

# 16ARLINGTON

RESEARCH FOR INDEPENDANT PROJECT  
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Fig 1. SS25 Runway (2024)

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## BRAND INTRODUCTION

16 Arlington is a high fashion, luxury brand, based in London. They predominantly design womenswear collections, due to the interests of the founders; however the brand has branched into menswear and accessories in recent seasons.

Founded in 2018 by designers Marco Capaldo and Kikka Cavenati, the brand is a blend of the designers' shared Italian heritage and their years in London where the name 16 Arlington remembers their first flat together. Following Kikka's sad passing in 2021, the brand now lives to present her through its elegant and courageous designs in which the duo's minimalist and maximalist personalities protrude.

Often recognised for this delicate feminine look, 16 Arlington frequently favour embellishments such as crystals or feathers. Now running the brand alone, Capaldo has made a strong name for himself, not only in fashion but also in the world of the arts, where he has collaborated personally with a number of artists and galleries to curate refreshiwnng exhibitions.

Following on from their recent SS25 show, one that vogue titled as 'The sexiest LFW yet' (Newbold. A, 2024), 16 Arlington are surging to be one most loved young luxury brands.



Fig 2. SS25 Runway (2024)





Fig 3. AW24 Runway (2024)

BRAND MESSAGING

Underpinned by its founders’ Italian heritage, at its heart is a captivating tension between the subversive and the sensual, precision and provocation.

-  
Today, the brand is led by Capaldo in honour of Cavenati, whose irrepressible energy can be felt in every atom of the 16Arlington universe.

(16 Arlington, 2024)

BRAND VALUES

Femininity

Self-expression

Sensuality

Power

Glamour

## BRAND HISTORY

2015: The duo graduated from Italian fashion school Istituto Maragoni in London as a couple in both life and work.

Rented a flat post-graduation, number 16 on Arlington Street, where they began designing.

Word of mouth begun initiating the brand as friends used to borrow pieces for nights out.

2017: The brand was formally founded in September with help of Cavenati's father, following the pair being denied the chance to collaborate on their final graduate collections.

2018: 16 Arlington was officially launched.

In its first year the brand got picked up by global stockists such as Selfridges in the UK, Penelope in Italy and Bergdorf Goodman in New York, plus many more.

2019: First debut at London Fashion Week.

2020: Launched a 6-piece bag capsule with Net-a-Porter in January.

2021: The couple were happily engaged and living in a new home with their business was growing, despite post lockdown factors.

Kikka sadly passed away from a short illness and Marco attempted to find a new meaning in the legacy they had created.

Creation of AW22 was light and airy, inspired by the memories of Kikka and what she would have wanted.

2022: AW23 incorporated Menswear and broadened the accessories line.

2024: Capaldo collaborated with art gallery Almine Rech to curate an exhibition that presents a multitude of artists work.

The brand is thriving, has dressed a vast amount of celebrities and is known as some stockists' top sellers to date.



Fig 4. Lena Dunham Pays Tribute To 16 Arlington Designer Kikka Cavenati (2021)





## ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

Marco Capaldo is both the creative director and co-founder, along with his late fiancé Kikka Cavenati, for 16 Arlington. The brand's foundations were built from the pairs close relationship and following Cavenati's sad passing in 2021, Capaldo's continued effort to reflect her in the brand is still evident today.

Both designers had an Italian heritage, however Capaldo was raised in Britain so the brand presents a duality of his more minimal London style and Kikka's Italian flamboyancy. In an interview with ELLE, Capaldo stated that he is 'building on something we started together, and continuing a legacy that I began with someone I loved.' (ELLE,2024). Today Capaldo is a well-known face in the fashion and arts world, frequently attending industry events as well as holding a golden circle of friends including people such as Simone Ashley, Alexa Chung and Alva Claire. He is certainly a strong figure head for the brand and his involvement in the arts world adds a further creative depth to the brand's current image.

Within 16 Arlington's further infrastructure it is clear the love and understanding for women, which both cofounders bonded on in their early days, is reflected throughout the team. Capaldo prides himself on the majority of his team of 20 full time staff being female. A key lead figure in this team is CEO/Managing Director Fatima Geffrin, who supports and directs Capaldo in most of his work. Having a strong female lead such as Geffin ensures that the brand remains connected with its focus of female empowerment. Other key names in the team are: Bliss Louth-Horwell in PR and Marketing, Vinnie R in Atelier and April Holyome in Production.

The physical space of the brand is also important to recognise, where the entire team functions under one roof in a Shoreditch studio. Everyone from the atelier to the CEO works in this space, encouraging the team to form a tight knit community and have genuine support for each other. This is crucial to a successful brand as in order for the designs and brand image to be appreciated externally, it requires a fluid and functional community within. 16 Arlington's continued success with events such as London Fashion Week is certainly a result of the brand's close organisation and female led power.

The brand's representation doesn't just come from this studio, however. Whilst a large amount of the brand's PR takes place in-house, 16 Arlington are also represented by PR agency A.I. A.I. are a relatively well known London based agency who also have clients such as LOEWE, ALAIA, S.S Daley and Zara (AIPR, 2024). This representation is key for the brand as it ensures the reach they gain isn't only from the team in the studio but also a second team with further connections adapts this. Having a combination of both in house and agency PR allows for the brand to capture an original brand aligned representation whilst reaching people in the industry they alone may not have direct contact with.



Fig 6. Party people: the couple behind London's coolest eveningwear label 16Arlington (2020)



Fig 7. AW24 Runway (2024)

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

16 Arlington are an independently owned brand with very few sources on their financial records. This is most likely due to the age of the brand being only 6 years old. However a key financial point for the brand was winning the British Fashion Council/ Vogue Designer fashion fund in 2023. 'Receiving a £150,000 cash prize and business mentoring' (O'Connor, 2023) the brand solidified its emergence into the luxury fashion world. Edward Enninfu OBE, British Vogue editor-in-chief at the time, awarded the fund for 'Marco and Federica's unwavering commitment to push boundaries and challenge conventions' with their womenswear designs (O'Connor, 2023). Whilst the brand is yet to receive more fundings or financial investment, having the BFC award on their record will certainly attract greater opportunities as well as enable the brand to excel further in their work.



## PRODUCT OFFERING

16 Arlington's product offering has slightly differed throughout the years, with a predominant focus on womenswear which is released each season. They also produced the 'Scale Sequin Edit' which is available on their website and has been worn by a variety of celebrities. The brand only recently ventured into menswear for AW23, also available for purchase on their website.

In an interview with GQ, Capaldo sheds light on how menswear was 'always something floating' in the 16 Arlington 'universe' and that whilst womenswear was directed so much by Kikka, menswear was 'much more a reflection of me' (Capaldo, 2023). This collection was received incredibly well by consumers and attracted an entire new audience with men excited to have a connection to the brand. The reason as to why menswear only appeared for the one season is unclear however and is a question I asked in my email interview with the CEO of 16 Arlington (See appendix 3B). Unfortunately, I am yet to get a response from this interview, however having a one off menswear collection makes it more special and unique to the brand.

Additionally, it's interesting to note that some things showcased on their runway aren't available for purchase on their website. Such things include their accessories and shoes, which is unusual considering the positive addition to the looks they made. The 'Kikka Clutch' is a bag which is certainly unique to the brand and is designed to reflect how people 'clutch' onto the memories of her. If the brand was to offer purchasable accessories or footwear such as this, many more opportunities in regards to the consumer would arise for the brand.

Results from my consumer survey told me that 50% of those asked do have specific 16 Arlington garments on their wish list (See appendix 1K), which reflects the consumers certain interest in buying into the brand. If the brand was therefore to expand its product offering, this consumer interest would only increase.



Fig 8. 16 Arlington Website Products (2024)



Fig 9. SS25 Runway (2024)

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

### Inclusivity and Diversity

Due to the brand's small size, the array of sources and areas in which they may implement methods of strong CSR are few. However, looking at the brand's general image and use of models and celebrity dressing is an area where inclusivity and diversity can be explored.

It is clear that 16 Arlington are somewhat making a conscious effort to consider inclusivity and diversity when it comes to both their commercial and runway models. Castings present a vast range of models where a variety of skin colours, ethnicities and genders are present. This is crucial for a healthy brand image as well as maintaining brand values such as self-expression.

Unfortunately, the range of body types isn't so well considered and both their website and runway shows present a 'token few' plus size models. This isn't just particular to 16 Arlington; Vogue Business SS25 report has shared how 'there was very limited progress in size inclusivity' (Vogue Business, 2024) for the most recent season - SS25.

This report asks you to consider why it is that progress is still very limited and brands still fail on being fully inclusive. This being said, as a small brand, 16 Arlington is evidently attempting to make decisions considering inclusivity and diversity that they will hopefully continue to practice further.



## Sustainability

Again, due to 16 Arlington's size, it is difficult to preach sustainability. However, there are certainly connections to be drawn between brand size and a smaller negative environmental impact. During my internship with them it was evident their production scale is small, with the brand primarily focusing on using made to measure capabilities when dressing celebrities. This is as well as the use of archive samples for press requests and shoots. From my experience with the brand, the sample archives were vast and well curated in order to make press send outs and VIP dressing easier. Prioritising these already-made samples and made to measure abilities shows the brand is working to be sustainably considerate.

