

# Pierre Cardin

Dive into the story of one of the greatest titans of the fashion industry, who revolutionized established norms. Pierre Cardin's business strategies continue to set the standard for entrepreneurship even today, ensuring that his legacy remains immortalized in history. This e-book is crafted for every aficionado of the fashion industry, emphasizing the power of vision. Discover the professional journey of an enduring legend.

BY VALERIA E. KONST

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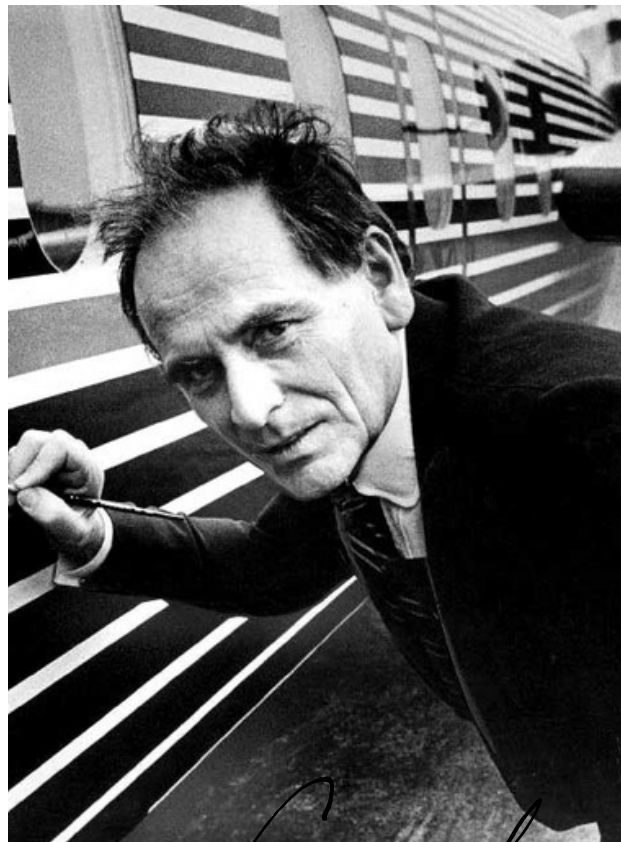
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Amidst the tribulations of 2020, we bid farewell to a significant figure in the industry, the illustrious **Pierre Cardin**. **With deep sorrow, the fashion world mourns the legendary creator of futuristic French couture, and every media outlet floods the internet and mass media with the unfortunate news.**

Some of the greatest achievements of the great designer become unfairly known posthumously, and soon humanity - beyond the realm of fashion - **recognizes Pierre Cardin's pioneering and innovative creativity.**

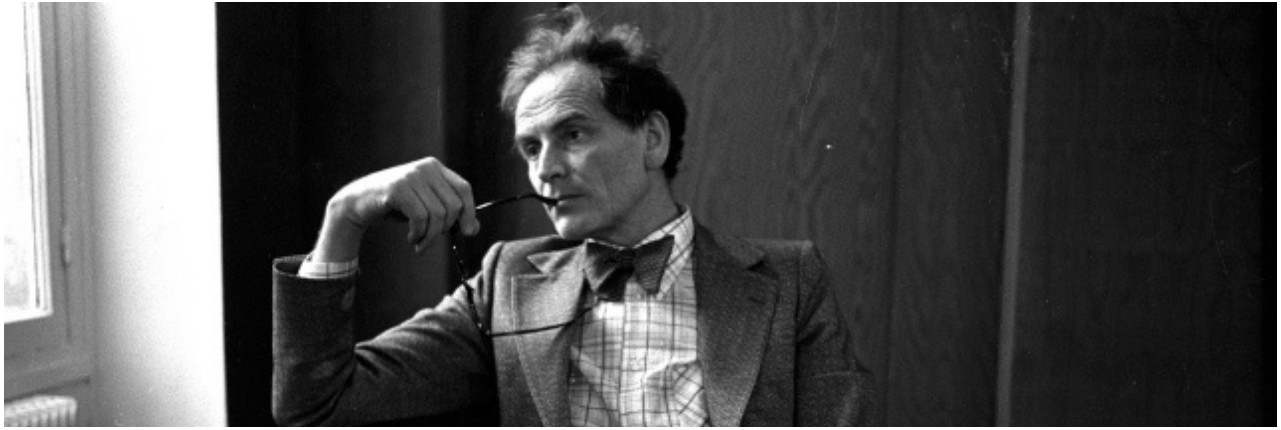
However, he himself felt distinctly unjust as a designer, which strongly emanates from his critical statements made while alive. In a 1998 interview with the Italian newspaper La Stampa, Pierre Cardin makes a gloomy statement regarding the houses of Prada, Gucci, and Armani, stating, among other things:

