

May 2025

Issue #1 Rodeo

GALLAVANT

MENSWEAR ENCYCLOPEDIA

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PHIPPS

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Guide

GALLAVANT

MENSWEAR ENCYCLOPEDIA

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letter from the editor

This issue is dedicated to
Siegfried who brought love and
joy into the lives of those he knew



Memories. I have found that is why I do most of what I do. The side quests, the infinite amount of energy picking up random skills and shifting my entire schedule and depleting all my funds to be at whatever event my loved ones have asked me to be in attendance to. I have realised after the death of my cousin Siegfried after his almost three-year battle with brain cancer at the age of 23 that there are so many memories, he will not get to have that I have more time than he will ever have at his same age.

It has made me infinitely more sentimental with my documentation, saving every first and last, writing down poems I like down somewhere so I can share it and even learning how to make a bed like how they do in five star hotels - fitted sheet, flat sheet, duvet, decorative cover in that order.

I think I have really leaned into my reputation as my families “Google” which is what they used to call me when they would be annoyed at all my fact checking. But as this issue of Gallavant shows, there is beauty in the historical detail and symbolism of everything, which in this case happens to be rodeo.

Throughout the reader gets to see the oral history of unrecognised participants within the culture like Gabriela Hasbun and Stefan Siegel and find out where the figure of the cowboy originated in a piece that was informed by researcher Dr Charles Knightly. I hope that Gallavant can become an encyclopaedia of sorts for those who want to learn about niche and random topics without the aire of academia scaring them off because formality or lack thereof does not disqualify information and archives from being valid. Gallavant truly is the encounter of knowledge for pleasure and even by chance.



Editor-in-Chief

Tamica De Sousa

THE NEW
**BLACK
WEST**



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM AMERICA'S ONLY TOURING BLACK RODEO

GABRIELA HASBUN

FOREWORD BY JEFF DOUVEL, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, BILL PICKETT INVITATIONAL RODEO

The Ethics of the Spectacle

Examining the Angola Prison Rodeo
and the Commodification of
Incarcerated Lives



By Tamica De Sousa
Images Sourced From Public.work

A “The spectacle presents itself simultaneously as all of society, as part of society, and as instrument of unification.” This quote by Guy Debord perfectly describes the gathering of thousands of spectators at the Louisiana

“Louisiana penitentiary at Angola every Sunday in October and one weekend in April. The Angola prison rodeo serves as a unique American spectacle where prisoners from the prison voluntarily take part in dangerous events like bull riding, "Convict Poker," and "Guts and Glory" in hopes of monetary compensation as well as a sense of normalcy that comes with being able to interact with the world outside their prison context. Despite being hailed “the wildest show in the South” this rodeo and others have always been plagued by profound ethical dilemmas that usually touch on animal rights but in the case of the Angola prison rodeo there is a fundamental question of human dignity and exploitation (both physical and economic) comes with the participation of incarcerated individuals.

The ethical dilemmas of the Angola prison rodeo begins with the establishment of the Louisiana State Penitentiary that sits on a former plantation. This begins a conversation about the exploitation of black bodies and how a place where black individuals were enslaved had evolved to mimic that same practice in the modern day with incarcerated black bodies. This legacy reflects a long history in which black people, who are the majority demographic at the prison are used for entertainment.

One of the dilemmas that are central to the critique of the prison rodeo is the economic exploitation and incentive to participate that it creates. An ACLU report finds “incarcerated workers earn between \$0.02 AND \$0.40 per hour in Louisiana” which incentivizes the participation in the rodeo as the opportunity to sell handmade goods and win \$300 in games like Convicts Poker leaves room to argue about whether the participation of prisoners is truly voluntary. Coupled with the fact that the rodeo generates approximately \$450,000 each weekend of operation and the 22% cut of sales from handmade goods leaves in question of who the events are meant to benefit. Sibonelo Dlamini, a Central European University PPE graduate commented when asked that “the exploitation of people of colour has long been overlooked. That is why in the conversation of rodeo ethics, the exploitataion of incarcerated black men is secondary to animals.”