However, I did also discover that their website produce is made in factories outside the UK, though details on this were hard to find. Whilst this element of practise won't be sustainable, they do make a conscious effort not to over produce. This was clear to me in my time at the brand, where the sales team would only order a certain amount of the popular sizes for each garment once they had become out of stock on the website.



Fig 10. Report On New Gen Materials (2024)





Whilst this method may mean a few lost sales, particularly whilst restock takes place, it does ensure the brand isn't over producing and discarding excess garments into landfills. The high price point of the brand can also be an indication of sustainable practice as better quality garments take longer to make with better and more expensive materials. This is common across the luxury sector though, so it isn't full proof of sustainable practice.

It is clear that 16 Arlington overall show little effort on presenting a strong CSR image. There are no sources that publish the statistics of their work, nor any clear action and desire to run in a fairly sustainable way. This is something which the brand should develop in order for them to later not fall short in a crisis with regards to CSR.

Whilst the brand is small and still relatively young, having little work on sustainability or social justice is not received well by most modern-day consumers. This lack of transparency can be altered by the brand if they choose to commit to presenting their efforts in sustainable practice, highlighting things such as their material origins, carbon footprint and the approach to human rights in their factories.



## SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT

16 Arlington's social media presence is relatively small in relation to their success in the industry, as well as in comparison to other luxury brands of a similar standing. The brand digitally operates on two main platforms: Instagram and their brand website. On other platforms such as TikTok their existence is minimal, with 80 followers and 2 posts.

This is surprising considering the majority of luxury fashion brands and brands in general are using TikTok to reach a wider audience and push their work in a different way.

Instagram is the brand's main social media with @16arlington having 169K followers, posting 4-5 times a week and story posts every 2-3 days. Despite this relatively frequent activity, the account has a 0.01% engagement rate with posts receiving 5 comments on average. As well as this, their like count is turned off which may suggest they have no interest in consumers discovering what other consumers like or are interested in. Whilst turning this feature off isn't uncommon for brands in the modern world of social media, the lack of transparency can be confusing when wanting to analyse the level of interaction the brand has with its online audience.

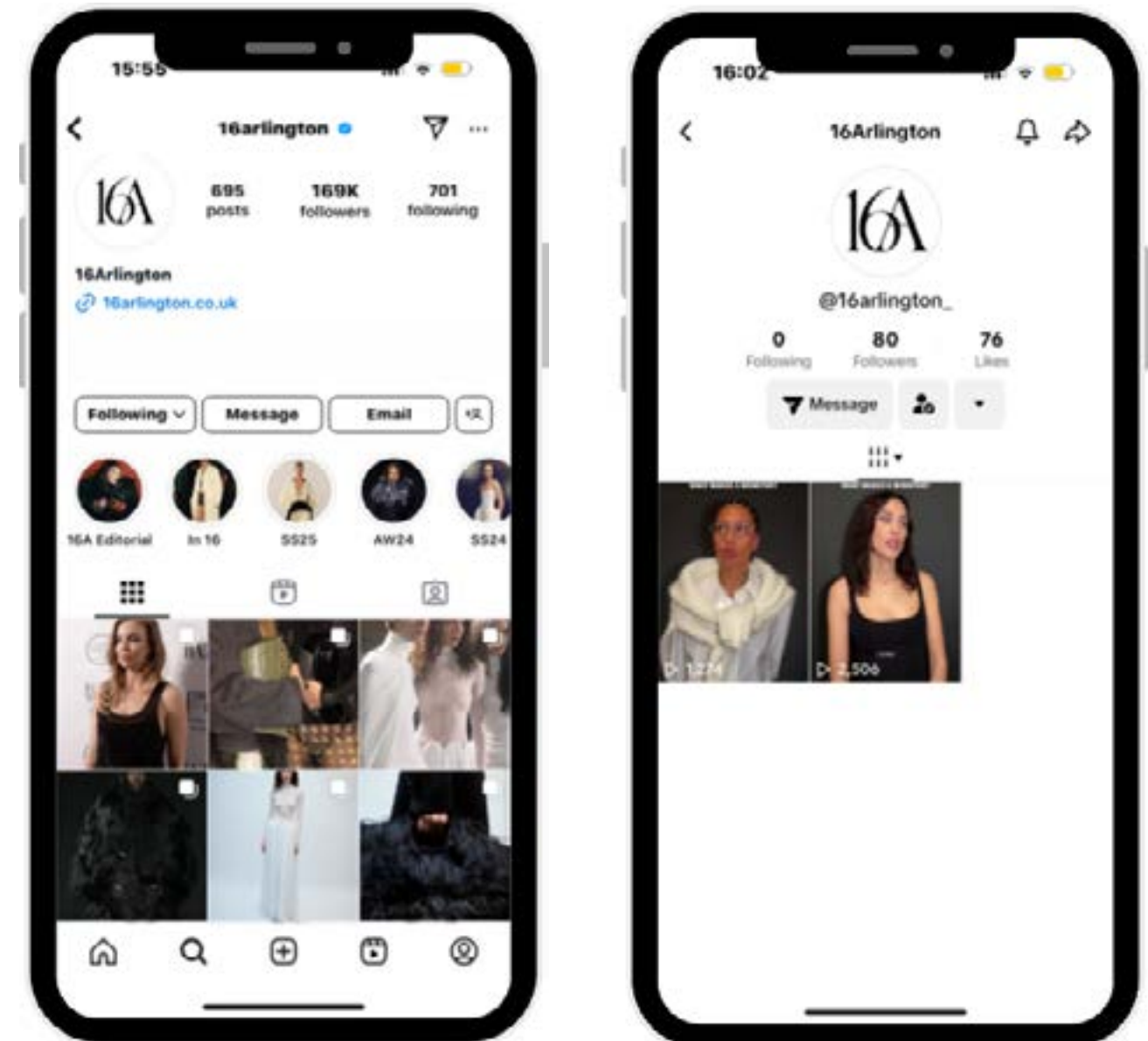
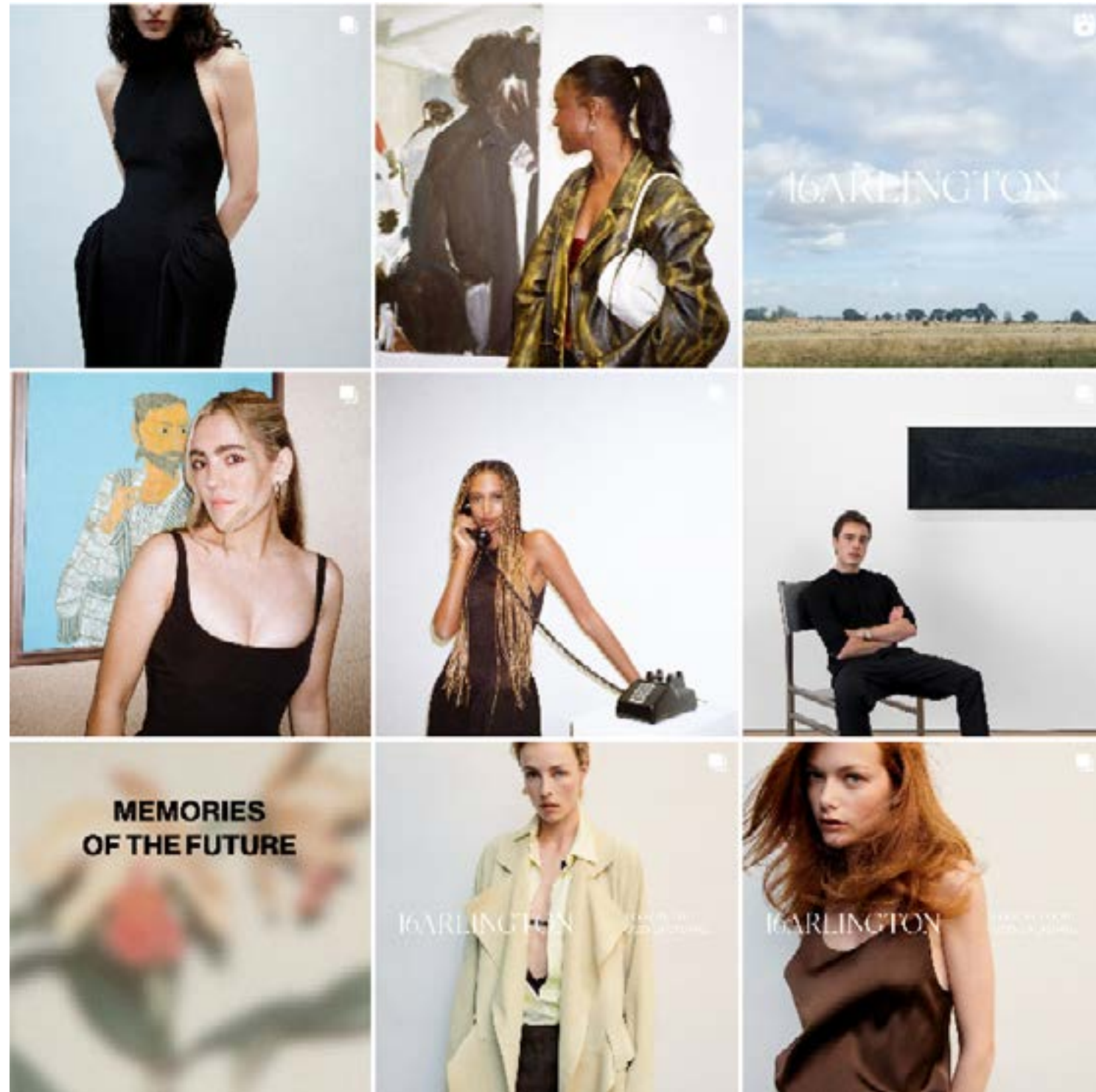


Fig 12. 16 Arlington Social Media (2024)



## Instagram

16 Arlington's brand image is very clearly reflected across their Instagram page. Whilst their account isn't notably innovative, the strategy implemented ensures that there is a seamless transition between their designs, website and social media presence.

