

# Integration of Fictional Archaeological Artistic Styles and Modern Brand Design: Artist Daniel Arsham's Work

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**Abstract:** At present, with the rapid development of the global economy and improvement of people's life quality, demands for products are not only limited to the pursuit of practical functions. Instead, people also pursue certain ornamental values besides practical functions. Individualization also becomes an indispensable part. People's sight enjoying demands cannot be satisfied by many conventional designs anymore. People start paying attention to the uniqueness of products. To this end, brand owners should help enhance the uniqueness of brand product design by some external resources, so as to attract more consumers. Each artist has their own typical artistic style and features. By cooperating with brands, they can bring unique artistic styles to products as well as artistic elements to improve the brand image. Therefore, more and more brands have extracted different artistic elements of artists and embody them in product design in recent years. Integration of these elements and brand design has brought great artistic effects, and the creative and innovative products motivate people's purchase intention. In the essay, with an introduction to an American modern artist Daniel Arsham and his artistic style, namely fictional archaeological artistic style, the era background of cooperation between art and modern brands as well as their mutual integration forms are described. In the end, the research focuses on how Daniel combined fictional archaeological artistic style with different modern brands in the design and how he added modern technologies to diversify product forms.

Keywords: Fictional archaeological artistic style; Brand design; Cross-field integration

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#### 1. Introduction

More and more brands have appeared in the market, making products stay in a saturated state. For this reason, competition has become more and more intense. Individualization and symbolism become more and more important for brands to stand out from so many other brands of the same type and become more competitive. With progress in the era and science, people are living a better life. Besides demands for product functions, people also have demands for appearance. With the increasing upgrading of people's aesthetic tastes, cultural and artistic natures of products become especially important. With the gradual improvement of economic conditions and continuous emergence of innovative artists and artistic elements, cooperating with brands is the best way for artists to stand out, let more people know their creativity and appreciate to launch their artistic works. In addition, as independent individuals, artists appear widely among people by such commercial form, bringing a fresh sense to people. Such integration not only provides a display platform for artists but also helps greatly improve brand influences.

The degree of matching between artists and brands is a crucial factor. Matching of abilities can help

each other create a win-win environment with mutual benefits and complementation. Such ability is embodied in many aspects, such as production ability, design ability, and marketing ability. Powerful brands often can create good commodities and promote them with better forms and modes of sales and propaganda, to spread art into people's life. Sometimes commodities not only represent objects, but also stand for the ability of a brand. In the era pursuing individuation, whether an artist or artistic element which is well matched with the brand can cooperate with the brand and promote products with high commercial values is also a challenge for the brand.

Due to global development, different countries have conducted more and more frequent exchanges in culture and business. Excellent and creative cooperation works emerge one after another. A lot of famous brands cooperate with artists or hold exhibitions and foundations, which is a good chance to integrate art into people's daily life and make it a part of life, rather than what it looked like several hundred years ago, that only the upper class could get access to art, while common people could hardly have the chance to get contact with it. Based on the analysis of artistic concepts of artist Daniel Arsham, the paper discusses different design forms brought by the integration of fictional archaeological styles and brands, so as to promote further development of the brand design.

## 2. Artistic Concepts and Styles of Daniel Arsham

### 2.1. Life Experience

Daniel is an artist born in Cleveland, Ohio, America in 1980, who grew up in Miami, Florida. After finishing study in Design and Architecture High School, he graduated from Cooper Union, New York with a full scholarship in 2003 and now lives with his wife and children in New York, America. Daniel suffered hardship while pursuing success in art. Born with the defect of color weakness, he could only recognize several hundred colors, mainly warm tones. In fact, most people could recognize several million colors. That's why most of his works are mainly full of colors like black, white, and grey. However, it did not stop his artistic creation. As proved, he is highly talented in art as an all-around artist. His artworks are embodied in different forms, including but not limited to sculpture, device, painting, building, design, and performance. Most of Daniel's works are embodied in different dimensions, such as 2D, 3D, and 4D. Outer space and building are his favorite elements which are mainly used in his expression. When he was 25 years old, he started work by designing the eyeSpace, a new stage of a choreographer Merce Cunningham (Figure 1.), which was one of his designs in the earlier stage. Since then, his talents were discovered, making him more and more famous. Afterward, he accompanied Merce Cunningham Dance Company in performances of a lot of different countries and took charge of designing stage visual effects, props, or the like of these performances. Then, he started cooperating with Dior, Adidas, Kith, IKEA, and so on, initiating his cooperation with brands in "art + business".