***"They are commercial brands, not designers. Gucci made leather suitcases. Visconti gave me my first Gucci suitcase as a gift. I succeeded without money, armed only with my talent. I was not created by banks. I am the sole owner of my brand (...) Armani makes clothes that are elegant, wearable, and beautiful. But that is not creativity."***



*Pierre*

*Cardin*



# THE UNYIELDING *PERSONALITY*

The imposing personality of Cardin and the sharp criticism that characterized him as a creator, despite the undivided admiration the world had for his name, undoubtedly made him provocatively competitive. **However, his hard work, inexhaustible inventiveness, richness, and mastery in marketing made him unparalleled.**

**His creations still serve as an inspiration for every contemporary designer.** Examples abound. From the latest collection of the Balenciaga house presented in the December issue, featuring Demna Gvasalia's stunning space creations in the online video game "Afterworld: The Age of Tomorrow," to the pagoda shoulders adopted by Olivier Rousteing for Balmain in the spring/summer 2021 collection at PFW, **the designer's remarkable idiosyncratic style and signature are reaffirmed endlessly.**

In light of the latest Balenciaga collection, it's interesting to note that despite his magnificent achievement of being the first person to wear the historic suit worn by Neil Armstrong when he set foot on the moon, Cardin never managed to fulfill an immeasurable desire: **to go to the moon.**

The love and boundless creativity of Cardin's work had an inexhaustible source of inspiration from space, an innovation that historically wrote and marked the fashion industry and will perpetually define it. **Perhaps he never managed to travel to the moon himself, yet undoubtedly he journeyed every silhouette with his dreamily futuristic creations and the unparalleled, monumental elegance that characterized them.**

The great designer never truly left. Whether he was not appreciated as much as he deserved is another matter. **Nevertheless, let's face it, the originality of his creations will always play a pivotal role for future generations of designers.**



# What does his absence ultimately mean for fashion?

*"Fashion is an X-ray of society. I always wanted to be different because that's the only way to endure"*

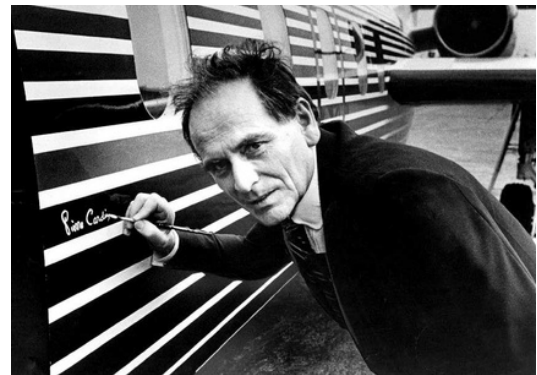
Since Pierre Cardin passed away, thousands of articles have been written in his name. Most of them offered a retrospective of his biography, while others revealed hidden secrets of the designer's personal life, such as his "rebellious" lifestyle, his sexual preferences, and the fact that he was buried in the same grave as his former partner, Andre Oliver.

Certainly, the death of the designer served as an opportunity to make his achievements more widely known, but critical questions arise: Now that Cardin's biography is posted across all media platforms, nowhere is the most important aspect mentioned — **how did he manage to bring his works to life? How did he implement them? What made him stand out from all the other designers of his time? How do his pioneering designs and futuristic silhouettes shape and define fashion, even in 2021? How does his death pass the baton to new designers to continue his work, and what does his absence ultimately mean for fashion?**

A personality like Pierre Cardin deserves deep analysis, especially from a business perspective. If there's something you haven't heard yet but need to know, it's that **the legendary designer**, beyond being an unparalleled creator, was primarily a shrewd entrepreneur.

Fashion history has repeatedly shown that there was **never a shortage of talent in any decade, but rather a lack of entrepreneurship combined with innovation**. In simpler terms, many designers never made it big not because they lacked talent but because they rested on their laurels and didn't take the next step, the so-called **business** aspect.