Their current method consists of mostly posting image carousels 4-5 times a week and a video reel every few weeks. The majority of these posts show 16 Arlington products from the relevant season, shot against a blue/white background, usually containing a link to the website in order to make the consumers online shopping experience seamless. Post captions are kept in line with their sleek look where it only is used for product detail listing and sometimes adding #16Arlington in an attempt to boost the posts reach.

Their story posts follow the same aesthetic and strategy which are then organised into season coordinated highlights. This is only visible for the last three seasons however, suggesting stories and highlights is a relatively new strategy for them. To conclude these findings, from those interviewed in my consumer questionnaire some consumers have discovered 16 Arlington through Instagram and felt that the account epitomises the brand image and the values that they like in the brand. (See appendix 1J).

Fig 13. 16 Arlington Instagram Feed (2024)



# DIGITAL PLATFORM AUDIT

Throughout their website, the sleek and elegant look of 16 Arlington is clearly reflected with its neutral aesthetic and attention to details such as type face and organisation . The home page is laid out in a tile-like format which enables consumers to find specific collections faster. For example, the season relevant at the time e.g. AW24 will be linked in one of the tile images, which customers can be fast tracked to in one click.

Scrolling to the bottom of this homepage there are also features such as ‘contact us’, a link to their Instagram, terms and conditions and other policies. From this research it is clear that in order to read the brands ‘About Us’ section, it requires a separate google search and cannot be found simply through the website. This is something which the brand could look at changing as consumers are more inclined to connect with a brand if they present a welcoming environment.

The brand does also offer a newsletter linked at the bottom of the homepage, encouraging customers to subscribe with a reward for 10% off their first shop. The newsletter notifies customers on recent brand activity, new collections and launches as well as anything else that the brand feels relevant.

Other sections of the website include: New In, Womenswear, Menswear and SS25 Runway shots. It is evident the majority of sections in the website are shopping pages and there is no information on anything else the brand is doing or areas for customers to engage with in an exciting way. Bringing in features like videos of their runways or any information about wider events the brand has done will boost customers engagement with the brand online.

Overall, 16 Arlington’s website visually presents the brand in a seamless way that connects to their overall brand image. However in terms of usability and functions, it has potential for development. For example, consumers like to see transparency in brands so a page on their sustainability efforts as well as their stance on human rights and animal welfare would be insightful. As well as this, making the ‘About Us’ section easily accessible will enable consumers to engage with the brands identity and provoke a more genuine interest. Finally features such as videos or interactive elements that promote other areas of work by the brand will again draw in a wider engagement from consumers.

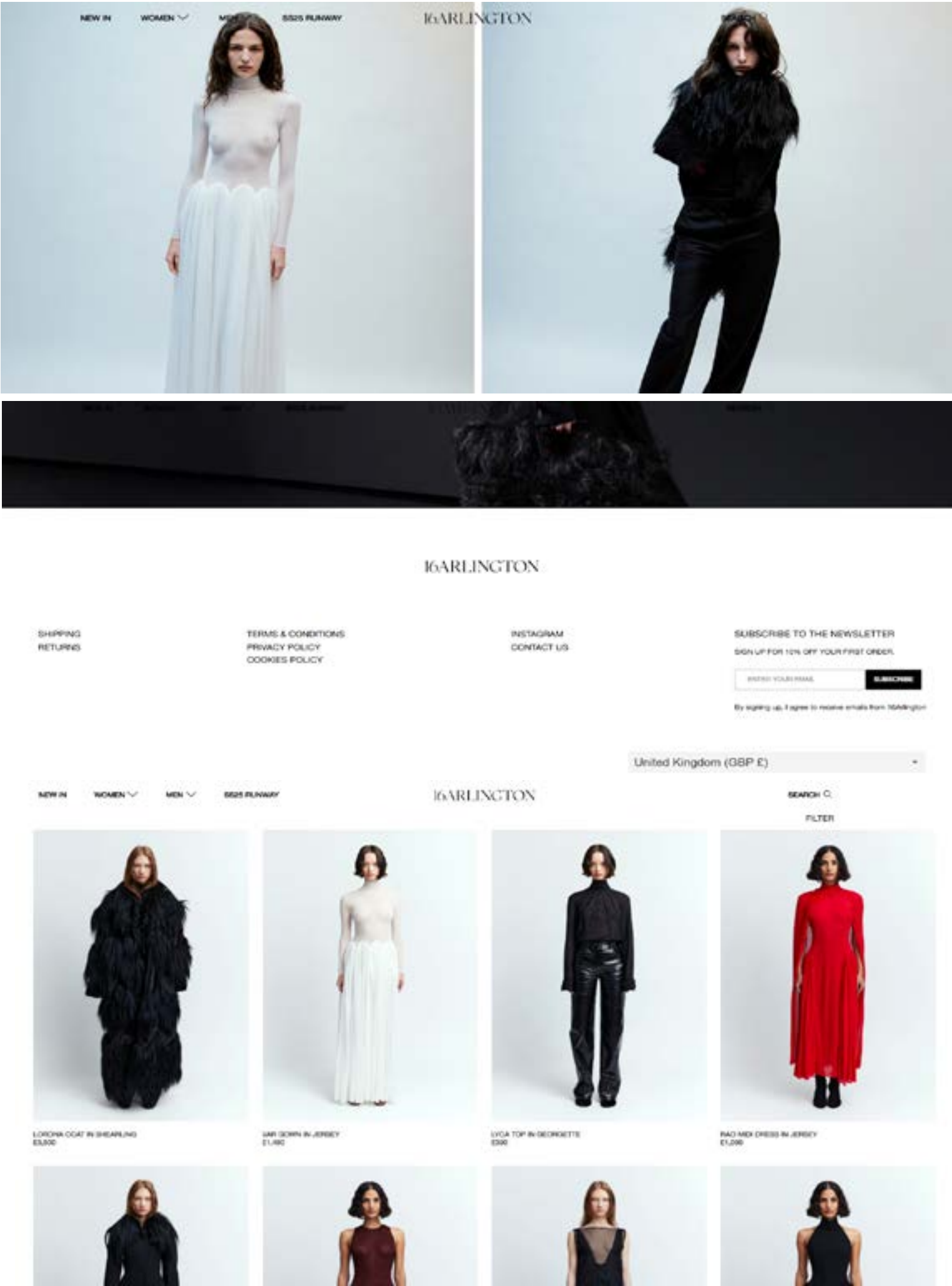


Fig 14. 16 Arlington Website (2024)



Fig 15. It's The Sexiest LFW Yet (2024)



Fig 16. The Show Goes On (2024)

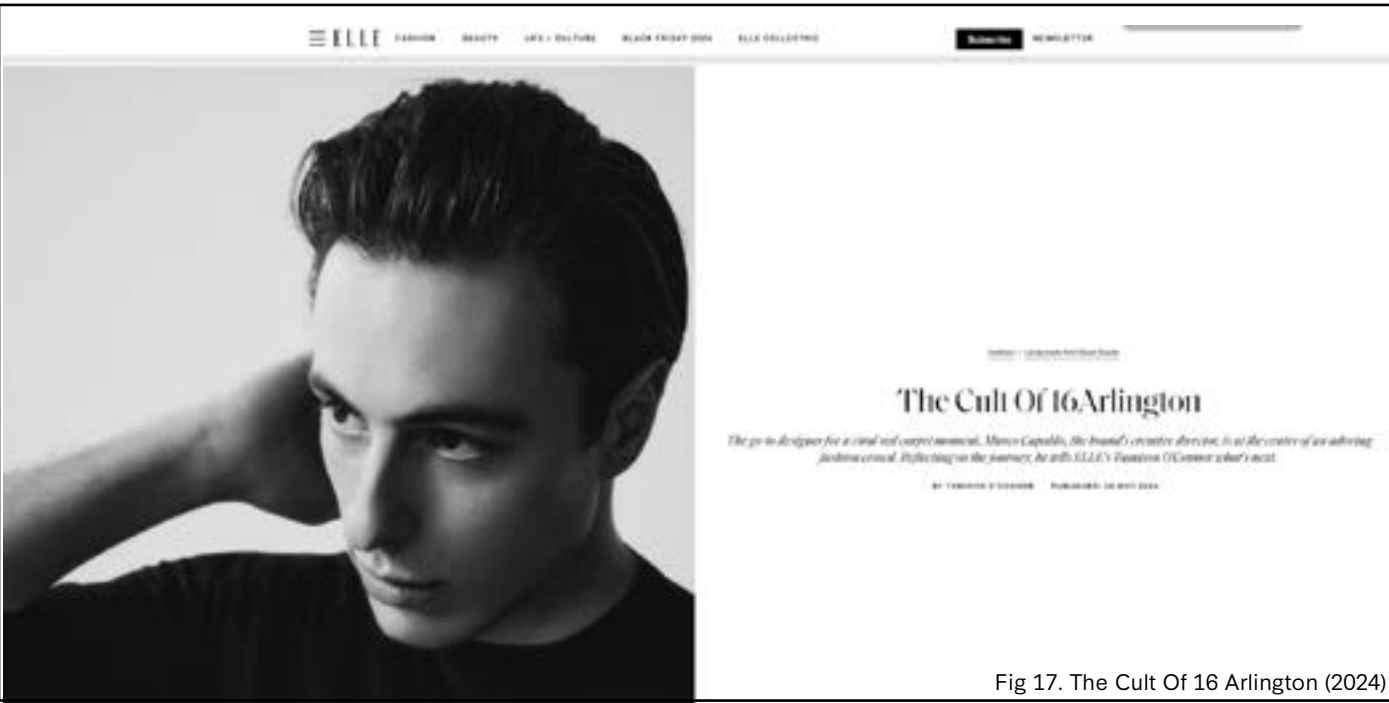


Fig 17. The Cult Of 16 Arlington (2024)