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Figure 1. Stage Design of eyeSpace

## 2.2. Fictional Archaeological Artistic Style

Fictional archaeology artistic style is an antique technical style that treats modern things with the view of the future and prefers to create a series of works with time as a carrier; it mainly embodies virtual concepts. In the traditional sense, archaeology treats historical relics based on the current time. But fictional archaeology is different. It mainly overturns archaeology in the traditional sense, while the time points and things can be defined quite randomly. It is feasible to treat the present from the future or look back to the past self from the present perspective. It jumps out of the specialized indication of archaeological historical relics. In a hurricane Daniel experienced in childhood, all the buildings seeming to be indestructible were brought on the verge of collapse after being blown by the high wind for a period. The former firm image disappeared. This experience laid a foundation for concepts and styles in his later artistic creation. A lot of works he creates now are related to the time and destruction of firm things. It is easy to find that all his works are centered on the element of time and space. All the works in artistic forms such as fictional archaeology are correlated with time and focus on time points such as past and future, in which things after being destroyed cannot be recovered to the former appearance. As for a typical artistic style, the original structure of things is destroyed in space for reshaping, with the purpose of creating a strong visual impact. Despite of lack in colors, his works can always leave a striking impression. In other words, he often uses simple colors to express meanings of many deep levels, bringing more profound thinking to people. For example, in a series of works called Future Relic, Daniel made a lot of sculptures of modern things by destroying and weathering structures such as clothing, coats, helmets, and balls, so as to create a visual effect of "worn and broken" to make people think of relics and fossils (Figure 2. and Figure 3.). This is a conscious behavior, while the theme of this series is to express future humans' archaeology and exploration of our current times. The number 3018 is shown in the exhibition poster, implying that this set of works tries to observe modern times from the perspective of future humans. In the human civilization 1,000 years later, daily articles are dug, meaning the archaeological behavior of the current time by future people. As generally believed by us, the word "archaeology" means the exploration of historical relics. This set of works breaks the conventional concepts. The current era we live in is a history for humans 1,000 years later, while we have become the archaeological target. This is the meaning implied by fictional archaeology. Some works of Future Relic are found every day. Seeing these broken "fossils" stacked together, viewers can think of daily life details and make introspection on their daily consumption concept and environmental awareness.



Figure 2. Worn Electric Appliance



Figure 3. Sculpture installation Art (Worn Articles)

# 3. Cross-field Integration of Art and Brand Design

## **3.1.** Cooperation between Artists and Brands

The trend of cooperation between artists and brands was formed as early as the middle term of the 19th century. Since the cooperation between the Cubism and Chanel – a famous brand in Europe, a lot of masters in the painting school such as Picasso and Mondrian started cooperating with the brand one after another. After that, under the deep influences of the structuralism master Iliazd, Chanel created 3D fabrics to enhance the visual 3D sense of clothing. In 1965, Yves Saint Laurent, the founder of a French fashion brand YSL, was enlightened by the Red, Yellow and Blue Layout of Piet Cornelies Mondrian, an abstract painter, and designed the three colors and layout of the painting in dresses with delicate and exquisite tailoring, since when the famous Mondrian dress was born. After this dress was made a success, YSL got enlightenment from works of different painters, such as famous ones like Vincent van Gogh and Matisse. All these design works were highly approved in the fashion field. A lot of other brands started trying such a mode of cooperating with painters to design cross-style fashion products. In 2017, LV printed paintings such as Le Bassinaux Nympheas by Monet and Le déjeuner sur l'herbe by Manet into its new products, allowing artists to add an original design of the brand logo, setting a precedent in cross-field at that time.

