

In Luxury Fashion, the United States Is a Pirate

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Luxury fashion is all about design. After design, come quality materials and workmanship, execution, branding, marketing and sales. But it starts and ends with the creative vision—the design—the protection of which is the lifeblood of the industry.

China, for years the epicenter of fakes and copies of fashion products—especially luxury products—is not alone. Because of a huge, unclosed gap in domestic intellectual property laws, the United States is itself a pirate nation.

Contrary to public perception, most designers are constantly on the edge of failure. First, they seek money to get their initial collections up and running. Then, they need money to get the goods made (factories live on this basis). Having passed these barriers, more established designers immediately start working on next season's collection and, they hope, have earned at least some money from their initial efforts to keep the lights on. It is often touch and go.

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