The primary ethical concern relating to human dignity and the commercialization of black suffering can be seen in events like convict poker, where four incarcerated men sit at a table in the arena while a bull is released, and the last one standing wins the \$300 reward mentioned earlier. A comparison to dystopian contests such as The Hunger Games where people are treated like subhumans that are disposable.

The merchandise further cements ask T-shirts written “Angola: A Gated Community” treat incarceration in the same manner of being locked in a cage in what can be seen as a distasteful joke. It is almost to say come to the circus and see the animals perform and after we will put them back in their cages.

The danger that many of the events pose also brings into question whether the priority is entertainment or human life as there has been a history of severe injuries that have almost been woven into the routine of the rodeo.

The counter narrative for the criticism of the Angola rodeo largely comes from the idea that the rodeo provides incarcerated individuals the ability to gain agency as they are able to make an income through their craftsmanship skills. The ability to somewhat integrate back into society temporarily is also seen as a benefit to the individuals, as it is a luxury as a prisoner to mingle with society based on the harm caused by their crimes. Supporters of the rodeo argue that there is a rehabilitation aspect that is served by this temporary interaction with the outside world. Ultimately, the ethics of the Angola Prison Rodeo serve as an allegory for the American approach to criminal justice, the treatment of black incarcerated individuals, and whether society has a responsibility to those it has imprisoned. The rodeo can be seen as a symptom of deeper problems in the criminal justice system and a continuation of injustices of the past.



Images Sourced From Public.work

流風十二月



豊國魚



泉市版

China's Luxury Crackdown

Fashion's new Faultline and the rise of the Artisan

By Tamica De Sousa

Geopolitical tensions have emerged as fashion's newest obstacle, adding to an industry already grappling with inflation, ever-evolving consumer preferences, and sustainability challenges. China's luxury market, once a beacon of growth for global fashion houses, is now undergoing significant transformation. A combination of perpetually shifting consumer behavior, government crackdowns on extravagant displays of wealth, and most recently, U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods has sent shockwaves across the industry. However, this cultural shift has created an unexpected opportunity for smaller, artisan-led fashion brands. These labels, often pushed to the sidelines by industry giants, now have the chance to not only gain prominence but to potentially steer fashion in a new direction.



Images Sourced From Public.work

According to a report published by Bain & Company, in 2024, China's luxury market experienced a notable contraction of 18% to 20%, reverting to percentages last seen during the pandemic in 2020. The decline was primarily due to low consumer confidence and increased overseas spending as international tourism rebounded. This downturn coincided with a government crackdown on what was deemed "conspicuous consumption," leading to a phenomenon popularly termed "luxury shame." Popular influencers known for flaunting their wealth, such as Wang Hongquanxing (nicknamed China's Kim Kardashian), faced bans across platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu. The result has been a shift in consumer behavior, with a growing preference for understated, classic products that retain value and quality over time.

Within this shifting environment, artisan-led fashion brands have found themselves with a far more receptive audience. In their emphasis on craftsmanship, heritage techniques, and environmentally conscious practices, they have attracted new consumers looking for genuine and responsibly-made goods. For instance, Chinese brands like Shang Xia, Shushu/Tong, and Swaying/Knit that not only celebrate but integrate Chinese heritage and craftsmanship into contemporary designs have gained increased popularity, arguably due to the recent crackdown. These brands exemplify how artisan-led businesses can offer products on par with established luxury houses, both in quality and design, while also aligning with the growing consumer demand for meaningful and culturally resonant fashion.



Contrary to what recent media attention would suggest, the signs of luxury market disruption are not entirely new. An article published by The Cut in 2022, revealed that affluent women in New York known as “Rep-Ladies” spent, on a yearly basis, more than \$3 million on ‘high-quality’ fake Birkin’s and various luxury replicas. The willingness among wealthy consumers to purchase high quality counterfeits arguably foreshadowed the recent questioning of pricing premiums that China’s crackdown has now accelerated. When people who could easily afford to purchase authentic luxury, items opt to purchase counterfeit instead, it says a lot about whether brand premiums are justified; a sentiment that has only like wild fire as production realities become ever more transparent.