Today, it seems impossible to sell a product without following a specific marketing strategy. **Yet many forget this, even today.**



Pierre Cardin early on realized that he needed to evolve the business aspect of his work within the framework of his inexhaustible work ethic. Yes, he was incredibly **workaholic**. He worked nights and loved everything related to his work, except... collaborations. That's true, it was his weak point. His relationships with his colleagues were not the best. **He was incredibly demanding, another component of his success.**

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# The First Steps That Defined Him as a Designer

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**From the age of 14, Pierre showed a strong desire for independent self-rule by leaving his well-off family and working in workshops in central France.**

There, as an apprentice, he learned the initial secrets of design and garment construction. One might say that even as a young man, he was already thinking methodically, despite his father's strong desire for him to become an architect. His strategy was clear from an early age. It was already evident that he was an intelligent individual with an unwavering personality and leadership abilities.



**Just as a good wine requires time, Pierre Cardin, at the age of 30 in 1951, manages to present his first collection.**

This strategy was by no means accidental. Business-wise, it was the ideal period for Pierre, and he knew it very well. Two significant pillars contributed to his mathematically certain success. **Fashion was already under French dominance, and furthermore, the glorification of the legendary New Look by the House of Dior had already begun to fade.**

It was the moment when fashion was seeking the next "star," the next "New Look." Seizing the opportunity, the designer makes the final move, and the fashion world soon becomes his.

In his design studio, only 30 people were initially employed. Within a year, this number tripled. The income was so substantial that the designer experimented with the best fabrics in the market. Another strategy that led him to success was the quality of the materials and their excellent craftsmanship.



# THE BUBBLE *DRESS*

However, it is unknown with what capital he started this entire "empire" as several years elapsed from his first steps until the creation of his first atelier on Rue Richepanse. We certainly know that he came from well-off parents, but this does not necessarily mean that they financially supported his vision. It would indeed be interesting to have saved at least a few more pieces of information regarding the "construction" of the temple of the great designer to analyze his first entrepreneurial steps, but as our American friends say, "it's none of our business." **Certainly, for Pierre Cardin, work was never a fear. He lived and breathed for it, like a true entrepreneur.**

Before establishing his empire, for a whole five years, the designer worked at Paquin, Schiaparelli, and Dior.



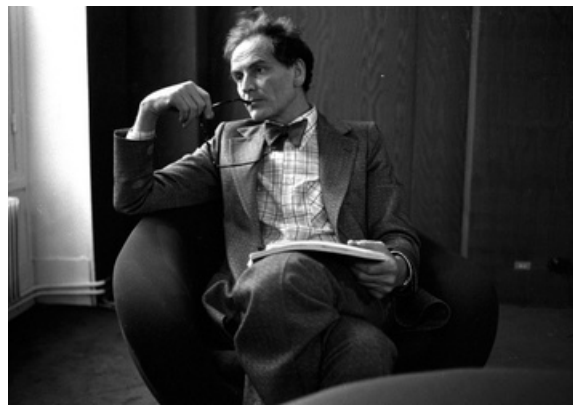
**He refused collaboration with Balenciaga** and experimented extensively in creating theatrical masks and cinematic costumes, even framing the legendary film "**Beauty and the Beast**" by Jean Cocteau. Moreover, at the height of his fame, Cardin was the first fashion designer to enter the **Academy of Fine Arts of France in 1992** (from which his death was also announced), when fashion was recognized as fine art. His steps were steady. The experience he gained from collaborations and his knowledge proved beneficial and fruitful. It was no longer random.

By 1953, Pierre had already become known for his famous "**bubble dress**" (with the balloon skirt), while his first boutique "Eve" opened at 118 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, serving as another cornerstone in the designer's business plan.

# PIERRE CARDIN'S DIPLOMACY

## PIERRE CARDIN'S DIPLOMACY

The intelligence of a good entrepreneur requires knowledge of the "where and when" to act and invest. Having business acumen in certain cases can save you from any mistakes. **The highly intelligent Pierre Cardin never attempted to enter "foreign fields," and this ultimately proved so ingenious that it led him to create yet another magnificent empire, "pret-a-porter."** How did he manage it? While in 1959 haute couture was at its zenith - with Dior and Balenciaga as the main protagonists - Cardin **withdrew and returned with the innovative idea of everyday dressing, Ready-to-wear (pret-a-porter).** Ingenious?