## MEDIA COVERAGE

The fondness and love that people have for 16 Arlington, evident across my research file, is certainly reflected across the media coverage the brand receives. Whilst the coverage may not be extensive in a way that some luxury brands receive, taking into consideration the brand's age in comparison to their success shows that their media coverage is well earned.

The majority of coverage which the brand receives is from publications such as British Vogue, Harpers Bazar, Elle and British GQ. These publications are targeted for the millennial and Gen Z demographic, especially those with an interest in fashion. The coverage on 16 Arlington usually show reviews or interviews and direct quotes with creative director Marco. This is all positive coverage with titles such as 'It's The Sexiest LFW Yet According To 16 Arlington' (Newbold, 2024) and '16 Arlington's Marco Capaldo On Turning Art Curator For Frieze' (Hawkins, 2024). A large portion of their older coverage is sadly tributes to late co-founder Kikka; this is certainly a crucial part of the brand to recognise throughout this research file. The vast number of articles reflecting on Kikkas part in the brand and her life confirms the impact her death had on the brand as well as within the fashion industry.

The coverage received is therefore good for the brand, in terms of growing consumer awareness as well as grafting a place amongst competitors of similar levels. In time, if the brand continues to grow, this coverage will certainly expand and hopefully cover a slight wider variety of brand related topics. If this happens it will enable a wider audience reach and solidify 16 Arlington as an essential luxury brand.



## CAMPAIGNS

16 Arlington are very careful to maintain their elegant brand image throughout their campaigns, where they present the classy woman with this 'go get' attitude that the brand strives to encourage. All of their campaign work is presented as lookbooks which are designed to be released before every season is dropped on the website. It is evident that Capaldo has made a conscious effort to work with models and photographers that best showcase the 16 Arlington look. However, branching out into wider channels such as collaborating with artists, athletes and other people of influence would elevate the brand and lean into a key trend which is happening more frequently across the luxury sector.



Fig 18. 16 Arlington AW22 Campaign (2022)

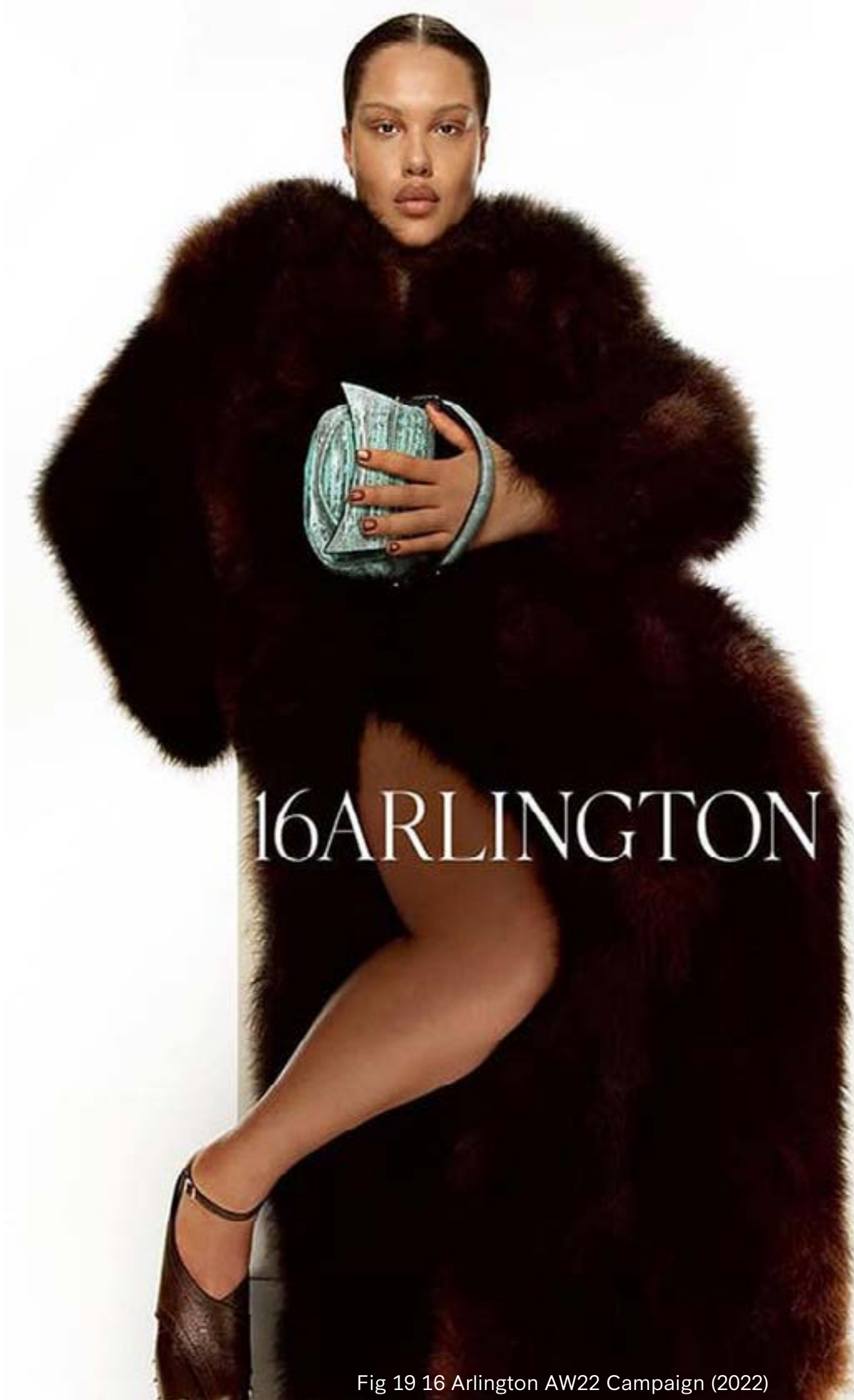


Fig 19 16 Arlington AW22 Campaign (2022)

## Lookbooks

The places to find 16 Arlington's lookbook campaigns are sparse, and throughout my research the latest findable lookbook was released for AW23. It is unclear the reason behind this as it seemed the lookbooks were incredibly successful in epitomising the brand and presenting the garments in a way to interest the consumers. The images are crisp and captured in a way that stylishly and tastefully presents the designs. The use of plain backgrounds, predominantly white, showcases the styling-focus of the shoots and ensures the presentation is in line with the brand image.

One of their most significant campaign lookbooks was the AW22 titled 'Tears' where Capaldo worked with photographer Hugo Comte and frequent 16 Arlington collaborator Georgia Pendlebury (Seward, 2022). This campaign was a tribute to late co-founder Kikka and used models such as Alva Claire to 'convey the foundations of freedom, self-conviction and power upon which Marco and Kikka built their brand' (Seward, 2022).

## VIP dressing

It is clear throughout my research findings that 16 Arlington have dressed many VIPs from well-known actors to small emerging artists. There are a few regular faces in 16 Arlington designs such as Alva Claire, Simone Ashley, Alexa Chung and Jodie Comer. It is well publicised that Capaldo has personal friendships with these people; this aids the brand's image as it suggests that they are people focused and thoughtful about who they dress.

Whilst it is certainly a positive that the brand regularly dresses VIPs such as the above, they could look at solidifying more permanent dressings or collaborate with one of these VIP's much like many other luxury brands are doing. By taking this course of action the brand would reach a wider audience through a range of VIPs, as well as potentially gaining an increased amount of media coverage.



## Collaborations

Whilst 16 Arlington is yet to collaborate with other brands or celebrities, Capaldo has worked on art curation in addition to running his brand. Some of his most prominent work is his recent collaboration with art gallery Almine Rech, where he curated his first gallery show 'Memories Of The Future'. This exhibition explores the connection between the past and the future. 14 artists, most of whom are known as quite close friends of Capaldo, were asked to respond to this title for this year's Frieze London show (Uwagba, 2024).

Having an exhibition at Frieze's No.9 Cork Street, their permanent gallery space, is a major achievement, being that 'Frieze is the world's leading platform for modern and contemporary art' (Frieze, 2024). This is a signature point for Capaldo's career as it solidifies his connection to the art world and how he blends the border between his love for fashion and art.

