



PROPOSAL FOR SUMMER WORKSHOP SUBMITTED BY KAREN WONG AND SKY GELLATLY

GENEROSITY & GRAFFITI: VIRGIL ABLOH'S WORLD

COLUMBIA
GSAPP

THE FIRST CHAPTER IN VIRGIL ABLOH'S CAMPAIGN FOR LOUIS VUITTON; COURTESY OF INEZ AND VINOODH

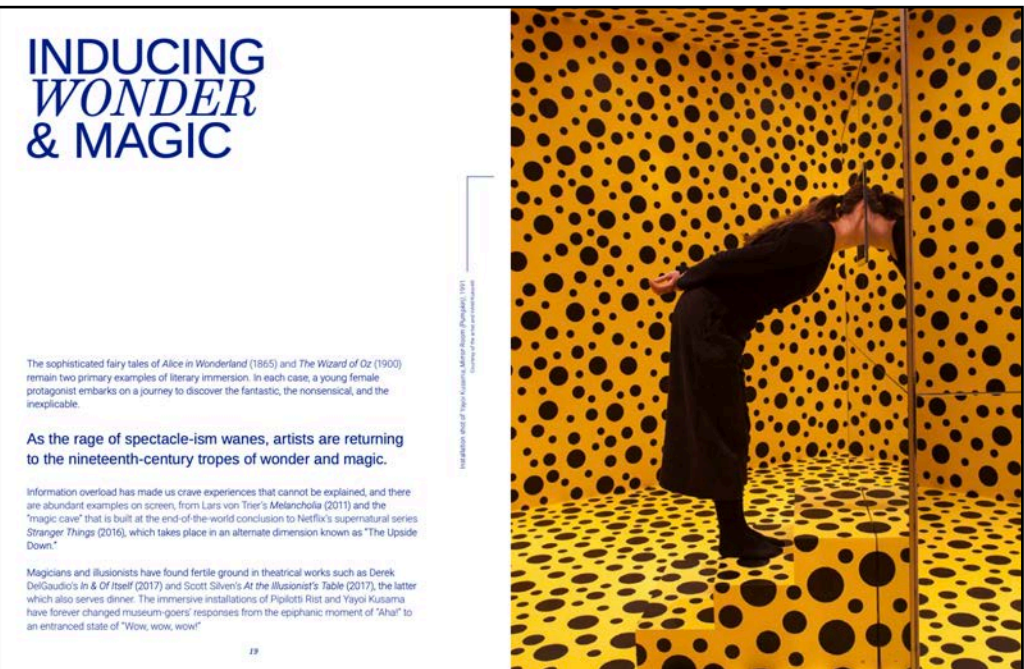
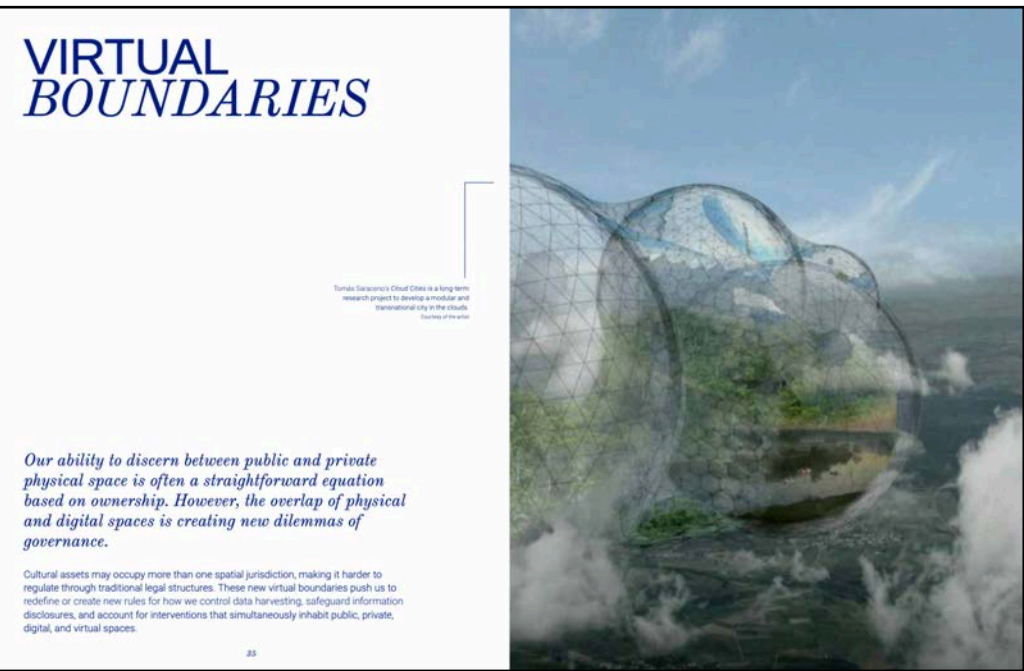
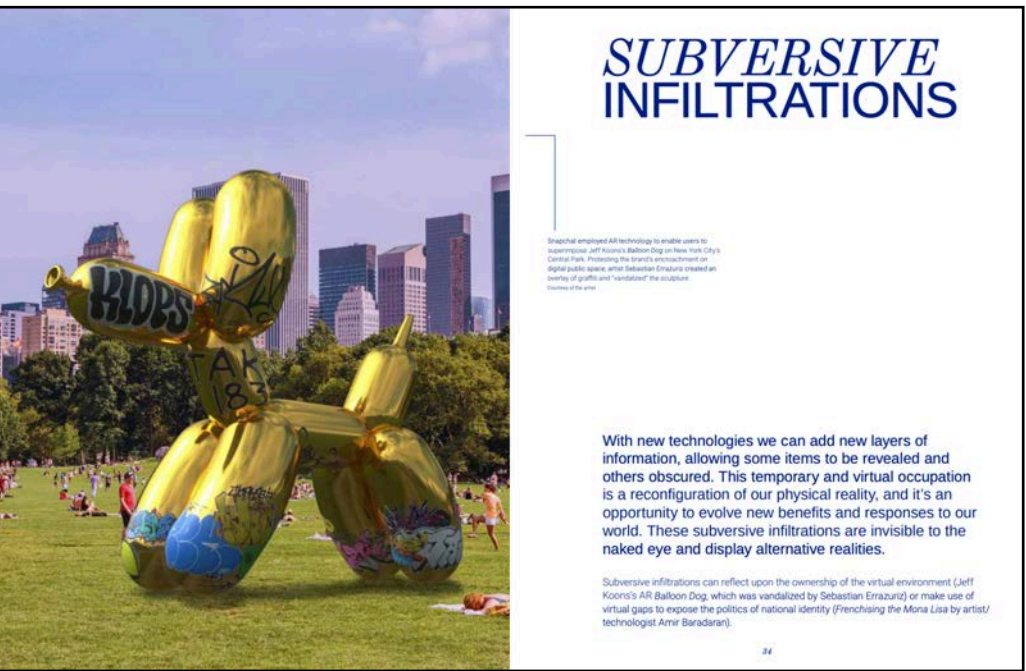
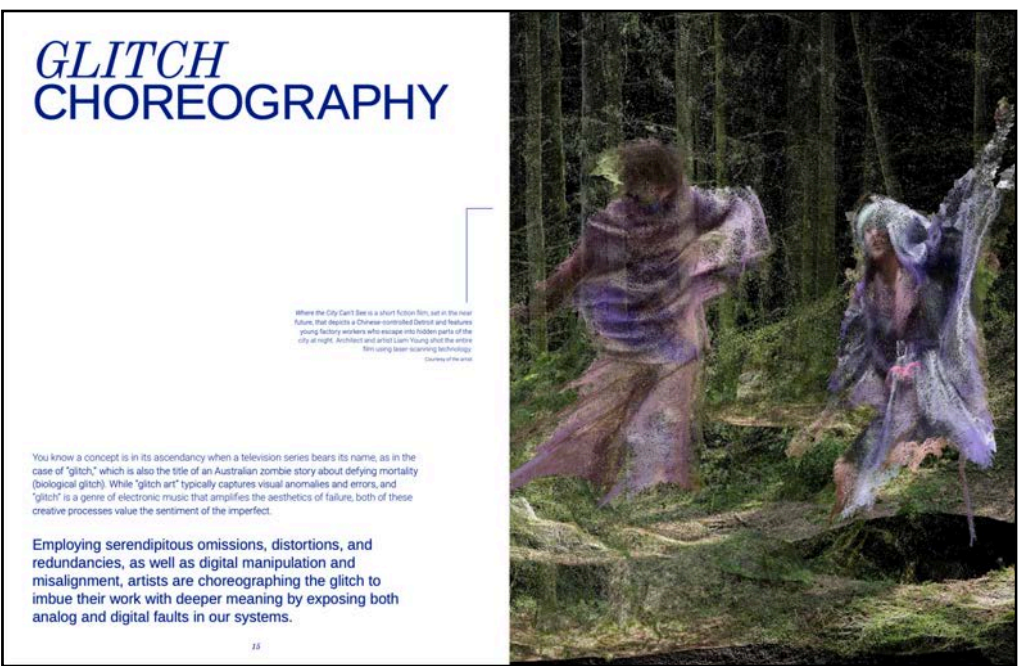
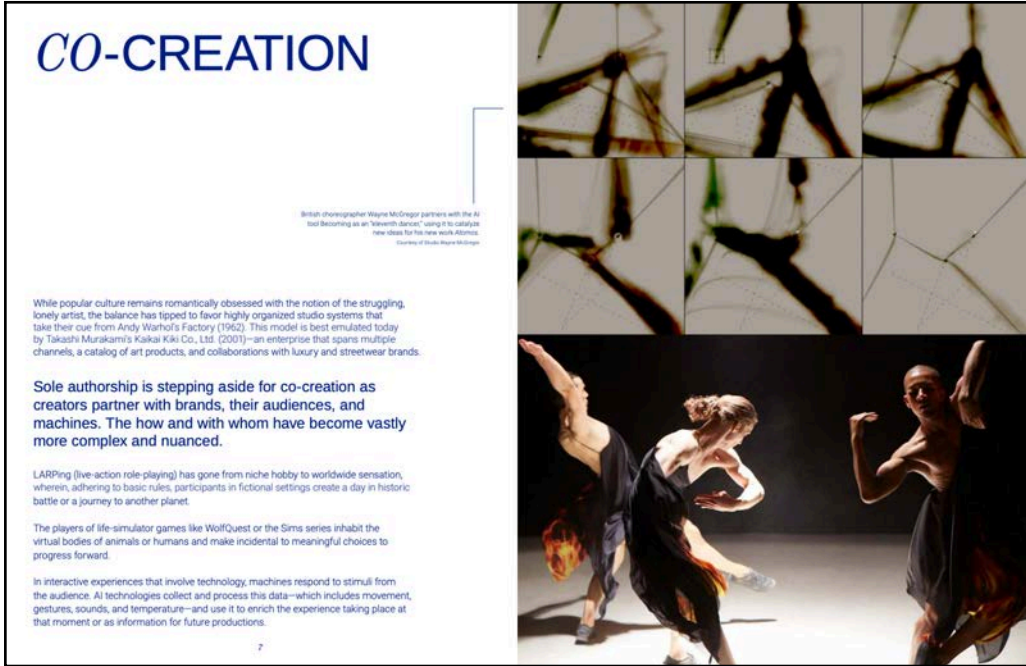
Karen Wong cofounded NEW INC in 2014, an incubator at the intersection of art, design and technology and the extended realities lab ONX Studio in 2019 sponsored by the Onassis Foundation. She was the Deputy Director of the New Museum (2012-2020).