## INNOVATIVENESS WAS A HALLMARK OF HIS WORK

**Pioneer and ceaseless creation of innovative ideas were in his blood.** As early as 1958, he managed to design the world's first **unisex collection**, the landmark **Cosmos** collection, which dominated the second half of the 20th century. Pierre Cardin never ceased to experiment, **trying out new and different synthetic fabrics**, such as the 1968 minidress with the use of techno fabric, the 1969 waterproof vinyl, and the 1971 envelope hat made from raffia.

The designer constantly drew inspiration from **geometry, sculpture, and architecture**. He embraced **vinyl**, which he adopted in his most beloved collections, and introduced **colorful patterns into men's clothing**, a particularly revolutionary move considering the conservatism of the era.

Pierre Cardin

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## THE "BRAINWASH" THAT OVERTURNED FASHION STANDARDS

While entrepreneurship is anchored in consciousness, it also demands robust strategies of calculated risk.

Though the incomparably imaginative and archetype-breaking designs of the creator shook the fashion world with their unconventional, pioneering, and eccentric character, one of the greatest achievements of the great entrepreneur undoubtedly lay in the establishment of the "different" and idiosyncratic in everyday collections.

Pierre Cardin had transformed the streets into open catwalks, and the world gained complete freedom in the oasis of fashion.

The right to futuristic elegance was no longer reserved for the few. The integration of elegant otherworldly finesse that captured the everyday life of the common people **changed history by creating new rules and horizons.**

There, the legendary designer "stepped in" and created yet another powerful and dominant empire that spans kilometers even today. It is truly remarkable how he managed to radically change - almost brainwash - in a peculiar society the until-then ideology that defined anything qualitative and "different" as high fashion, and not only changed it but also led to its initiation. **This perhaps urges us to understand the power we can have as leaders in fashion.**

Everyone now has the right to quality. Fashion ceased to mean only high fashion because of Pierre Cardin, while at the same time even haute couture had a different approach. The great designer and entrepreneur had a clearly **targeted vision and strategy.** His revolution led fashion into an exceptionally progressive brainwash that led every class to create "artistic events" of immeasurable elegance.

While the designer's designs continuously stunned with their sharp angles, perimeter shapes, sculptural volumes, and strikingly futuristic unisex silhouettes, **the essence of the revolution was cemented by replacing the "unusual" with the normal and primarily by adopting it into the daily lives of people with overwhelming success.**



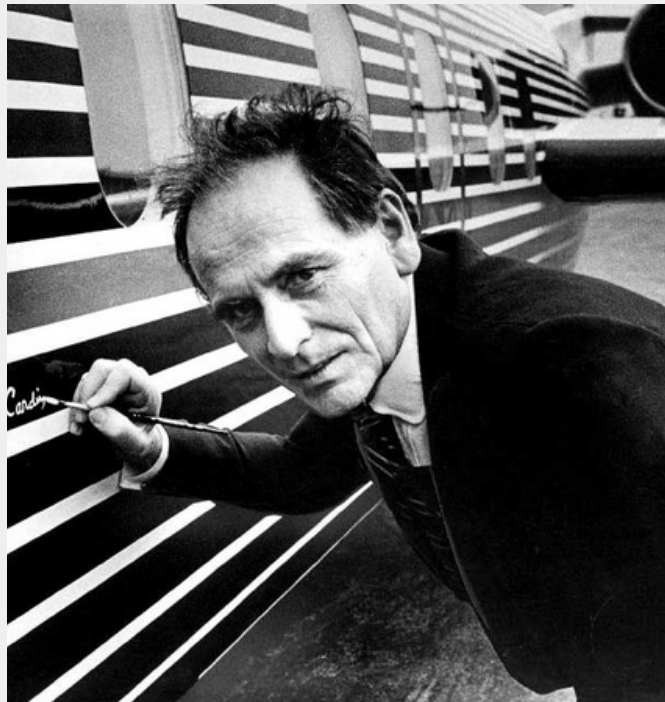
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# The logo that decisively marked the era's marketing

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**"My name is more  
important than myself."**

The success and creativity of the designer had inspired various industries, **extending from furniture design to house constructions and even airplanes!** This expansion might remind you of something from Steve Jobs. No, it cannot be compared to the evolution of the American multinational technology company, Apple, but it's essential to understand the similarity in applying certain strategies and the common vision of creating fashion based on your logo.



