf leather, LOUIS VUITTON x FORNASETTI



Capucines BB Architectura bag, calf leather, LOUIS VUITTON x FORNASETTI



Sleeveless printed Lurex jacket, LOUIS VUITTON x FORNASETTI. Asymmetrical silk dress, LOUIS VUITTON
Make up, Dariia Day. Hair, Frederic Kebbabi, Manicure, Béatrice Eni