Since 2018, Wong has been an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Columbia University GSAPP. Her research explores immersive culture through architectural language.

In Fall 2023, she taught the graduate seminar **“Ways of Experiencing”** — an amalgamation of public programming and professional development — setting students up with a more expansive foundation of how their skill sets and passions can be implemented in the creative industries.

WAYS OF EXPERIENCING COURSE SYNOPSIS

John Berger’s 1972 Ways of Seeing has dominated the pop cultural consciousness as the go-to text for “reading” art of the last 50 years. Much remains relevant, yet a eurocentric and masculine point of view (written by a group of five white men) dates the heralded text. Ways of Experiencing, the seminar proposes to remedy and expand Ways of Seeing by investigating how seeing has shifted to experiencing.



↑ Spreads from the trend report/white paper collectively written by Karen Wong’s 2018 GSAPP Seminar on Cultural Production and Strategies NOW

Eschewing the traditional format of unilateral lectures — Wong engaged collaborators and colleagues and moderated conversations between students and professionals outside of the architectural world. Guest speakers agreed to divulge a failure(s) and share lessons learned. Wong implemented world cafe-styled workshops engendering 100% participation of the class.

Fall Seminar Guests included

LUKAS BENTEL & KEVIN WIESNER, CREATIVE DIRECTORS, MSCHF

IDRIS BREWSTER, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR, KINFOLK

DAVID BYRNE, MUSICIAN, ARTIST, WRITER

STEPHANIE DINKINS, ARTIST, AI PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL

DAVID KORINS, BROADWAY SET DESIGNER

ANNIE-B PARSONS, CHOREOGRAPHER

RACHEL ROSSIN, ARTIST, CODER, FOUNDER DUNKENSTHALLE

AMANDA SCHOCHET, ECOLOGIST, MICRO MUSEUMS

NATE SILVER, FOUNDER FIVETHIRTYEIGHT.COM, PRO POKER PLAYER

XINRAN YUAN, ART AND TECHNOLOGY CURATOR

PIERRE ZANDROWICX, AI FILMMAKER

WAYS OF EXPERIENCING COURSE SYNOPSIS

In the last twenty years, “seeing” has been replaced by “experiencing.” Once a visitor or an audience, we are now agents, actors, participants, subjects, or even co-creators. These modalities have increased so rapidly that it has left makers and ‘consumers’ dizzy, perhaps searching for a language to describe what is happening.

Public Intellectual and artist Stephanie Dinkins who received the inaugural Art and Tech Award from the Guggenheim expounded on AI, race, and gender and the need for more Black and female engineers (Stephanie in conversation with Bina48)



Idris Brewster and the virtual monument app Kinfolk addressing the lack of Black and Brown leaders commemorated in physical monuments in the US, featured of MoMA’s Architecture Now: New York, New Publics



Lukas Bental and Kevin Wiesner, cofounders and creative directors of the MSCHF collective connected their output to athletic aesthetics (exhibition still from their first museum retrospective at Daelim in Seoul, Korean)



The other day, you remarked that your superpower was knowing cool people who do cool things. I wholeheartedly agree with this, and it speaks well to your own personal capacity for empathy and understanding. You serve as an interpreter for us as students, translating the work of so many great artists and activists into contexts that help us understand new stories of all kinds. You are a lens for us to see ourselves and the rest of the world in a different light. **Your ability to get to the heart of a matter is incredibly inspiring, and it is a detail of my time here at Columbia that I will never forget.** Thank you for bringing forth the *Ways of Experiencing* course in this iteration — I hope that you will continue these efforts far into the future and host other types of programs here at GSAPP (and beyond!) that can introduce others to different ways of experiencing.

— Farida Igbadume, GSAPP student



The course repositions spatial experience by offering insight into what multidimensional design can mean in today’s ever-changing context. **One of the best courses at GSAPP, Karen invites speakers from within and beyond the field of architecture that engage us by offering unique perspectives that challenge architectural preconceptions and fosters original impactful conversations around spatial design.** Eye-opening and truly inspiring, the course’s discussions relate directly to field trips within New York’s architecture, art, and performance scenes. The course is also hugely beneficial to me as a designer because it offers a direct exchange with industry professionals and to how they have been successful in positioning or repositioning architectural thinking.