**Some moves are not entirely coincidental. Some business models tend to resemble each other, aiming for the same outcome. Voilà, here's their spread! As one realizes from the above tactics, a proper blend of marketing skills and a cleverly devised business plan can radically change everything we knew until then. In other words, it can create new worlds. It's what today's fashion revolution needs. Think about it...**

And while many might agree that at this point, Cardin's works were already enough to leave a mark in the fashion realm, he emphatically proves us wrong. **The designer's pioneering business moves knew no bounds.**



## THE "SPACE-AGE" COLLECTION USHERED IN A NEW ERA IN THE *1960S*

While fashion houses like Christian Dior, Cristóbal Balenciaga, and Yves Saint Laurent were engaged in relentless competition in haute couture, Pierre Cardin was designing clothes for... space!

he creation of the **Space-Age** in the 1960s gave fashion a new breath and decisively shaped it, especially after his first major solo success in 1954. Every fashion show was surrounded by delicate dresses resembling astronaut suits, and the runways transformed into artistic performances reminiscent of NASA space missions. **Spectators traveled mentally to a parallel universe, encountering unique futuristic creations by Pierre Cardin ready to gently land them on the moon.**

The magnificent designer always charted his own course, through unbeaten paths, sometimes challenging but always fruitful. That was ultimately his entrepreneurial intelligence.

**"I ALWAYS TRIED TO BE DIFFERENT, TO BE MYSELF. WHETHER OTHERS LIKED IT OR NOT, I NEVER CARED; THAT WAS NEVER THE ESSENCE,"**  
**CARDIN SAID IN A REUTERS INTERVIEW.**



# THE LONGING FOR INVESTMENTS IN *ASIA*

Pierre Cardin was constantly expanding. He turned his attention to Asia very early on, where he gained recognition. In 1957, he visited Japan during the reconstruction period, introducing Parisians to Japanese art. In 1978, **he became the first Frenchman to establish himself in communist China, organizing extravagant fashion shows at the Great Wall of China.**

**He was truly a designer ahead of his time. What we essentially analyzed in the article "China: At the Center of the Luxury Market Until 2025", he was adopting almost 50 years earlier. If you recall, I had spoken to you about the characteristic features of quality, consumer awareness, and the storytelling aspect that characterizes Chinese marketing strategies, similar to those of the creator. Pierre Cardin was not accidentally marked as a business genius. The relevance and signature of Cardin's pioneering works will forever remain in the forefront of fashion, even if only in spirit.**

Everything was meticulously planned; each of his moves seemed innovative, and the boundaries of success had been shattered. Humanity was now watching with admiration and anticipation for Pierre's next moves, while the expansion of his name into new continents heralded the evolution of fashion beyond all borders.

His commercial activities extended to various forms of art and investment, culminating in the acquisition of the Maxim's restaurant, a symbol of French gastronomy and aristocracy in Paris - where he later created the interior of the Maxim's Musee Art Nouveau museum - and subsequently turned it into a chain that expanded all the way to China. Pierre's profound need for investments in Asia was a characteristic feature of his recognized success.





## THE LEGENDARY COLLABORATIONS AND THE RECOGNIZED *SUCCESS*

Pierre Cardin's expansion was relentless. As every end marks a new beginning, in **1966 the designer resigned from the Chambre Syndicale** and began presenting his collections at his own space, the **"Espace Cardin"** - the former **"Théâtre des Ambassadeurs"** - which he leveraged to promote new artistic talents, including theatrical ensembles, musicians, and more. Since 1971, artists like Marlene Dietrich, Bob Wilson, Gérard Depardieu, and even Pilobolus paraded through its halls.

**Cardin was particularly renowned for his diverse business activities, which aimed to engage various industries.** Throughout his professional career, he received numerous honorary titles, and his successes were continuous. Some of these included:



He designed and dressed stars of the era such as the legendary Beatles and the much-talked-about Hollywood **actress Elizabeth Taylor**, while later he dressed well-known names like supermodel **Naomi Campbell** with her super glamorous appearance at the 'Commonwealth Fashion Exchange' celebration at Buckingham Palace in 2018 ahead of London Fashion Week.

His last home, named **"Bubble Palace"**, also served as a venue for events/exhibitions where last February it gained the title of **'Europe's Most Expensive Property'** when it was listed for sale for the high amount of **305 million pounds**.

