



At Dior, a change that makes history

Jonathan Anderson is named to design
both women's and men's collections

BY VANESSA FRIEDMAN

In a historic, if long-awaited, move, the luxury goods behemoth LVMH on Monday named Jonathan Anderson as creative director of Dior for women's wear, men's wear and couture, making him the first designer to unite all sides of the brand since Christian Dior himself.

Mr. Anderson is "one of the creative talents of his generation," said Bernard Arnault, chief executive of LVMH, in announcing the news — which also upends longstanding LVMH practice.

Since 2001, when LVMH transformed the Dior men's line from a license to an integral part of the house, it has been conventional wisdom that no one designer can manage the burdens and pressures of both men's and women's wear, creating 10 different collections a year for what is now estimated to be a \$9 billion brand.

Daring to rewrite those rules and concentrate all the power in the hands of a single designer is a risk for both brand and individual. But it also underscores the current precarious state of the industry, which has seen a broad slowdown in sales, thanks to global political and economic unrest and the general belief that a shake-up was needed.

Mr. Anderson's appointment qualifies. It is the final step in what has been one of the most drawn out succession dramas in modern fashion history, as well as another move in an unprecedented shifting of fashion's creative landscape, with 17 brands naming new designers in 2025 — four of them at LVMH alone.

Rumors about the Dior change began percolating through the industry last September and picked up steam in January when Kim Jones, then artistic director of Dior Men, resigned. Mr. Anderson was named to the men's post in April somewhat unceremoniously — Mr. Ar-

nault dropped the news during a general shareholder meeting, before it had been officially announced — but Maria Grazia Chiuri remained artistic director for women's wear. Last week she held a Dior Cruise show in Rome, and two days later the brand announced she was leaving. Today was simply the denouement.

"A change in creative leadership brings a fresh opportunity to reinvigorate the brand," Luca Solca, luxury analyst for Bernstein, wrote in a note after Ms. Chiuri left.

Mr. Anderson, 40, famously ambitious and charming, has been a part of LVMH since 2013, when he was named designer of Loewe, then a little known Spanish leather goods house that the group had bought in 1996. Over 11 years Mr. Anderson transformed Loewe from largely irrelevant to one of the hottest brands in fashion, with annual revenues estimated at \$2 billion.

He proved expert at balancing the kind of high-concept runway collections that create buzz and boggle the eye with commercial products. On the one hand, he would show dresses with hems shaped like cars or tailcoats microbeaded to resemble classic country house tapestries; on the other, he created accessories like the Loewe Puzzle bag that became classics, and internet-friendly stilettos with sunny side up eggs trapped under the point of the heel. Both provided catnip for celebrities seeking a bit of edge, with his Loewe circle including Josh O'Connor, Ayo Edebiri, Greta Lee and Daniel Craig, who used a controversial Loewe ad campaign to shed his James Bond stereotype.

As if in acknowledgment of his achievement, in 2024 Loewe was the chief sponsor of the Met Gala, and Mr. Anderson stood in the receiving line

next to Anna Wintour — who wore an embroidered Loewe tailcoat over her Loewe dress.

Still, Mr. Anderson showed signs of restlessness, partnering with the director Luca Guadagnino, another creator who bridges the worlds of art house and pop culture, to design the costumes for two of Mr. Guadagnino's films, "Challengers" and "Queer."

Despite such a seemingly bountiful creative output, uniting both sides of Dior will be a very public challenge. While Mr. Anderson had years to find his groove at Loewe (where he has been replaced by Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez of Proenza Schouler), he will not be granted the same grace period at Dior, which is both the cornerstone of the LVMH empire and responsible for an estimated 20 percent of the fashion and leather goods revenues of the group. Famously the pet brand of Mr. Arnault, it was publicly identified as an underperformer in the 2024 financial results by Cécile Cabanis, the LVMH chief financial officer.

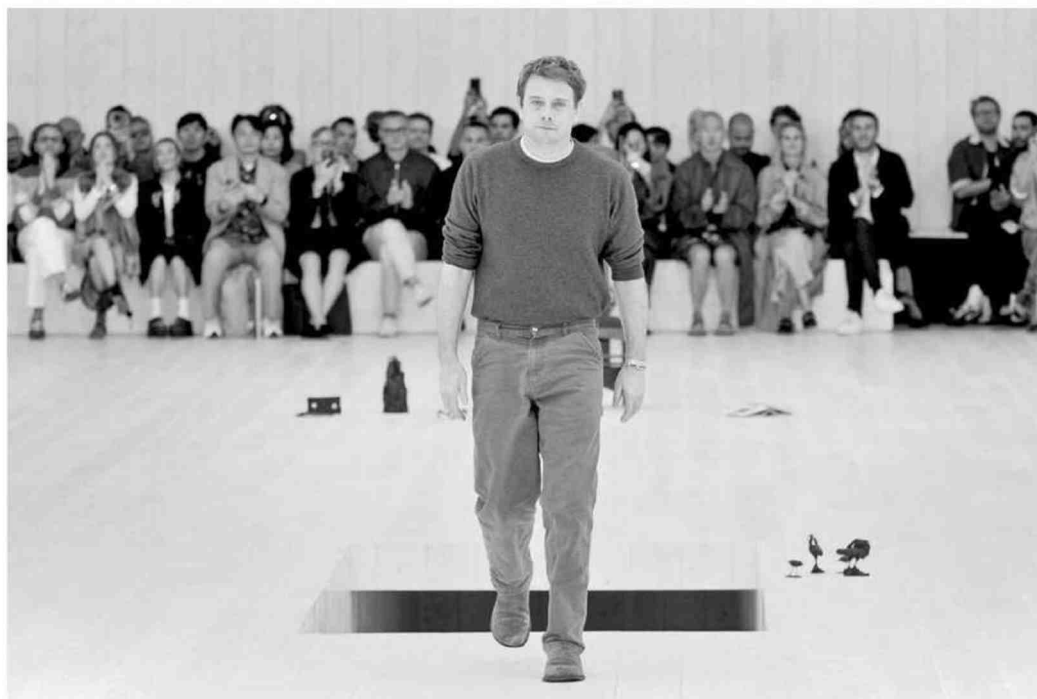
(The pressures of designing for Dior were blamed by the former artistic director John Galliano for the addictions that caused his own personal implosion in 2011, as well as his dismissal from LVMH — and he was in charge only of women's wear.)

Mr. Anderson will be expected to reverse that direction, starting with his first show, to be held in June during the men's wear season; his first women's wear show is to take place in October. He has put his namesake brand, JW Anderson, on hold, the better to focus on Dior. In the news release, he called getting the job "a great honor." Whether it is an anomaly or a paradigm shift remains to be seen.



Jonathan Anderson at a Loewe show in 2024. His designs for the brand, below, were marked by flights of incredible runway fancy, including trompe l'oeil tapestry, skirts that appeared to float and bodices resembling an anthurium.

DANIELE OBERRAUCH/GORUNWAY.COM, THIERRY CHESNOT/GETTY IMAGES



ANDREW PAIN/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

