

Louis Vuitton Men's collection  
by Virgil Abloh Spring-Summer 2021  
'Message in a Bottle'  
Shanghai, August 2020.

Port of call: Shanghai, People's Republic of China.  
Date: 6th of August 2020.  
Cargo: Spring-Summer 2021.

"Where human feet have never trod, where human eyes have never seen  
I'll build a world of abstract dreams, and wait for you."  
—Sun Ra, *Strange Celestial Road*, 1979.



Close your eyes and go into hypnosis. Feel the ground and lift yourself up. Deepen the trance and open your eyes. Now, you're under. For the Louis Vuitton Spring-Summer 2021 voyage, Men's Artistic Director Virgil Abloh visualises a place where value looks different to the status quo. Proposing an alternative to a rational world view, the show slips into a figurative state of hypnosis where value is in the eye of the beholder. *Hypnovisualism*: the idea of encouraging unity and compassion through mesmerising displays of theatre. It is a parade for the mind that liberates you from preconceived notions of human and material worth, from questions of "high or low", "old or new" or "black or white". Here, truth is subjectivity.

In July 2020, when Louis Vuitton loaded its shipping containers at the founder's ancestral home in Asnières and sent them on a voyage to the East, a colourful crew of animated characters were hiding as stowaways. On the docks of Shanghai, Zoocom with friends break free and take corporeal form. The imagined playthings of the youngest living descendant of Louis Vuitton, the puppets integrate into garments and bags, animate them and jump through the screens of a digital audience. With them, an epic parade unfolds. A hypnotising

wonderland of inclusivity and unity, it imagines the world through the untainted vision of a child, not yet spoiled by societal programming.

On his voyage, Virgil Abloh invites the local humanities of each destination to walk his runways, and shares their stories with the world. Scored by the hypnotic dub of ska, entrancing imagery occupies land and sky: surreal inflatable figures hover over psychedelic motifs and two-tone illusions. New yet familiar silhouettes take form in a travelling collection that continuously evolves along the way. On this trip, ideas and materials are recycled and upcycled in a *maintanamorphosis* of novel expressions and contexts. The "old" is reinvigorated with value and presented alongside the new, equal in worth forevermore. The hypnosis can be real. "Let your imagination run riot." –Virgil Abloh.



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'Upcycling Ideology'  
Paris, August 2020.

Upcycled looks in the Spring-Summer 2021 collection are divided into four categories:

- A. Pieces upcycled by recycling material from overstock.
- B. Pieces upcycled from recycled ideas.
- C. Pieces upcycled through reiteration from the previous season.
- D. Pieces upcycled as part of the "Homework" initiative.



Upcycling creates the framework for the Louis Vuitton Spring-Summer 2021 collection. Presented through the childlike grammar of fantasy, Men's Artistic Director Virgil Abloh seeks to de-programme our minds from the images of obsolescence that lead to overload, overproduction and waste. Assuming a child's perspective, he imagines what the world looks like without inherited social preference. In a new reality where the value of material objects isn't classified by preconceived ideas of "rich"

and "poor", worth is defined by emotional value. Applying his fantasy to fashion, Virgil Abloh introduces the Upcycling Ideology for Louis Vuitton. From this point onwards, work can be recycled, upcycled, and even reissued in its original form.

Ideas – the very foundation of fashion – are no longer disposable, but part of an eternal cycle of inspiration, codes and values that continue to elucidate and expand our ethos. It's a creative pyramid where brainwaves and technical development begin at the top only to filter into every other aspect of the Louis Vuitton Men's realm. The philosophy calls for a fundamental decision: now, previous seasons no longer exist as individual entities, but unify into one canon. No season is an old season. In a fast-paced and fleeting time, repetition equals documentation: gestures made and lessons learned. The Spring-Summer 2021 collection is comprised of 30 looks

made from new material, 25 looks made from recycled material, and 25 looks from the previous collection, reshown and remembered.



In a series of upcycled garments and accessories, recycled overstock from the archives of Louis Vuitton and Virgil Abloh's collections is upcycled into new manifestations. Reconditioned pieces carry the *Upcycling Signal Logo*, a new LV emblem exercised to imbue the "old" with new value. Certain established silhouettes are duplicated in new materials in a strive to limit waste caused by development. A capsule collection within the collection features the "Homework" of the Louis Vuitton

menswear team during their time spent in domestic confinement. Using overstock material, Virgil Abloh set his studio a task of free creation, encouraging them to liberate their minds from any predisposed objectives. The results are individualistic and inclusive.