One of his stunning dresses was worn in the world-famous classic film **"La Belle et la Bete"** by Jean Cocteau in 1946. He also designed uniforms for **Pakistan International Airlines**, which were introduced from 1966 to 1971. In the same year, he redesigned the **Barong Tagalog**, a national attire of the Philippines deeply appreciated by President Ferdinand Marcos.

*"Fashion is a reflection of society.  
I always wanted to be different, because  
that's the only way to endure."*

In 1975, he opened his first furniture boutique on **Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré** in Paris. In the years 1977, 1979, and 1983, he was awarded the **Cartier Golden Thimble** prize by the French high fashion industry for the most creative collection of the season.

Throughout his career, the designer opened his own museums, such as the **"Past-Present-Future"** museum in 2010 in Saint-Quen, France, featuring 80 iconic designs. He became a prominent honorary member of UNESCO in 1991, actively contributing with his creativity and futuristic designs, which adorn museums worldwide.

In 1960, he announced his first men's collection called **Cylindre**, represented by 150 French students. Six years later, he created his first children's collection, which received high praise after a stunning presentation in Paris. However, in 1972, he also launched his first men's fragrance, **"Pour Monsieur,"** and at the age of 52, in 1972, he became the first high-fashion designer to pose for the cover of **"Time magazine"**.

He was a member of the **Chambre Syndicale de la Haute Couture et du Prêt-à-Porter** from 1953 to 1993. The biography titled **"Pierre Cardin: His Magnificent Destiny,"** written by Sylvana Lorenz in 1995 as a tribute to the great designer's journey until then, received the best reviews of the time.

In 2010, this work was recreated by the author **Jean-Pascal Hesse**, releasing the book **"Pierre Cardin: 60 Years of Innovation,"** a tribute to the 60 years of magnificent design journey by the designer. Later, in 2016, it evolved to encompass the designer's historic 70-year career, under the same author, titled **"Espace Pierre Cardin."** It's a bibliography undoubtedly worth reading and deserving of an honorary place in your library.

Just a few months before his passing (December 29, 2020), the great designer, Pierre Cardin, was honored with the documentary "House of Cardin" by P. David Ebersole and Todd Hughes. It's highly recommended to watch. However, please note that in Europe, it's not available on any platform except in America. In other words, I encourage you to use a VPN service, as I did. And to preemptively address this, Amazon is not an option anymore due to recent updates that prevent region changes. Nonetheless, it's worth watching as many secrets are unveiled.



In 1970, Pierre Cardin revealed a new collection for... nurses! This much-discussed move left everyone astonished, not only for its creative innovation but primarily for his inexhaustible radical imagination. With this initiative, the innovative designer sent a decisive message to society that fashion is everywhere and always has the final say... Because fashion must always be a step ahead!

**"Fashion is a reflection of society. I always wanted to be different, because that's the only way to endure."**

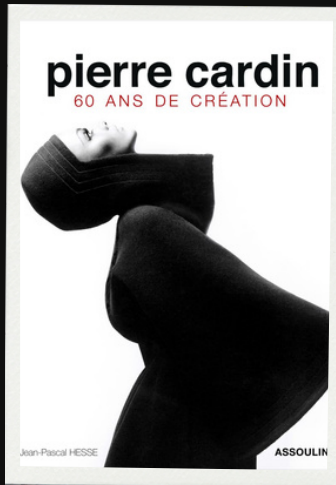
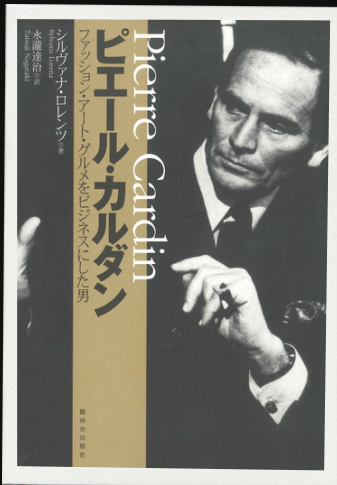
On February 20, 2020, the magnificent Pierre Cardin rightfully earned the honorary star on the Palm Springs' Walk of Stars titled "Pierre Cardin: Designer Futurist".