Artist Daniel started cooperating with commercial brands in the 21st century and has created some classic brand images, embodying the profound cooperation between the artist and brands. For example, he cooperated with Kith and designed stores for its flagship store in Paris. The corridor is famous, with the ceiling full of fossilized images of Air Jordan in white (**Figure 4.**). As a sports fashion retailer in America, highlighting customers' rights and interests, it wants to provide consumers with values higher than the paid fee; one of the artistic concepts of Daniel is to put viewers' sight experience in the first place. These concepts coincide with each other, promoting the integration of more artistic images in the brand.

### 3.2. Manifestation Form of Artistic Style in Brand Design

Thanks to progress in modern science, the manifestation form of artistic styles in brand design becomes more abundant, stereoscopic, and diversified. Singular product design has been expanded to store design, window design, plane design, show field design, etc. Some art styles such as popular, abstract, and minimalism have been widely applied in brand design, bringing the more diversified manifestation of brand images. Manifestation of artistic styles not only enhances attraction and influences of brands but also brings different visual senses and experiences to viewers. In 2003, LV cooperated with Takashi Murakami, an artist from Japan, which is known as the model for cross-field integration between art and brands. They designed and launched the series of Monogram Multicolore (**Figure 5.**). From the word Multicolore, we can see that the products of this series are colorful. It is quite different from the conventional style of LV familiar to people. Most of the traditional leather products of LV have a neat and simple claybank color, with the symbolic concise and elegant patterns printed on the surface. To embody the diversity of brand design, LV tries to add fashionable patterns to the design. Takashi Murakami integrated the ultra-flat and childish artistic styles he is good at into embossment, changing the traditional LV design. Thanks to adding of abundant colors and popular elements, the distance between luxury products and people are narrowed, while the audience range is expanded from the high-class elites. After that, LV cooperated with Yayoi Kusama, another famous Japanese artist, in 2012. Good at using bright and colorful artistic features, Yayoi Kusama applied dots into the LV design. She also cooperated with LV in the design of store decoration, promotion pictures, or the like, to diversify the expression forms of cooperation. In this way, consumers can more personally feel the different possibilities brought by infinitely extended dot art and LV (**Figure 6.**).

As found in the works of the above two artists, we can clearly see that each artist has a symbolic artistic style, which shows the unique perspective and artistic ideas of the artist. The paper mainly analyzes the artistic styles of the artist Daniel as well as the works designed by cooperation between him and brands. As a representative artist, he has artistic styles and artistic forms different from those of other artists.

"Fictional archaeology" is his unique artistic idea and concept. By creating a series of artistic works with profound significance, he has formed unique artistic styles. The research focuses on Daniel's cooperation with brands such as Adidas, Uniqlo, and Dior. The fictional archaeological artistic style is more typically embodied in these brands, granting more profound significance to the brand and guiding people to have deeper thinking on awareness of these brands.



Figure 4. Store Design of Kith by Daniel Arsham



Figure 5. Monogram Multicolor Series



Figure 6. Series of Yayoi Kusama-LV Cooperation

# 3.3. Integration of Fictional Archaeological Artistic Style and Modern Brand Design

"Fictional archaeology" is a quite modern artistic style, with Daniel Arsham as a typical representative. Daniel is good at expressing this concept with different materials and forms, managing to make such artistic style popular among people.

In order to keep the transformation and deepen brand images, brands should find unique art elements and add them to their products. Daniel cooperated with IKEA – a famous Sweden furniture brand to design a clock placed on the table, which was released in 2021. The co-branded clock was made with Falling Clock, a sculpture created by him in 2011 as the blueprint (**Figure 7.**). It is a clock falling from the wall. Instead of conventional hard material, the wall is made of a cloth-like material. The clock is sunk in the wrinkled wall. The creation is based on the concept that the wall falls as time goes by. Time slowly sinks into the peeled wall and they are blended. The representative antique style of Daniel is not added in the product, but the concept of highlighting time by the fictional archaeological artistic style is also embodied in the product. Time is hidden in the thick wall, which is hard to be found by later generations. This product explores art and time and then gives the manifestation of time with the artistic form (**Figure 8.**).