— Deniz Dagtekin, GSAPP student

WAYS OF EXPERIENCING COURSE SYNOPSIS

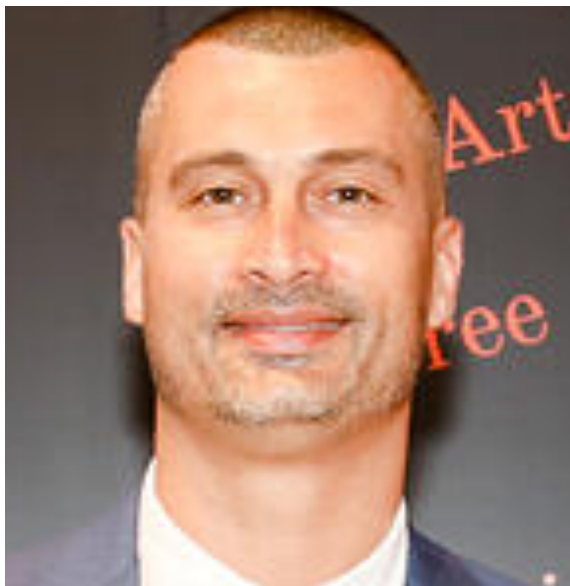
The hyper-acceleration and democratization of culture have overwhelmed us with the cacophony of content. Can we find the patterns and interfaces that leave an emotional imprint or change our behavior beyond the superficial, beyond clickbait? And if we can explore and map out some of these creative devices, makers will be more adept, and consumers savvier.

Proposal for GSAPP Summer Workshops

Faculty-led summer workshops assemble students from across the School’s programs for intensive cross-disciplinary study that revolve around particular questions.

Co-teaching with Sky Gellatly (friend/ collaborator of Virgil Abloh), Professor Wong iterates upon “Ways of Experiencing” by focusing on a single case study — **exploring the the strategies for world building by Virgil Abloh™.**

During a two-week period, students will participate in world cafe style workshops and design charrettes. Sky Gellatly will co-curate a handful of Virgil Abloh collaborators to be invited as guest speakers for moderated conversation with students.



SKY GELLATLY SHORT BIO

Since founding ICNCLST/ a dual marketing and artist management agency, Sky Gellatly, CEO has helped drive powerful collaborations and campaigns for brands such as Comme des Garçons, EA Sports, Google, Levi’s, Louis Vuitton, Nike, Off-White, and Pepsi. He is the cofounder of Control Gallery in Los Angeles and sits on the boards of Free Arts NYC and Street Soccer USA.



Tentative Title for Summer Workshop:
Generosity and Graffiti: Virgil Abloh’s World

POSSIBLE PROMPTS

- ANARCHITECTURE
- CAMOFLEUR
- FLUIDITY AND TRANSPARENCY
- HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT
- GLITCH CHOREOGRAPHY
- MAPPING AND INTERSECTIONS
- SKATEBOARDING AS A SPACIAL PRACTICE

POSSIBLE GUEST SPEAKERS/VA COLLABORATORS

CHLOE AND MAHFUZ SULTAN, FOUNDERS, CLOCK (AGENCY)

DEVON TURNBULL, AUDIO ENGINEER, SPEAKER MAKER

DONG PING WONG, FOUNDER, FOOD NEW YORK (ARCHITECTURE)

FUTURA 2000, ARTIST

BENJAMIN EDGAR GOTT, DESIGNER, FOUNDER BOXED WATER

HERON PRESTON, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, DJ

DR. SAMUEL ROSS, PRODUCT AND FASHION DESIGNER

VENUS X, WRITER, DJ, FOUNDED GHE2OGOTH1K

VIRGIL ABLOH CANARY—YELLOW BIO

Born in Rockford, Illinois (U.S.A.) in 1980, Virgil Abloh is an artist, architect, and fashion designer. After earning a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he obtained a master’s degree in Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology. It was at the Illinois Institute of Technology where Abloh was introduced to a curriculum established by Mies van der Rohe, formed from the notions of Bauhaus, that taught him to combine the fields of art, craft and design. These theories, merged with contemporary culture, make up Abloh’s inter-disciplinary practice today.