For artisan-led businesses and fashion brands this could potentially mean a shift in how luxury is defined and consumed. Artisan brands can use this opportunity to position themselves as the antithesis of everything consumers are slowly starting to reject about mainstream luxury. What this could look like is emphasizing transparency over mystique, authentic craftsmanship over fabricated scarcity, and personalized storytelling over selling manufactured lifestyles. China’s luxury crackdown has arguably created an avenue for a more honest and authentic marketplace where quality, craftsmanship, transparency and luxury can coexist.

Despite their appeal, artisan-made goods can at times come at a higher price point that reflects the time, skill, quality, and sustainability practices involved in product production. Unfortunately, without the brand recognition of well-established fashion houses like Hermès or Louis Vuitton, consumers can at times be deterred, often questioning the value proposition of higher-priced items. What China’s luxury crackdown has revealed about consumers is that they purchase luxury goods not just for their quality, but for their wealth signaling power. Consumers want to be seen wearing brands that are instantly recognizable as status symbols, which is an advantage artisan-businesses unfortunately do not have. Chinese manufacturers have revealed to consumers worldwide that up to 80% of the production process for luxury brands like Hermès, Gucci, and Prada occurs in China, contrary to what the “Made in Italy” labels imply. With expensive luxury items being produced for less than a fraction of their retail price, consumer views on brand exclusivity and identity are being challenged.





The Knight and the Cowboy: A Scholarly Conversation

A look into the supposed connection between the medieval knight and American Cowboy

In the course of my research on the figure that is the cowboy, a fascination for the supposed connection between medieval Knights and American Cowboys, as proposed by various researchers, grew. The idea that two figures separated by centuries and on different continents seemingly linked left me curious to investigate. With the consultation of Dr. Charles Knightly, a respected researcher specialising in medieval history and author of several pieces for English Heritage, I aimed to find if there was scholarly support for this notion from experts in medieval knights in comparison to the experts in cowboys that I had been consulting.

Tamica: "I've been exploring this idea that the medieval knight served as a kind of blueprint for the American cowboy. Scholars such as the likes of Moskowitz actually compared the myth of the cowboy to that of the English knight, suggesting the cowboy symbolised the establishment of America post-civil war. What are your thoughts on this comparison?"

Dr. Knightly: "I'm afraid that's complete nonsense, there's simply no meaningful connection between knights and cowboys beyond the superficial fact that both rode horses. The fundamental differences in their social roles, historical contexts, and actual lived experiences make any comparison essentially meaningless."

Tamica: "So why do you think scholars have made this parallels between these figures? The cowboy was assigned traits of autonomy, independence, and heroism—much like the chivalric ideals associated with knights. Both figures seem to embody idealised masculinity."

"No, this is nonsense: there's no connection."

Dr. Knightly: "The problem is that there is romanticised mythology with historical reality. Knights were not lone heroes at all. They were essentially warriors who fought on horseback and in armour, yes, but they were also landowners drawn almost exclusively from noble or upper-class families. They served the king or great lords in battle, and in peacetime acted as local administrators and justices of the peace. They were thoroughly embedded in the feudal system—they were the establishment, not rebels against it."

This perspective brought to the forefront a conflict in the image of the cowboy that had been found in my research. This conflict lies in the outlaw cowboy who had a humble nomadic lifestyle versus the Marlboro man cowboy who was upper middle class and was admired for his land ownership and economic success. The latter closer relates with the reality of the knight while the former aligns more with the myth of the knight.



Dr. Knightly: "Now that's a crucial point. If the American cowboy was itself a constructed image that deliberately excluded its most historically significant participants, then any supposed connection to medieval knights becomes even more problematic. We're not comparing historical realities—we're comparing selective mythologies."

This brought me back to Moskowitz's research which stated that there was little resemblance between even the myth and reality of the cowboy and that was the reason for the erasure of non-white participants from the main stage of the culture. This in combination with the perspective that even white cowboys were often not from the high socioeconomic class brought the cowboy at odds with the knights aristocratic status that Dr Knightly had mentioned.

Dr. Knightly: "Knights wore the best armour and clothes they could afford, displaying individual heraldry to demonstrate the nobility of their family. They had no uniform because they were showing their wealth and status. This is the complete opposite of working cowboys, regardless of race, who were labourers doing dangerous work."