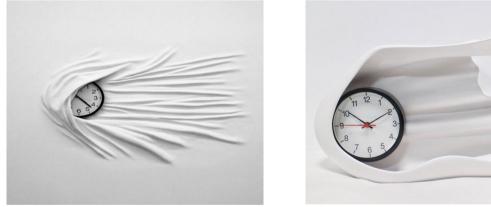


Figure 7. Falling Clock

Figure 8. Co-branded Clock with IKEA

# 4. Design Practice of Integration between Fictional Archaeological Artistic Style and Brands 4.1. Adidas and Daniel Arsham

# 4.1.1. New York

Daniel divides the shoe co-designed by him and Adidas into three-time nodes, namely "Past, Present, and Future." He co-branded with Adidas two pairs of shoes mainly expressing "past" in the timeline, which is based on the New York shoe sample. They are in white and black, respectively.

Different from the former flip design, the shoebox of white shoes is like a gift packaging box. The top cover can be directly put down. The cover is adhered with sealing strips around. A line is embedded in the

sealing strips. Only by pulling the line, consumers can tear up the sealing strip from the middle. It means, once the sealing strip is torn, the whole shoebox cannot be recovered to the former intact shape. The design is highly in line with the cooperation concept of "Past, Present, and Future" between Daniel and Adidas. Changes brought by time to things cannot be recovered and everything cannot go back to the former form (Figure 9.). The whole shoe body including the sole is pure white. Each connecting corner on the upper is roughed. It seems that the shoe has experienced hardship and gotten worn. The artistic feature adhered by Daniel is kept, namely the fictional archaeology artistic style (Figure 10.). While introducing the fictional archaeology artistic style, the former text also mentions the close relationship between such artistic style and time. Hence, the design of the whole pair of shoes is insinuating the point of "past". We can feel from the antique form that the designer wants to bring a time-space sense to people by this product. The shoe pattern is called New York. While hearing this word, people will think of New York, a busy and flourishing modern city. However, artist Daniel made it an antique product, to form a contrasting sense as if it is a pair of old shoes of the last century, found by people in New York. After irradiating it with an ultraviolet radiator, you can see the words "The Past" and "Present" on the side faces of shoe soles (Figure 11.). The artist Daniel skillfully kept his white sense of the whole of shoes beside the application of different materials. These words are not strikingly presented on shoes and can be seen only after irradiation of special tools. It is of the same principle as archaeology. Workers in archaeological digging need to apply different tools to slowly peel off coatings of the antiques buried underground for many years, while the original and most complete patterns can only be seen after advanced technical restoration. Daniel also designed the concept into the shoes.



Figure 9. Side Face of Shoeboy



Figure 10. Appearance



Figure 11. Shoes under Irradiation of Ultraviolet Radiator



Figure 12. Appearance of Black Shoes

The other pair of shoes, namely New York in black grey, is changed in appearance. The whole shoe is not that round as the original one. It is replaced by the relatively sharp one. The overall design is creative. A very thick elastic fabric covers cross the shoe tongue from the inner side to directly connect the shoe's outer side. Metal elements are added to the shoelace end as decoration to make it more modernized. Patterns on the shoe sole sides look like small stones stacked together. The fabric circle from the shoe heel to the shoe tip is of a velvet fabric, which forms contrast with the stone-grey matching, to highlight the texture and uniqueness of the shoes. The contrast design which is modern, but antique adds a sense of time to the shoes (**Figure 12.**).

## 4.1.2. Futurecraft 4D

The shoes belong to the Adidas Future Craft series, which is a series exploring new technologies and dedicated to protecting the earthly environment and integrating the shoes into natural ecology. As introduced by the video on the Adidas official website, "The idea of Futurecraft has put something out there that is never been done", the series aims to create some commodities which have not been realized yet. While creating the Futurecraft series, Adidas is thinking about whether the problem caused by plastic waste can be solved and if the harm brought to the future earth by-product manufacture can be reduced. They expect that this series can become the pronoun of innovation so that their products can be integrated into nature and become a part of the future world. Shoes of the whole series try to integrate modern new technologies into production, in which useful marine rubbish is recycled and reprocessed into raw materials of shoes, and the regenerants of sugarcanes are used to make shoes. In the whole manufacture process, only 2.24 kg of carbon dioxide will be generated and emitted, which is equal to 1/10 of the carbon dioxide emitted by every person each day. These concepts also highly conform to the artistic style of Daniel. As mentioned above, he classified the shoes co-designed with Adidas into three types of "Past, Present and Future". The own image of the Futurecraft series obviously belongs to the "Future". As believed by Daniel, these shoes act as a bridge connecting the future and the present. It is quite necessary to embody the timespace sense with different materials and technologies.