**Young architects
can change the
world by not
building buildings.**

**I distinctly feel like
this generation, our
generation, is the
first one where we
can unveil the mask,
give the kids the
tools, and let them
create.**

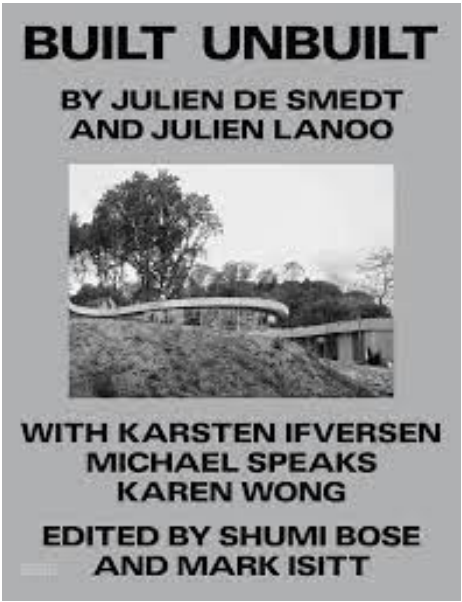
—Virgil Abloh
Columbia GSAPP 2017 Lecture
“Everything in Quotes”

Appendix A: Writing Sample | Karen Wong

Julien De Smedt grew up skating in the late 80s, an era defined by risk-takers like Mark Gonzalez and Rodney Mullen, who reinvented skating for the streets. It was simple and provocative — plazas, curbs, furniture, railings, and stairs were all opportunities for them to co-opt public space. Viewed by many as a menace, street skating and its disruptive nature laid bare prejudices of government and community. **Philosopher Michel de Certeau describes skateboarding as a spatial practice, certain play within a system of defined spaces.** Skating’s ‘misuse’ of architecture is daringly playful and remains shapeless (like water) until you represent its intention by creating a trick. The bipolar nature of the intense physicality of jumping and flipping and the informal elegance of fluid lines drifting and curving is well documented in thousands of YouTube videos spanning the last forty years.

Street starters are actors in a city. They immersed themselves in their respective environments in search of a performance marked by an attitude of defiance and the beauty of dance. Skaters bend gravity and flout rules, resulting in an unexpected relationship with municipal infrastructure. Their exploration and interaction with a city form a multiplicity of duets, translating a lonely park bench into a springboard for a jump and a jump down or engaging a defensive barrier as a sustained partner in a long, fluid grind.

De Smedt’s unbridled passion for skateboarding resonates as a collection of subliminal tactics in his architectural practice. As a skater, he has mapped forms and functions that make a city click. As an architect, he creates structures that encourage performative actions. Many of his projects question the status quo and yield built work highlighting spaces for social exchange.



BUILT UNBUILT (2017) EXCERPT FROM “SKATING WITHOUT A SKATEBOARD” BY KAREN WONG

Entitled Built Unbuilt, the book is beautifully illustrated with pictures by Belgian photographer Julien Lanoo, Public space, community and nature are all key themes in Julien De Smedt’s work.

Virgil Abloh’s Efflorescence collection was described by Galerie Kreo as "a landscape where the rigidity of structures and urban planning meets the randomness of organic growth, human appropriation, and mark-making."



Oh, man, I can remember it like it was yesterday! With my friend Chris Eaton we would go and raid construction sites in my neighborhood to build ramps with whatever wood was there. Once we made this wedge, a launch ramp, into this PVC rail slide bar. And I tried to 50-50 it, like the first time, thinking that all you have to do is ride up the ramp, and then just pop on the two PVC pipes and slide. Annnd... I got hung up on the lip and landed with my chest on the angled support of the rail slide. I thought my ribs were broken. I just had the wind knocked out of me but I couldn’t tell the difference.