This led me to think about how both myths had gained such cultural power within the media space. The Marlboro Man being the most obvious example of the cowboy as it was used to sell an aspirational image of masculinity. Starr describes it as representing autonomy and independence, much like how knights are portrayed in popular culture.

Dr. Knightly: "These are just marketing tools versus than historical connections. The Marlboro Man was advertising, designed to sell cigarettes by appealing to a fantasy about masculine independence. It has nothing to do with actual historical relationships between medieval knights and cowboys."

As our conversation continued, the complexities of what began as a simple, supposed historical connection had come to the surface at this point. It began to unravel the accuracy of the media's portrayal of figures that have existed in history. The knight has been romanticised, the cowboy has been mythologised.

Dr. Knightly: "And when you add the supposed connection between knights and cowboys, you're creating a three-layer myth on top of two already fictional constructs. It's mythology plain and simple."

I had to know what he thought this said about Hollywood's use of these figures as I felt it was necessary to get to the root.

Dr Knightly: "It reveals how powerful storytelling can be in shaping values and cultural understanding while obscuring historical truth as we see both figures have been used to represent an ideal of white masculinity, but they've been stripped of their historical accuracy. The real knight was concerned with maintaining feudal hierarchy. The real cowboy was a hardworking labourer at their essence."

This somewhat validates what the erasure of black cowboys shows, that it was carefully constructed to push a narrative of white masculinity's supremacy.

Dr. Knightly: "Which makes any supposed connection to medieval knights even more absurd, knights were aristocrats preserving hereditary privilege in a hierarchical society. The mythologised American cowboy was supposed to represent white American democratic values and individual freedom. These aren't connected traditions; they're entirely different cultural constructions serving different purposes."

As we ended our conversation, I wanted to get Dr Knightly's final recap with the question "Is there a connection?"

Dr Knightly: "There is no blueprint relationship; the similarities are mostly a work of fiction, created by Hollywood and advertising, without a historical connection. More importantly, both figures, as popularly portrayed, are largely fictional constructs that tell us more about the societies that mythologised them than about any historical reality."

The supposed knight-cowboy connection had been dismantled and shown to be a fictional one rather than a historic one, but our conversation revealed that inclusion or the lack thereof plays in the construction of pop culture figures.





ANOUK MASSON KRANTZ'S



"COWBOYS: SPIRIT OF THE WEST"

By Tamica De Sousa
Photography by
Anouk Masson Krantz's

**Iconic Images Gallery Piccadilly, London
May 9 – June 14, 2025**

There's always been a fascination from foreign eyes witnessing the expression of the American West—a fresh appreciation for a truly American cultural Titan. French photographer Anouk Masson Krantz, has given us her vision through her exhibition "Cowboys: Spirit of the West" that is currently displayed at the Iconic Images Gallery, a monumental moment for her career. Krantz presents a raw representation of contemporary Americana that strays away from mainstream media's romanticism of rodeo culture.



A Journey of Trust and Time

As I viewed Krantz's work I immediately recognized that what set her apart from countless photographers that captured the contemporary American West was long-term investment to her documentation. Spanning almost a decade Krantz has been able to somewhat integrate into these communities creating a personal touch to her snapshots. An insider with foreign eyes, shining light on details of this beautiful way of life in no way that connects with secular culture.

The realistic depiction free from theatrics is where Krantz's exhibitions true strength lies. The black and white leading your eyes to the beauty that lies within the simplest details. The eye of a horse and the depth of emotion that it holds or the strength of the dark silhouettes cast by a cowboy and his horse—a breathtaking depiction a mutualistic symbiotic partnership between man and animal.

Beyond the Cinematic Cowboy

Krantz's decision to stray away from upholding the myths of the cowboy that is often the standard in contemporary television has brought humanity to the reality of what is a long-standing profession that values hard work and grit in its daily uptakings. The freedom from a glamorized ideal allowing for the true stories of the people to shine through, each scuff on display as the valued detail and testament to the culture.

Technical Excellence in Service of Story

Krantz's technical choices must be appreciated as she takes on the task of a black and white presentation. The ability to strip an image of colour leaves no room for error on the details of the image captured, it forces the viewer to be more intentional and critical about it. Krantz's has managed to use this along with natural light to deliver powerful scenes that centre the subjects.