The shoe sole of Futurecraft 4D shoes adopts a very special technology called Digital Light Synthesis (DLS). This technology integrates light and liquids, which was first invented by Carbon, a high-tech company in Silicon Valley, USA. DLS can increase the 3D printing efficiency to a hundred times the former.

The shape and material of this style of shoes co-created by Daniel and Adidas are based on Future craft 4D, with the addition of a lot of Daniel's personal elements. He mainly focuses on the "future" this time. It realizes a good combination of art and modern science. Besides making in-depth exploration of different possibilities of materials, Daniel also realized perfect integration of art and science. The whole shoes are of a mint green color. In general, the shoe upper is ordinary without any words or marks. Due to the use of some reflecting materials, under irradiation of ultraviolet, the classic three-bar mark of Adidas is shown on the shoe sides, with the fluorescent "Future" on the tip (Figure 13.). Both the shoe box and the shoes are mint green. The other appearance design of the shoebox is in line with the New York feature. It is adhered to with sealing strips around. No recovery can be made after tearing; and words of "past, present, and future" are printed on the upper left corner of the shoebox top, in which "future" is of another typeface and redesigned, indicating the relation between shoes and Future (Figure 14.). After opening the shoebox, you can first see a pair of gloves and socks. The gloves mean that you need to wear them as if you will start the archaeological work and then open the next layers of packages. You need to treat this pair of shoes as carefully as the other sculpture works of Daniel as he would put a pair of gloves in package boxes of many sculptures works, which is also one of his features. This pair of shoes explore the shoes which may be worn by most people shortly, while the package should be opened with a careful archaeological form. In cooperation with the brand, "archaeology" and "time" are combined in aspects of outer package and shoes.



Figure 13. Patterns Displayed under Ultraviolet Radiator



Figure 14. Appearance of Shoebox

# 4.2. Uniqlo, Pokemon and Daniel Arsham

Uniqlo is a Japanese clothing brand. The game Pokemon was released by Japanese Game Freak in 1996. In cooperation between Daniel Arsham and Uniqlo in 2020, images of different spirits of Pokemon were combined and printed on the classic Uniqlo UT. As remembered by Daniel, Pokemon was not a cultural product from another country; instead, it seems to be a part of their culture. The impressive Pokemon images reflect his deep understanding of Pokemon, which facilitated the cooperation. Daniel still used black and white colors in which he is best at. Different Pokemon images were painted by him. Those patterns printed on T-shirts indicate his persistence in the style, namely the important element of archaeology. The white Pikachu and broken Pokemon marks with different degrees of damage symbolize the past (**Figure 15.**). In the past, Pokemon was presented to people in diversified colors used in Japanese cartoon games. Integrating the concise tailoring pattern of Uniqlo clothing and the low-key artistic style he is good at, Daniel changed the stereotyped image patterns of it and expanded the age groups of consumers.

At first, most of the UT patterns in this cooperation are for adults, expanding the consumers of peripheral products of cartoon games, who are mainly children and young people; secondly, the Pokemon game was popular many years ago, and its fans already grew up from teenagers. Some of them cannot appreciate too colorful clothing and prefer low-saturated T-shirts which are in the line with their aesthetic taste as a lot of popular colors now are low-saturated. The manuscript pattern re-presents the original creation images in the era without advanced technologies, awakening the childhood memory of some people. In other words, by buying these clothes, they are making archaeological work of reviewing their

past childhood. As mentioned above, Daniel wrote 3018 in the poster of Future Relic, a personal exhibition held in 2018. All these T-shirts have the number 3020 printed. He brings the same concept of Future Relic into these T-shirts, drawing the pattern of Pokemon in 3020 and deepening the fictional archaeology artistic style of these T-shirts.



Figure 15. UT x Daniel, Manifestation of Different Patterns

Afterward, Daniel made several derivative sculptures based on the T-shirt patterns. Meanwhile, they are still of the antique style. The broken crystal is exposed at the broken gaps, expecting to explore display effects brought by the combination of different materials. They show the original 2D carton game images in the form of 3D sculpture, making Pokemon images more stereoscopic (**Figure 16**.).