-Virgil Abloh, June 2021, GQ

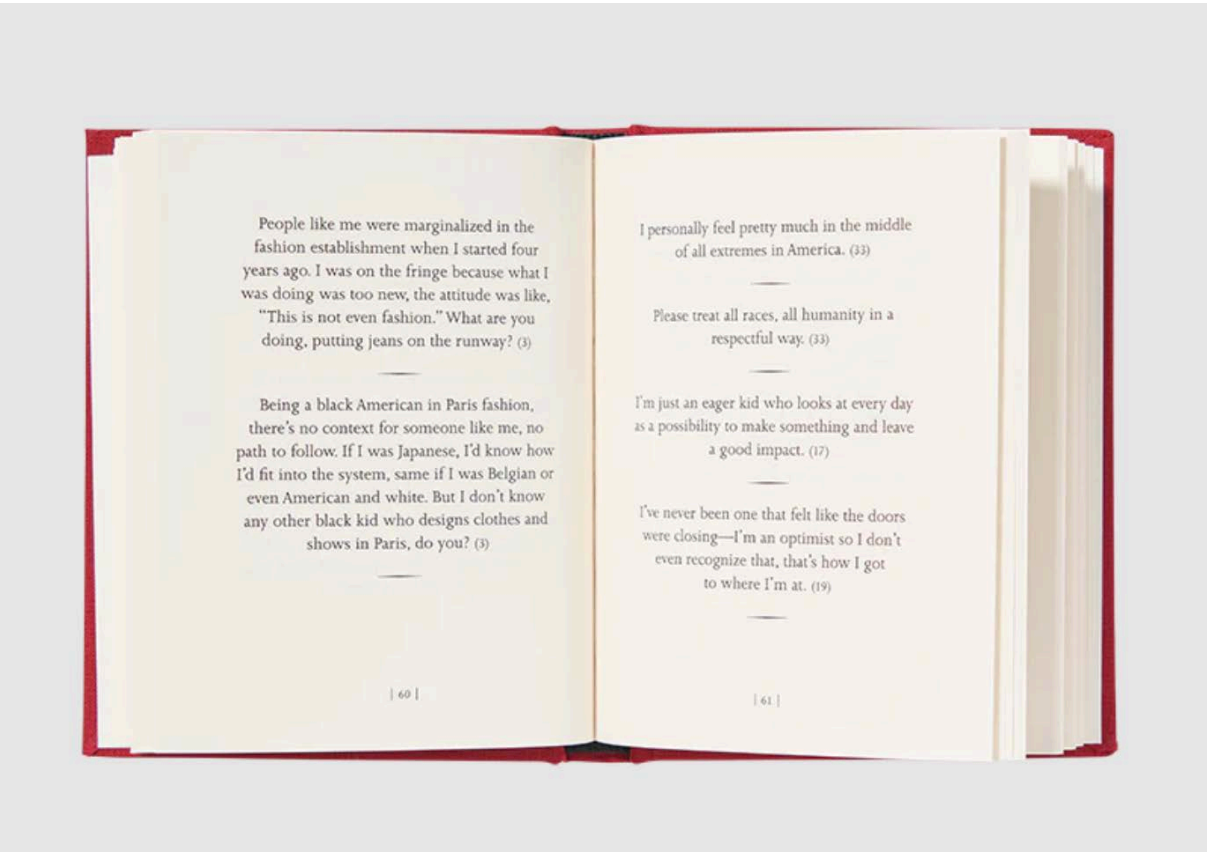


Appendix B: Virgil Abloh™ project highlights steered by Sky Gellatly

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Abloh-isms
Published by Princeton
University Press, March 2021.

Gellatly orchestrated and his
team researched and sourced a
collection of essential
quotations by Virgil Abloh.



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Off-White and FUTURA
Spring/Summer 20 Collection

Off-White tapped Gellatly and
his team to partner in
concept, product design and
communication strategy
featuring the legendary
artist and polymath, Futura



Louis Vuitton Exhibition
White Canvas:
LV Trainer in Residence

Feb 24 – Mar 16, 2023
Garage Traversi, Milan

Featured artists are Wild
Style-era spray paint
legends Lady Pink, Lee
Quiñones, and Rammellzee
were chosen by Virgil Abloh
and Sky Gellatly. “We cared
a lot about these artists,
they inspired us as kids,”
Gellatly says. “We thought,
they’ve got to be canonized
and institutionalized in the
right way in terms of art
history. We were both of the
mind that it’s our duty as
fans and people who respect
them to help push and
accelerate that narrative
while they’re still active
and making art.”