The images reveal the power of silhouettes and posture in telling a story. With one particularly captivating image depicting a cowboy and his horse shot from head-on, with both subjects holding a powerful stance that makes up for the missing details on the silhouettes. Body language is king in this image and lighting serves as its throne.

A Cultural Bridge

This exhibition serves as a reminder to the international audience that America still has authentic and rich cultural capital that is waiting to be found, documented and shared across the globe. Krantz echoed this in her Q&A session expressing the need for outside voices within documentation for education. The timing of the exhibition also perfectly coincides with the slow movement back to an analogue lifestyle that many people are taking in order to escape the nonstop bombardment from modern day technology. Krantz's photographs offer a compelling counternarrative—one that celebrates physical labour, connection to land, and the embrace of traditional values.

Rating: ★★★★★

"Cowboys: Spirit of the West" continues at Iconic Images Gallery Piccadilly (16 Waterloo Place, London SW1Y 4AR) through June 14, 2025. The work will also be featured at Photo London.

A Minor Limitation

The only limitation of this exhibition lies in one of its strengths. Although the artistic decision to present the photos in black and white comes through with meaning and power I fear that elements of self-expression within the rodeo/cowboy community have failed to shine through. I say this in reference to the rich fashion culture and craftsmanship that exist in every fabric and styling decision of Cowboys.

Verdict

"Cowboys: Spirit of the West" succeeds brilliantly as both art and anthropology. Krantz has created work that respects its subjects while challenging the audience to look at the reality of the cowboy rather than a Hollywood stereotype. Her photographs prove that authentic documentary photography—rooted in integrating into communities and creating a genuine human connection—can still reveal the beauty of the human spirit in its various forms of expression and interests.

This exhibition is a must see for anyone that enjoys contemporary documentary style photography as well as fans of the American West. Krantz has given us something rare: a foreign perspective of the Americana without the fluff.



Rodeo Style Guide

A Gallavant approved guide to rodeo style for every occasion

Phipps Corduroy Hard Work Shirt

01

A good shirt has always separated a good rodeo from a great one. A product made by “next great American heritage brand” Phipps, the corduroy hard work shirt is a refreshing take on a work shirt that not only adds to the look and performance but also gets better with time. Made in the USA from 100% cotton, this shirt can be styled with the matching trousers for a coherent outfit.



Stetson Tamalo Western Wool Hat

02

Tried and tested by the Gallavant team, the Tamalo can with good conscious be called the ultimate entry-level cowboy hat. Made by the originators of the cowboy hat, Stetson. This 100% wool felt made from Australian Sheep, this hat has a beautiful folded brim with leather and feather details. The hat is easy to upkeep with dirt, dust, and water repellent technology built and would be perfect for a casual lunch or a day out on the ranch.



Blackhorse Lane NW1 Relaxed Heritage Indigo

03

If eco-consciousness is an important factor in your denim selection, East London's Blackhorse Lane Ateliers should be your first stop. The brand's use of Italian and Japanese selvedge denim and lifetime repair policy means that you can count on the fact that your denim will have staying power no matter what you put it through. The NW1 Relaxed Heritage Indigo pair in particular allows for comfortable movement due to the straight leg taper.



Lucchese Brazos

04

And the winner is Lucchese. For those willing to spend a little more for a quality cowboy boot, look no further than Lucchese's Brazo. An entry-level Lucchese boot that is the gateway into this luxury cowboy boot brand. This boot brings style and luxury all in one craftsmanship heavy shoe. The black colourway is particularly loved here at Gallavant.





STEFAN SIEGEL PRESENTS

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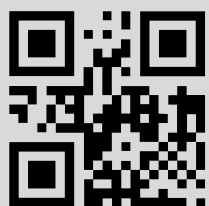
Hollywood

*at the Los Angeles
Equestrian Center*

RODEO # 10

STARS IN THE ARENA

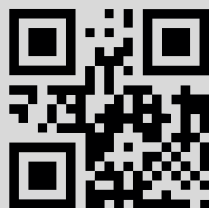
CELEBRITIES AT IRON'S # 10



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