Figure 16. Pokemon Sculpture

# 4.3. Dior and Daniel Arsham

Kim Jones, the men's wear designer of Dior, invited Daniel to co-design the clothing and show field layout for the 2020 Spring Men's Wear Collection. As one of the typical features in their cooperation, the Jornaux news journal printed elements that appeared in Dior clothes 20 years ago were brought back to the show field. The news release was written by Christian Dior. Different from the case 20 years ago, the words Collection Ete 3020 were added in the printed patterns. Just like the co-branded Uniqlo products, the patterns of articles 1,000 years later are pre-presented. This series covers handbags, blouses, Saddlebags, and other items of Dior with good WOM before (**Figure 17.**). Different significances were created through collision and integration between the antique journal and the future number 3020. At present, newspaper is no longer a mainstream channel for people to acquire news. It will be eliminated by the history in 3020, while only a few merchants will present the journal again in this form, to commemorate the information

acquisition media used over 1,000 years ago. After carefully observing these products, you can find a broken "D" on the printed patterns, in addition to gaps damaged by collision on letters designed in other ornaments (**Figure 18**.). As analyzed in every case mentioned above, the element of "defect" appears in works and designs of Daniel, focusing on the fictional archaeological artistic styles. Therefore, this design of the Dior type integrates such artistic style.

Different from former projects, Daniel also joined the design and layout of the show field facilities (**Figure 19.**). The huge white DIOR letter facility is erected at the center of the pink sand pool show field, and each letter has the mark of purposeful collision. The antique details of these clothing and show field layouts deepen the time sense of the whole show. Each detail can bring the audience to the world in 3020. But the weathered sculpture facilities are still reminding people that these articles do not belong to 3020, but they were designed in 2020. The interlaced time-space sense makes people rethink their former selves. It seems that they are reviewing the fashion 1,000 years ago as the people in the future.

The peripheral memorials of the Dior 2020 Spring Men's Wear show field were also designed under the guidance of Daniel. Four letters of DIOR placed in the show field are minified into small sculptures which can be placed at home. All the old phones, clocks, and articles were designed to be antique (**Figure 20.**). In addition, he also printed the sculpture patterns onto the clothing of different patterns (**Figure 21.**). There is a pair of white gloves in the package of each sculpture, which is in line with the package of Adidas sports shoes mentioned above. A thin layer of dust floats on the surface of the sculpture. Consumers can wear gloves to slowly wipe away the white particles on it, which is more consistent with the concept of fictional archaeology. In the form of exquisite and small sculptures, artworks with fictional archaeology styles can be brought by consumers back home. All these artistic facilities bring a certain artistic atmosphere to the surrounding environment. At home, people can easily feel the linkage with such artistic style and generate emotional resonance. Thanks to this form, brand images and artists can be presented in front of people all the time, making them more impressive to people.



Figure 17. Bag with Printed Journal



Figure 18. Co-branded Accessory



Figure 19. Design of Show Field Facilities



Figure 20. Limited Edition Sculptur



#### Figure 21. Printed Clothing

### 5. Conclusion

Under the great era background of global economic development, cross-field cooperation between brands and art is becoming an inevitable trend. Consumers are keeping the pursuit of individualization and uniqueness. Only by unceasing innovation in brand development and artists, customers' demands can be satisfied, which is also a key factor for them to survive in the intensely competitive business environment. Artists must show their artistic styles by commercial patterns, to win the public approval and promote their art in a certain market. Brands also need to design unique products with more ornamental values and original brand features, based on which breakthroughs can be made for the design, consumers will be provided with more choices, purchase motivation can be driven, and customer loyalty can be enhanced.

The essay introduces the fictional archaeology artistic style and makes a case study of Daniel to analyze artistic features of this style. Innovative design based on the integration of different brands and artists is analyzed to promote brand-artist cooperation and realize transformation in brand innovation forms. On this basis, the paper further analyzes how Daniel cooperated with brands, how he integrated the artistic style of fictional archaeology with brand products then granted different styles and concepts, to comprehensively show possibilities and innovativeness of such artistic concepts in different products.

#### **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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