One of the artists who Capaldo showcased in 'Memories Of The Future', Jesse Pollock, was previously commissioned to produce large aluminium flower sculptures and custom jewellery for the SS25 show. Pollock crafts and welds all his work in cargo containers down in Kent where he finishes off his pieces with a bite mark imprint. When 16 Arlington produced a short interview and video for their Instagram with Pollock, he explained he got the idea when thinking 'What's the most grotesque thing you could do to a human? And I thought biting' (Pollock, 2024).

Having this reflective but warped aluminium finish on his work, allows for people to glance into a morphed concept of reality. This complements the entire concept of fashion and worked well on the runway as fashion is subjective and everyone will see something differently. Pollock's 'Impressive, looming art pieces' (Dazed Digital, 2024) were therefore a huge success in adding a final aspect to Capaldo's show, suggesting 16 Arlington should focus on collaborations more frequently in order to attain a greater audience reach.



Fig 20. 16 Arlington Instagram Video (2024)



## RETAIL OVERVIEW

Currently 16 Arlington has no retail space of their own, however they can be found in a large number of stockists both online and in their selected stockists. Major stockists include Harvey Nichols, Selfridges and Harrods as well as Flannels and Net-a-Porter. Being stocked in these retailers certainly allows for a variety of consumers to engage with the brand. This is a positive for any brand using stockists as there is a higher chance for people to gain an interest in the brand by chance. It also means that the widest possible reach of buyers is achieved.

However, not having brick and mortar stores of their own does create its own setbacks as people won't be able to physically engage with entire collections or older pieces. Having their own store would mean that consumers would be taken through a 16 Arlington experience and be able to engage with the brand in a closer proximity. It is unclear through my research into this why the brand has no stores; however, again the young age of the brand suggests that perhaps they don't have the financial funding for it yet. Expanding into their own stores would certainly be something to look into for the future, as it would bring consumer experience to a new level and increase sales and opportunities for 16 Arlington.



## Primary Research: Harvey Nichols

In order to gauge the success and the level of consumer interaction 16 Arlington receive within their chosen stockists, I carried out some primary research with a store visit to Harvey Nichols. (See appendix 4). I chose to visit Harvey Nichols as they are one of 16 Arlington's main stockists, with the majority of items also on their website. Situated on the first floor, which is usually used for younger but established brands, seemed a certain positive. However, there was only one rail of 16 Arlington garments and one mannequin for styling. In comparison to many other brands who had two or more rails. I thought this unusual and unfortunately when I asked the staff they couldn't give me a certain answer as to why this was the case.

It is also important to consider the brands they were stocked alongside, which were: Simone Rocha, Isabel Marant and Coperni. All of these brands are very well established and widely known, which suggests 16 Arlington have some strong competitors with themselves being classed in this band. I would argue this is a positive thing for them as people gravitate towards brands of a similar aesthetic or status, so within Harvey Nichols 16 Arlington couldn't be placed any better.

Separately to my store visit, I managed to pick up a shift at Harvey Nichols through an agency and by chance was allocated a section near 16 Arlington. Over the course of the day I observed a mere 3-4 people engaging with the brand, with only one going to try on and continue through to purchase. There could be multiple factors to this, one being that 16 Arlington themselves never focus on the fact that consumers have the ability to find them in stockists and rather choose to promote their website for sales. Linking to my consumer survey, it was clear that most consumers found out about 16 Arlington on Instagram/social media and that age demographic are unlikely to visit department stores such as Harvey Nichols. (See Appendix 1J).

Overall, my store visit has shown me that 16 Arlington have a lot of potential growth in the retail sector. Having their own store could be much more brand aligned and would appeal to a wider variety of consumers, giving them greater accessibility for purchases. This being said, 16 Arlington are very impressive in regards to how many significant stockists they are working with and this is something which should be continued as it adds to the luxury status.



Fig 22. 16 Arlington in Harvey Nichols (2024)





### Primary Research: Sample Sale

To further my primary research for retail analysis, I chose to visit a sample sale that the brand was holding at the Music Room just off Bond Street (See appendix 5). By attending this I could get a better understanding of details around consumers as well as if anything about the sale stood out. The entire 20 minutes of my visit, the sale had a constant but slow stream of people, with a lot of them trying on.

I noticed this was very different to my observations at Harvey Nichols. All consumers were women roughly between 25-40, despite some of the menswear available. I went with the intention of possibly getting a few interviews with the staff; however the people working had no connection to the brand which led me to take my interview via email. Altogether visiting the sample sale embellished my understanding of consumer engagement so far. Taking into consideration it was a sale, so not full price, suggests perhaps the people with desire to buy the brand can't - or are reluctant to - due to the high price point. This issue can be resolved in a number of ways, drawing back to the concept of collaboration where 16 Arlington could collaborate with a lower price point brand. Again, this is another way for them to expand consumer engagement and sales, with the potential of also gaining retail space if the collaborator has a store.



## CURRENT CONSUMER

To gather information on 16 Arlington's current consumer I conducted a variety of primary and secondary research. It was important to engage specifically with brand consumers which led me to creating a survey sent through Instagram. This survey aimed to initially identify the current consumer as well as learn more about their brand awareness, consumer habits and general lifestyle. (See appendix 1).

Whilst there was no question on gender, 100% of the consumers who responded on Instagram were female. This didn't come as a surprise considering 16 Arlington's rare release of menswear.

50% of consumers fell into the ages of 18-24, 33.3% in the 25-30 bracket with the remaining 16.7% between 31-52. The average consumer is therefore from the millennial demographic, which again was no surprise considering this is the age people potentially begin to afford luxury. This is standard across the luxury sector where the luxury consumer market is 30-40% millennials (Luxonomy, 2024).

The hobbies of these consumers consisted of things like fashion, make-up, travel and reading. Some more niche responses told of interests such as ballet and content creating. From these responses it is clear that the general consumer is a creative or has creative interests with potentially a more luxurious lifestyle. This was also reflected in the question relating to the consumers ideal weekend where brunch with friends, partying in the city and long walks were echoed a number of times.





Fig 25. Simone Ashley in 16 Arlington (2024)

In relation to job/occupation there was a considerable mix, from CEO of luxury brand management to train attendant. Whilst there is a wide variety in jobs, they all reported a love for fashion or arts, some even with creative side hustles such as modelling.

A final important factor from the questionnaire is the consumers social media presence. When asked for their most used platform, 50% of consumers said Instagram where some even originally discovered 16 Arlington. We can draw the conclusion therefore that the 16 Arlington consumer follows the brand on Instagram and engages predominantly with the brand on that platform.

Overall, the key takeaway from this consumer questionnaire is that the main consumer of 16 Arlington is a female between 25-30 who either works or has an interest in fashion. She usually is present on social media where she discovered the brand and is aware of industry trends. Living a luxurious lifestyle in her spare time, the attitude of these consumers is exactly who 16 Arlington target with their fun, sexy and confidence boosting garments. In an interview with Grazia, Capaldo talks of 16 Arlington and how its "all about celebrating women" (Capaldo, 2022) and these consumers are certainly the women who fit perfectly into this aim.



CURRENT CONSUMER  
MOODBOARD



Fig 26. Consumer moodboard (2024)



## COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

### Self-Portrait

Through my research, I have identified Self-Portrait as a direct competitor of 16 Arlington due to their similar brand image. There can be connections drawn between the brand's product offering, working in a similar style with a fondness of embellishments and flattering the female silhouette.

It is important to note however that there is a gap in the price point of both brands, with the average dress at 16 Arlington valued at £1000 GBP (16 Arlington, 2024) in comparison to Self-Portrait where a dress is average £500 GBP (Self-Portrait, 2024). Despite this, both brands can be found in the same stockists such as Selfridges, Harrods and Harvey Nichols. Having these lower price points for a similar style will appeal more to the majority of consumers, positioning Self-Portrait as a direct competitor.

An additional factor that positions Self-Portrait as a direct competitor is their many successful collaborations. For example, they have begun a new residency programme which enables creatives a new space to design and create a one-off collection for the brand. Vogue Business recently published that Self-Portrait have 'tapped Christopher Kane as its first guest' (Shoaib, 2024), which will certainly keep their 1.5M Instagram followers engaged. Introducing new designers to a brand encourages a greater amount of media coverage and could be seen as a threat for 16 Arlington.

Another key event Self-Portrait partake in is their annual summer party with Vogue. Boasting a guest list of stars from every discipline, the party is an annual date in the fashion calendar and is a key point to the brands growing success. Whilst 16 Arlington are yet to do something so high profile, they would certainly resonate with something similar as this party lifestyle is what the brand engages with. In comparison to 16 Arlington, Self-Portrait are a decent step ahead on their collaborative path; if 16 Arlington ventured into such things they would discover many more brand opportunities.



Fig 27. Self-Portrait Instagram Post (2024)





## Simone Rocha

Simone Rocha can be categorised as an indirect competitor of 16 Arlington due to their similar price point, as well also being a 2010's founded luxury brand. The product offering of the brand couldn't be more different, however; Rocha's style hints historical fashion with a sense of femininity/masculinity.

Whilst there is no competition for 16 Arlington in terms of target audience, Simone Rocha's fast moving success with collaborations may pose threats. With a vast number of high profile collaborations such as Jean Paul Gaultier, H&M and most recently Crocs, Rocha quickly gained a place as a relatively well known luxury brand. This suggests that 16 Arlington's lack of expansive work may be a reason for their struggles on social media and gaining wider media coverage. By engaging with audiences that may not usually be reached by Simone Rocha alone, collaborations aid this development of audience brand awareness which 16 Arlington sometimes lack.

