



# GO GO REDUX

Wearing your heart on your sleeve — and your bag, shoes, or chest — is back. And this time, the ubiquitous logo has a cheeky grin

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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** CANVAS BAG, GUCCI; LEATHER AND SILK BAG, FENDI; LEATHER BAG, LOUIS VUITTON



Cast your mind back to the heyday of the Nineties. The Spice Girls ruled the airwaves, people marveled at their Hotmail email accounts, Ross and Rachel went on a break, and everyone smelled like cK One. It's safe

to say Calvin Klein was the quintessential Nineties streetwear designer. Propelling the New York brand to the top of the lust list? Its instantly recognizable logo. The words "Calvin Klein" were emblazoned on sweatshirts, T-shirts, and – most famously – underwear. Generation Logo had arrived.

Splashing designer logos on clothing wasn't new to the 90s, though. The trend took root the previous decade, when money was flush and clothing was brash. Status, wealth, and excess were the driving forces, with an almost gaudy mentality of "when you have it, flaunt it." Fashion logos became an easy way to show off status and prosperity. In the following decade, logos became an aesthetic in itself, with not only Calvin Klein but Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior embracing logo patterns on their clothing and accessories, while Gianni Versace pioneered the logo T-shirt. Conspicuous branding became a way of saying which tribe you belonged to – a Tommy Hilfiger sweatshirt, Calvin Klein underwear, a Fendi Baguette. Showing off your "LV" or double-locked Cs was *de rigueur*, and not in a tongue-in-cheek or self-aware way. Logos were the universal language – understood by all, yet accessible to relatively few.

But towards the end of the decade, oversaturation meant the fashion crowd started veering away from blatant branding. The zeitgeist started turning and when Naomi Klein published her post-consumerist tome *No Logo* in 1999, she galvanized a generation. And then, barely 10 years later, the global economic crash happened. Suddenly, showing off your propensity for expensive brands – and, by extension, your deep pockets – by flashing their logos on your chest seemed vulgar. Chloé and Céline ushered in the era of minimalism and normcore. Neutral palettes and interesting silhouettes ruled the runways, and the cK underwear was promptly covered up. Not showing off became the new showing off.

But fashion is nothing if not cyclical, and with the nostalgia trend in full swing, it was only a matter of time before branding came back with a vengeance. This time, it has a sense of humor and a winking self-awareness – and no small sense of the visual power of social media. The resurgence of the logo can be attributed to the joyous bursting onto the scene of two larger-than-life personalities: Alessandro Michele at Gucci and Demna Gvasalia at Vetements. The latter, in particular, turned the trend on its head when he sent his now infamous "DHL" shirts down the Spring 2016 runway. The ironic shirt sold out quickly and jolted the slumbering trend awake. Suddenly, the industry started re-examining the old tropes of "bad taste," with Roger Vivier, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Balenciaga, and even Loewe all displaying their logos on shirts, skirts, and shoes. "Today,

everything is branded. Everything has a logo," Gvasalia said backstage. Michele echoed this at his own show when he declared in his Spring 2018 ready-to-wear shownotes: "Resist the illusion of something new at any cost."

When fashion search engine Lyst reported its 2017 trends in December, after monitoring the shopping habits of its 80 million users and tracking more than 100 million searches, searches for "logos" came in second, after "Gucci." Searches for Gucci logo T-shirts numbered in the thousands per day, topping even the brand's beloved loafers. A logo T-shirt is an easy way for brands to be recognized, and for consumers to feel part of the movement. Case in point: Net-a-Porter reported that for FW17, T-shirts from Balenciaga, Vetements, Gucci, Ganni, and Dolce & Gabbana were five of their top 10 bestselling items. Gucci's "fake" Guccy shirt is a perennial favorite on the e-commerce site, selling out almost as soon as it comes online, and one of the top 10 most searched for handbags is its looged Dionysus shoulder bag.

What is the difference between the logos of now and the 90s? Today, it's not so much about a statement of wealth as a statement of cool; it's about making the logo your own. You're not joining the logo's tribe, but accepting the logo into your tribe. It's this authenticity that brands desire, and that's fueled by social media. Instagram is awash with It girls like Chiara Ferragni and Hailey Baldwin pairing their looged items with midi skirts, jeans, sneakers, and stacked jewelry. Emirati influencer Taim AlFalasi teams her Gucci Coco Capitán shirt with a headscarf and red Gucci GG Marmont belt bag, and Saudi blogger sisters Thana and Sakhaa Abdul regularly show off their Tommy Jeans and Adidas threads. One thing is for sure: the logo trend's strength lies in its ability to be constantly reimagined – it's both timeless and trendy, a true versatile signifier for the digital generation. □



VERSACE

GUCCI

BALMAIN

*Gucci's "fake" GUCCY shirt is a perennial favorite, SELLING OUT almost as soon as it comes online*

Name-dropping



CHRISTIAN DIOR

BALENCIAGA

CHANEL