During my store visit to Harvey Nichols, Rocha was situated just across the aisle from 16 Arlington, suggesting that the brand could be a potential threat as it seemed they attracted more consumer interaction. This may be due to Simone Rocha's bigger profile and therefore people gravitate towards it more in stores, in comparison to 16 Arlington. Therefore, Simone Rocha can be seen as an indirect competitor of 16 Arlington as, whilst the brands have a very different aesthetic, they attract a similar demographic of buyer with their price point and locations. When placed within the same space in stockists this could therefore become competitive.

## Khaite

Khaite is an American luxury brand which I have pinpointed as 16 Arlington's target competitor, founded two years earlier in 2016. Despite the evident difference of Khaite being New York based and 16 Arlington in London, their methods of work and success are something which 16 Arlington can be inspired by.

With a similar target audience and product offering that showcases elegant and feminine designs, Khaite have achieved a number of successful and diverse collaborations. 16 Arlington should look at these collaborations in order to gain an idea of which brands they could collaborate with, considering Khaite has a similar brand image. Such collaborations consist of: Bonpoint, Elhanti and Oliver Peoples.

Evidently, Khaite has indulged in a wide variety of sectors, showing the brands willingness to adapt and be innovative, something that poses threat to 16 Arlington if they don't start moving forward like this. Moreover, these collaborations have earned Khaite a wide variety of strong media coverage, such as their work 'Defining American Luxury' (Moore, 2024) in WWD. This positions them as a target competitor for 16 Arlington with this variety of media coverage still needing to be achieved.

Khaite having their own stores in New York is another key component to their success, giving consumers a brand aligned shopping experience. Whilst Khaite have a much higher price point - their average dress is valued \$10,000 - £7,000 (Khaite, 2024) - their continued consumer interaction with their stores is something that enables this greater success. This poses competition for 16 Arlington as they currently don't have this capability and is something they could consider in order to achieve a higher status in the luxury sector.



Fig 29. Khaite Website Home Page (2024)





Fig 30. SS25 Runway (2024)

## SECTOR ANALYSIS

The luxury fashion sector has forever been one which contains brands that most people desire yet few can't afford to buy into, considering the high price tag.

The concept of luxury fashion can be traced back for centuries where luxury garments were only made for people such as royalty or the aristocracy. Over many years the idea of luxury has evolved and now, in the 21st century, most people can recognise a range of popular luxury brands.

The Vogue Business Index for Winter 2023/24 ranked Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Dior as the industry's top brands of the year (Vogue Business Team, 2024). It is evident that the sector is incredibly competitive, with brands fighting for publicity and consumer attraction, something also quite prominent during my primary research in Harvey Nichols. This competitive edge will certainly be noticeable within luxury stockists where brands are positioned near each other and differences between brands become more noticeable.

Something distinct about the luxury sector has been the regular and unchanging consumer. This means that most luxury brands will have a certain consumer, which is very important for the brand to retain, and where the brand/consumer relationship is something carefully curated.

Business of Fashion published that following on from the knock which the sector received post Covid, the sector is currently only 'attracting the top 1 percent of earners' (O'Connor, 2024). The sector now requires brands to 'implement more sophisticated, differentiated strategies to foster relationships' (O'Connor, 2024), meaning the competition between brands is currently intensified.

Brands may take action such as that which Gucci have done with "Gucci Salon" which is 'it's first by-appointment store exclusively for servicing the brand's most important clients in Los Angeles' (O'Connor, 2024). This service allows for brands to curate the appointment specifically for the needs and desires of that one consumer, an idea that is gaining popularity amongst other luxury brands and will now see brands compete to give the best experience.

Despite this competition between luxury brands to retain their consumers, the sector as a whole is still struggling. This is a result of many factors in addition to Covid, such as the Ukraine war where 'Russia was an important market for luxury goods, accounting for around 2-3% of sales' (Farmiloe, 2024).

Business of Fashion also conducted a report on LVMH (who owns Louis Vuitton, Dior and Loewe) and how their revenue fell by 5 per cent for the year's third quarter (Williams, 2024). This drop signals trouble for other luxury stockists and suggests a greater change is needed within the sector in order for brands to stay afloat. This fall of sales in luxury will only be accelerated by Gen Z, with reports on the generation having little interest in consuming luxury goods in their future.

Dazed Studio released an article in their newsletter titled 'How Luxury Became A State Of Mind' (Farmiloe, 2024), which explores this reinvention of luxury for Gen Z. It is important to recognise that luxury 'is more inclusive and accessible' than ever, where the demographic of consumers is beginning to blend and brands are adopting similar strategies and aesthetics, leading them to lose originality.

The sector losing its identity may be a result of Gen Z's idea that luxury is a state of mind, where one lives a valued and healthy life, rather than the view of previous generations which centred luxury on materialistic goods (Farmiloe, 2024). Whilst this poses issues for the luxury sector, it should also encourage them to adapt their position and offerings to interest a modernised consumer, particularly in terms of showcasing greater inclusivity, a focus on values and increased social responsibility.



Fig 31. AW24 Runway (2024)





Fig 32. Coach with Lil Nas X AI campaign (2024)

## TRENDS

### AI Surrealism

A prominent luxury sector trend that is growing more popular each season is the use of AI in order to blend the brand's reality with a sense of surrealism. A WGSN report on 'Luxury Campaign Trends S/S 24', reflects on luxury fashion brands beginning to delve into the AI Surrealism world (WGSN, 2024).

Whilst AI's introduction to fashion happened initially in 2023, it is currently a year later and the trend is still growing, with a lot more potential. The concept of taking this new digital approach is something which already excites many consumers and can innovate a brand to fit in with the modern day digital landscape. Vogue Business conducted a study, with 2976 luxury consumers, in order to understand the consumer connection with AI and how a brand could become more influential with AI enhancements. The study showed AI 'has the potential to significantly boost brand perception, drive loyalty and improve consumer spend' (Vogue Business, 2023).

With this said, there are many aspects of AI which brands can consider. For example: practical solutions such as personal details and recommendations, sustainable supply chain adaptations, product design as well as the visual marketing and campaign strategies which WGSN referenced.

Responses of consumers for each of these aspects varies greatly and therefore a brand should consider its specific consumer wants and needs before their involvement with AI and how it can best aid the brand. Overall, AI surrealism is a trend which many luxury fashion brands will continue to incorporate into their business strategies and one that has an overall positive response from consumers.



## Fashion and Art

The fashion and art worlds have always been seen to influence each other with many industry specialists overlapping. In the current industry environment this intersecting trend is gaining even greater popularity, with collaborations becoming more frequent and powerful than ever.

Within my internal research file regarding 16 Arlington, it is evident that this trend is something they are already being influenced by. With Marco Capaldo's exhibition curated for Frieze, in collaboration with art gallery Almine Rech, it is clear this intersection of the two industries compliments each other well and is a success amongst consumers too. 'Fashion and art have long had a symbolic relationship' (Childs, 2024) and it is one which we will continue to see develop from both sides.

In regards to the luxury sector, partnerships will continue to be a success with consumers as it brings such a strong combination of feelings and originality such as when 'Elsa Schiaparelli partnered with surrealist Salvador Dali in the 1930's' (Childs, 2024). Overall, fashion and art as an intersecting trend will most likely remain a part of the luxury sector and begin to influence brands such as 16 Arlington in a positive and progressive way.

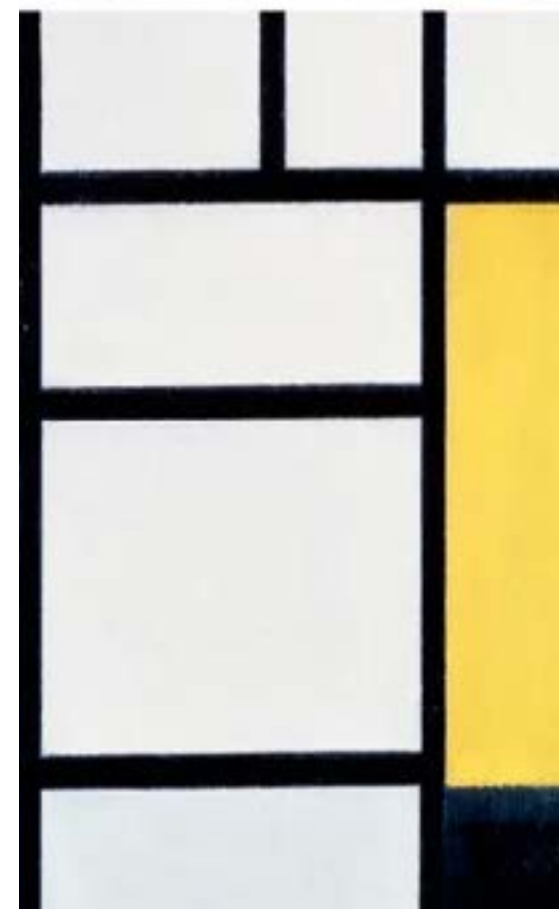
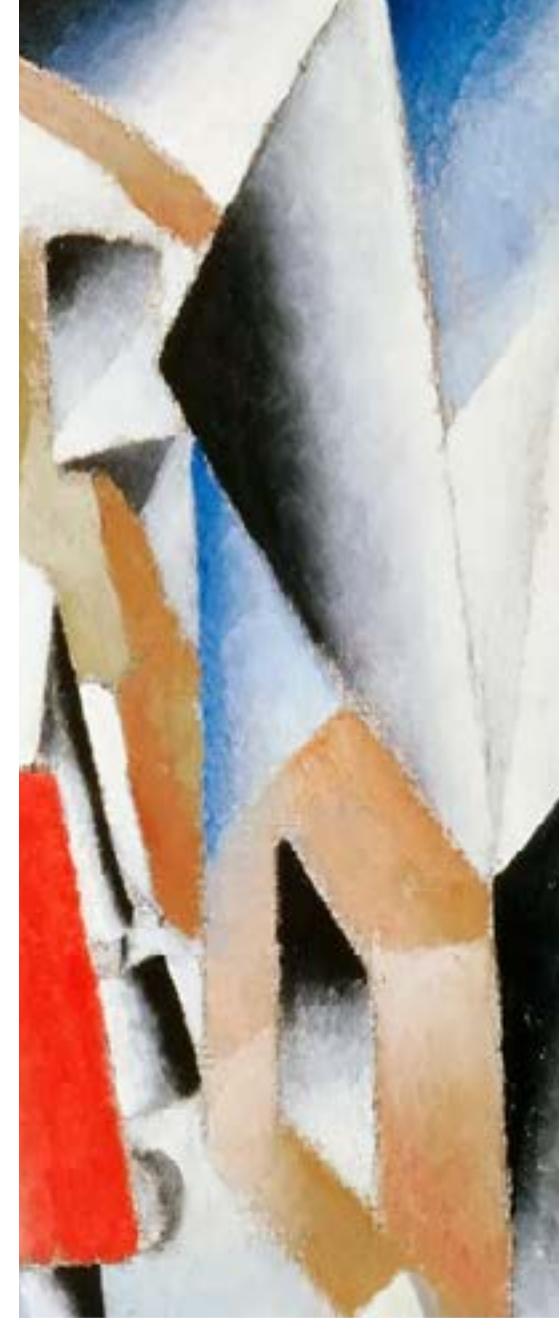


Fig 33. Abstract Art with Fashion (2024)





Fig 34. SS25 Runway (2024)

## Rental Sector

Something which is relatively new and emerging in the luxury sector is the option to use rental services in order to wear designer items without the commitment to the luxury price tag. The rental market has more than doubled in size since 2016 (Biondi, 2024), which could be the result of the consumer moving towards a more sustainable purchasing practice.

With second hand buying platforms such as Vinted and Depop gaining more interaction in the last few years, it is clear that shoppers are also keen to buy into the rental market where wearing a luxury garment has been made easily accessible. This is a positive movement for the luxury sector as it reduces over consumption as well as giving brands greater consumer reach that enables consumers to have their dream garments for a certain occasion .

There are currently many fashion rental brands appearing on the market such as HURR, My Wardrobe HQ and By Rotation, all of which stock a number of consumers favourite luxury brands. Within Selfridges, HURR currently have their own pop-up where they work hand in hand to provide consumers with a sustainable yet luxury rental experience. Giving consumers the option to rent within the same space as being able to buy brands, encourages greater consumer engagement by attracting those that do not want to purchase full price.

## RESEARCH EVALUATION

This evaluation will initially examine the various primary and secondary research methods used throughout my research file in order to explore how I reached my findings. Following this the issues and opportunities that have been identified throughout this research will be evaluated in reflection of the research results. Finally, a conclusion as to what further research could be completed will be drawn, in order to provide an insight to any unanswered questions.

### Methodology – primary research

The primary research carried out was extensive and aimed to cover a variety of different areas in relation to 16 Arlington. I first formulated a well-structured consumer questionnaire consisting of thirteen questions using Google forms. The questions were created in order to understand 16 Arlington's current consumer with hope of gauging their habits and behaviours, as well as understanding their general lifestyle. In order to gain a strong array of answers I reached out to consumers through the brand's Instagram and sent the questionnaire to twenty five people. This received a total of six responses, with all respondents giving relatively in depth answers in regards to both their personal life and their knowledge and connection with the brand.

Another method of primary research I carried out was the store observation in Harvey Nichols which aimed to recognise potential competitors, observe consumer engagement and understand any visual merchandising surrounding the brand. This visit was crucial in order to decipher whether their retail space was successful or not, something I explore in my retail analysis section. Additionally, I also visited their sample sale to see if anything in relation to brand visuals, organisation and event information stood out. This visit was important in presenting how consumer engagement differs across different retail spaces for the brand.

The other key piece of primary research I intended to collate ideas from were two email interviews with people at 16 Arlington. I initially reached out to the brand a month ahead where their response was positive stating they were happy to answer an email interview. I created two eight-question interviews, one directed for the PR coordinator another for the CEO/Head of Marketing. The PR interview covered topics such as competitor issues, main press and media coverage as well as website direction, whilst the CEO interview covered more general topics such as brand values, brand direction and target consumer. Unfortunately, I didn't get a further response which led me to consider the previous primary research methods as well as my secondary research in more depth.

### Methodology – secondary research

My secondary research was on the whole very successful considering the brand is only six years old. With 16 Arlington's relatively quick surge to popularity following its establishment, positive media coverage on their work wasn't hard to find. The majority of this coverage was found from publications such as British Vogue, Vogue Business and Elle, enabling me to gain a further insight into the brand's successes. However, in terms of any inside information there were few sources covering such topics, which I highlighted in the CSR section, as well as a lack of such information on their own digital platforms. This led me to rely largely on published media for greater analysis of the brand.

### Issues identified through research

Over the course of my research file, the primary and secondary research identified a range of issues with the brand and what challenges and opportunities these may pose. One key issue identified from my research is 16 Arlington's lack of transparency which was identified within the CSR section. Neither across the brand's digital platforms nor other sources is publication of any effort they make to consider social justice or environmental impacts. This isn't to say they aren't, however with no clear transparency it puts the brand in the spotlight for a crisis and will cause issues with the modern consumer who are sustainability focused.

Another key issue identified is the brand's presence on social media, or lack of it. Whilst in my primary research it was clear most consumers follow the brand on Instagram, their engagement rate is incredibly low. My research showed Instagram as a main platform for brands to engage with their consumers and will cause competition for the brand if their presence continues to be poor. In addition, their presence on TikTok is almost non-existent which is an issue considering the current consumer market and the importance of platforms such as this in order to engage them.

A final key issue for 16 Arlington is their lack of alignment with relevant brand tactics in regards to their campaigns and wider work. This was clear across my secondary research where 16 Arlington lacked in presenting any recent innovative or sector relevant tactics, with their lookbooks being sparse and showing no current collaborations. The communication surrounding the little campaign work they have done is minimal, with potentially one or two Instagram story posts dedicated to the focus.



As a result of these issues identified, as well as taking into account the wider research file, I have been able to identify three key opportunities for the brand, as follows:

#### Increase social media presence and activity

Firstly, as made clear throughout my social media audit section, 16 Arlington's social media presence lacks in creativity and reach with the brand only using their Instagram platform when engaging with social media. Branching into platforms such as TikTok, where they currently only have 80 followers, will enable the brand to reach a wider audience and potentially engage new consumers. As well as this by expanding their social media presence it ensures the brand is up to date and holds awareness surrounding their current consumer interests.

#### Expand bricks-and-mortar presence

Another opportunity evident from my research and identified in the retail overview is for 16 Arlington to expand their retail presence and consider their own stores. My primary and secondary research presented that whilst 16 Arlington are doing well to utilise a wide range of stockists, a key selling point for a number of luxury brands is having their own retail space. By this it allows for the consumer to experience a greater brand aligned experience with help of specialists and a larger product range offered. Looking at competitors such as Self-Portrait, who have this additional retail space alongside stockists, it is clear that it can boost consumer engagement and attract a more regular buyer.

#### Collaboration

A final key opportunity which became apparent across my research is to collaborate. Within the campaigns section I explored how whilst 16 Arlington don't have any collaborations, creative director Capaldo has personally collaborated with art gallery Almine Rech to curate this year's show at Frieze. Having this experience proves the brand has the ability to create a thoughtful and brand aligned collaboration. Doing this will present the brand with an array of opportunities and overall result in reaching a wider audience, expanding brand awareness.

For example, if the brand was to collaborate with a lower price point brand, they could design a collection which is more accessible for a greater number of people. The luxury price point was an evident factor across my research as to why some consumers won't purchase the brand; creating a more accessible line will enable them to.

An additional opportunity that a collaboration may create is providing extra retail space if the collaborator has their own stores, again engaging with another group of consumers. Furthermore, linking back to Capaldo's collaboration with the arts, my sector research presented this as an intersecting trend for luxury fashion so 16 Arlington collaborating with an artist could also pose such opportunities and ensure the brand is pursuing relevant sector tactics.

## Conclusions

Although the majority of my research was successful, there were certainly limitations. Firstly, whilst the responses from my consumer questionnaire were helpful, I was unimpressed with the lack of responses I received. Having a broader range of responses may have told me slightly different and more accurate figures. If I were to start again, I would pose the questionnaire to consumers at the sample sale or during my store audit, in addition to reaching out over Instagram, increasing the chance of more answers.

A similar limitation I struggled with was having no response to my email interview from the brand themselves. I was certainly disappointed with this considering the nice conversations I had with them in the run up and I had to be more thorough with my secondary research in terms of gaining inside information.

My own bias may have affected the results here to some extent, considering I took an internship with the brand previously, so I did have a small amount of knowledge already. To reduce this I focused deeply on my secondary research, searching for accurate information in published sources. This came with its own limitations nonetheless, where 16 Arlington don't have any brand information regarding their history or corporate social responsibility activities published on their website. This led to me look at alternative sources which pose the potential of being inaccurate. As successful as my research was at giving me a strong understanding of the brand, it certainly didn't come without limitations.

Overall, in order to provide an insight to any unanswered questions there are a few aspects of additional research I intend to do in moving forward. Firstly, I would like to explore the consumer in more depth and potentially hold some 1-1 consumer interviews with people either in stockists or reached by social media. This will be important in understanding their opinion on industry related topics and what the specific consumer is willing to engage with.

I also believe that additional research into 16 Arlington's attitude to social media and their lack of success on it is something which I need to understand moving forward. This will need to be posed to an internal staff member, so making a continuous effort to follow up with them will hopefully secure an answer and also potentially provide further contacts and channels for me to research.

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Figure 27. *Self Portrait. Residency Christopher Kane*. [Screenshot] Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/mrselfportrait/> (Accessed: 20 November 2024).

Figure 28. Simone Rocha. *Daisy Edgar-Jones Wearing Simone Rocha AW24*. [Screenshot] Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DCyfb-Xiepy/> (Accessed: 15 November 2024).

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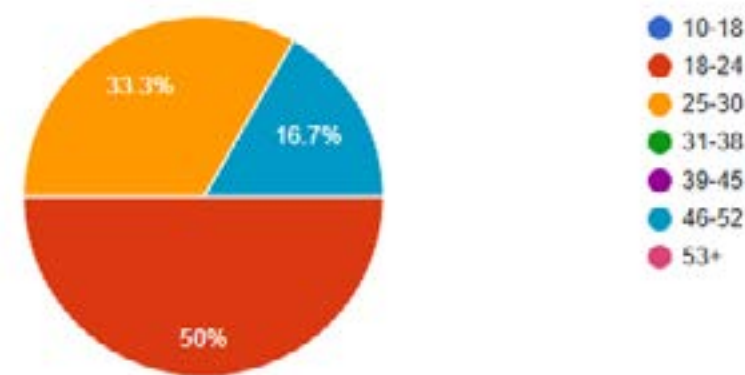


APPENDICES 1 - CONSUMER QUESTIONNAIRE

A.

What age bracket do you fall under?

6 responses



B.

What is your occupation and/or industry field?

6 responses

Deputy Marketing Manager - Food Chemical SBU
Train attendant
CEO luxury brand management
Showroom Assistant, Fashion
Student
Model

C.

What are your main hobbies and interests?

6 responses

Fashion, Music & Content Creating
Clothing, makeup, movies, walks and books
Travel Ballet Food
Fashion, Travel, Socialising
Cooking Second hand/ vintage Fashion Self care Film/Art culture
Photography, art, reading, academia and film

D.

In a few sentences, summarise what your ideal weekend looks like.

6 responses

Brunch with friends in a great outfit, sunglasses indoors & good coffee. Then, take pictures of course!
A walk in the city and later out partying, the day after just chilling
Long walk, dinner with friends and family, film and a good book
A productive morning going for a walk with a friend on Saturday before tidying my flat ready for the week ahead, then getting dinner and drinks then a club with friends. Sunday - hungover, chill at home, good lie in, big dinner at home. Plan the week ahead
Dinner and drinks with friends on Friday night, fun activity on Saturday and then out in the evening, chilled Sunday, maybe a gym class and then a roast dinner with friends/family
My ideal weekend is going to get a coffee, look round the shops, meet up with friends and have a glass of wine

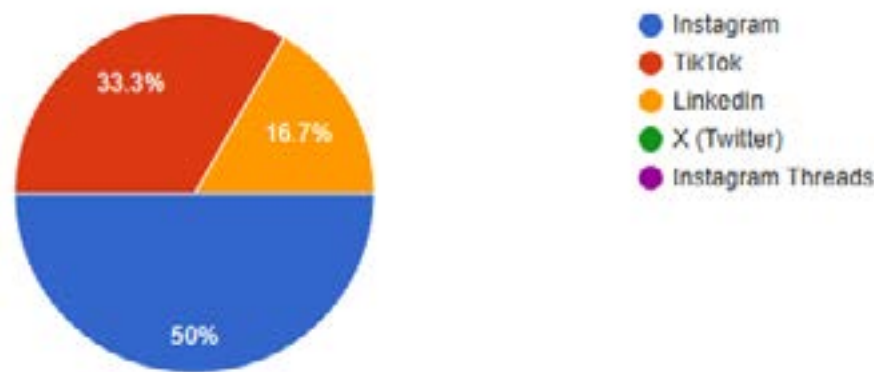
E. List any key social causes and issues you care about:

6 responses

- People in Gaza, Children in Gaza, everything happening in Gaza, Palestine. And for all the people who are hard to pursue higher education.
- The environment
- Women's empowerment within BAME communities
- Fair working wages.
- Women's rights/ feminist issues
- Environmental issues, human rights abuses, corruption in politics

F. What is your most used social media platform?

6 responses



G. What are your favourite Instagram pages you follow? (If you don't use Instagram, list any pages/blogs you follow)

6 responses

- stylemefresh
- My favorite public profiles are Tara yummy and Madeline argy
- Eyeswoon; Vivietmargot;
- Influencers and celebrities mainly, specifically that fit my style aesthetic for fashion inspo such as Manu Rios, Paul Mescal. Fashion brands and houses eg Diesel, Jacquemus, YSL, Salt Murphy, Dion Lee
- @voguerunway  
@pamalaam  
@dazedfashion  
@chloefrater  
@gisou  
@miaisobellebarker
- cooking, fashion and lifestyle accounts (culted,vogue,gym accounts etc)

H. Do you read any magazine/newspaper publications? Please specify if its print or digital.

6 responses

- Yes, @voguebusiness.
- No
- Vogue harpers bazaar house & garden print
- No
- Vogue  
Harpers Bazaar  
Telegraph  
Vanity Fair
- Print - dazed, culled, wonderland



I.

Do you know 16 Arlington?

6 responses



J.

If yes, when did you first come across the brand?

6 responses

I saw Kendall Jenner & Hailey Bieber wear it

On my explore page on instagram

London fashion week

University

When I started studying fashion marketing at UAL London college of fashion

a few years back, saw stores in London

K.

Do you own any pieces from the brand/ are any in your wish list?

6 responses

No

Not yet and yes. From their latest collection I would love the white sheer long dress, from the Winter collection I want the polka dot dress (the one who models it on the runway is my friend, Jessy!)

No, I would like to own some pieces

No, no.

Do not own any pieces but would love a jacket from 16 Arlington

L.

Which other luxury fashion brands do you buy into or would buy into?

6 responses

The Row, Lemaire, Alaia and Chanel

None

The Row; Theory; brunello cucinelli

Jacquemus, Dior, Loewe, JW Anderson

Fendi  
Roberto Cavalli  
Dior  
Louis Vuitton  
Miu Miu

Prada, Hermes, Loewe, Mul Mul

M.

Click here to: [Look at the brand](#)

Who would you say are their main competitors?

6 responses

Danielle Guizio, Lemaire, Self-portrait and Khaite.

I don't know

Nadine Merabi

Loewe, Sandro, Daniel Fletcher, COS

Jigsaw  
Vivienne Westwood  
LOEWE  
JW Anderson

And Other Stories, Reformation, Reiss, Aritzia

APPENDICES 2 - INTERVIEW ENQUIRY



APPENDICES 3 - EMAIL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A.

Interview with PR/Marketing coordinator:

Who would you say are 16 Arlington’s main brand competitors?

Which publications do you receive the most coverage from and therefore get the most consumer reach with?

Has there been one specific article, blog or piece of coverage that boosted awareness of the brand majorly?

Does the brand reflect carefully on who they dress and if they support the brand's identity and values?

Would you say there’s a thoughtful connection between the websites aesthetic and the way the clothes look and are styled on it?

Is there an element of storytelling behind the website or a connection to the brand's values/image?

Is there a specific direction that the brand intend the website to go in for the future?

Are there any ambitions for expanding on platforms such as TikTok with more regular posting?

B.

Interview with CEO/Head of Marketing:

What are the brands core values? (State 2 minimum)

What defines 16 Arlington in comparison to other new luxury fashion brands?

Does the brand have a desired image? If so, what?

Does the brand have a specific target consumer? If so, who?

What is the general profile of the frequent consumers of 16 Arlington?

What direction is the brand heading in? I.e. wanting to grow consumer base, gaining more coverage, expanding into retail spaces

Is there a reason for SS25 being only womenswear? Is there any idea of expanding back into other sectors such as menswear?

Would the brand ever consider having its own brick and mortar stores instead of only using stockists?

What are the main challenges you face when promoting a luxury brand?



APPENDICES 4 - STORE AUDIT - HARVEY NICHOLS



APPENDICES 5 - SAMPLE SALE VISIT