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“THEY SAID PRET-A-PORTER WILL KILL YOUR NAME, AND IT SAVED ME”



# THE UNFULFILLED *DESIRE*

The astute investments of the creator certainly impress; however, **let's not forget that "heavy burdens" and thorny risks certainly demand relentless hard work, dedication, and intricate wisdom.** That's why entrepreneurship isn't for everyone. The great Cardin, even in the last years of his life, regretted two things. One is the fact that **he never managed to go to the moon**, and secondly, **he never managed to create a family, to have a child.**

The glory and success certainly have their repercussions. However, we would say that our journey is full of choices, and often these choices may contradict each other. Somewhere here, allow me to borrow a phrase from my former editor-in-chief Costantino Roselli in the latest issue of December, "think of life as a video game" [<https://beautymagic.gr/>], and soon you will realize the value of life and its ultimate purpose. We are beings that can transform into superheroes, but each one charts their own path. **And to play devil's advocate, do you believe that a child was indeed what the magnificent Pierre Cardin needed in the end?** Does the fact that he managed to conquer the world with his creativity and entrepreneurial skills validate that he could have been an equally great father? And more importantly - without delving into his romantic life - could he, with the same strategies that won the admiration of the fashion world, win the care of a child? The questions raised are many, the answers elusive. The only certainty is that under different circumstances, things would have been completely different, and perhaps today we wouldn't be talking about the same Pierre Cardin.

## THE UNWAVERING EXPECTATIONS UNTIL THE END

In 2016, in a relevant interview with Bloomerang regarding the sale of his conglomerate, which was priced at 1 billion euros, among other things, Pierre Cardin stated:

***"If you don't have the money, then don't buy us. No one is pressuring you. I can die without selling it."***

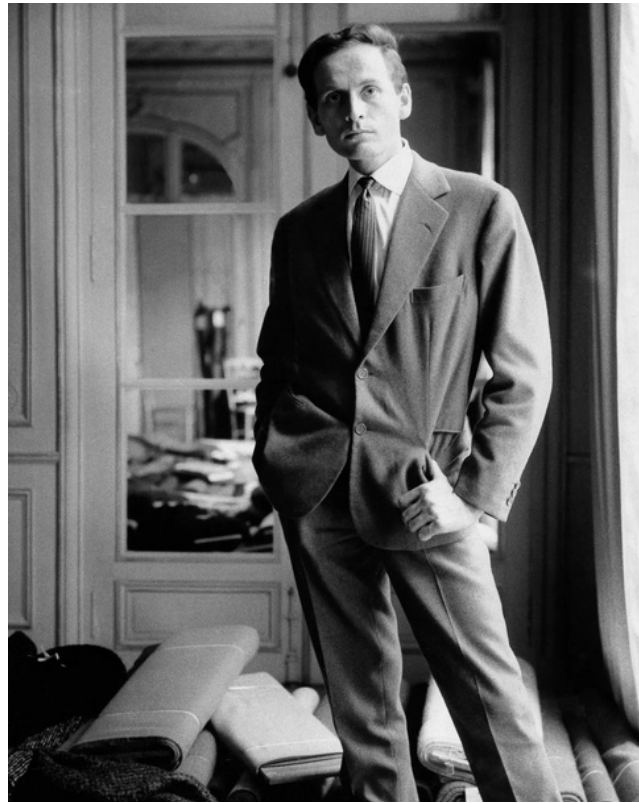
Although his great nephew, **Rodrigo Basilicati**, is listed as the manager of the company Pierre Cardin Evolution, Cardin refused until recently to clearly appoint him as the heir to his work. **It seems that the unwavering authenticity of his entrepreneurship did not allow him to yield or compromise on anything less than what he himself expected for his legacy.**



# Pierre Cardin

The revolution of fashion, however, is revitalized in light of 2021. It is true that mere willingness is not enough to radically redefine a new innovative system, but it also requires a meticulously planned strategy. **Pierre Cardin never yielded.** His business plan had a beginning, middle, and end. **He worked tirelessly, created unparalleled trends, and never ceased to disrupt the status quo.** Cardin's entrepreneurship was not merely intelligent and pioneering. **The "brainwash" he secured in the 1960s and 1970s through his pioneering marketing strategies and powerful investments literally captured the interest of fashion, immersing society in his uniquely visionary realm, establishing unconventional ideas for the respective society, and forging new bonds through the establishment of new norms in the immutable fashion industry.**

The magnificent Pierre Cardin, beyond being an uncompromising visionary, embodies a symbol of an entrepreneurial model, a paradigm of prosperity, and a catalyst for the evolution of fashion. A thorough study of his business strategies, applied and reshaped into new innovative marketing paradigms, can lead to newly formed ecosystems inspired by the future. **It suffices, therefore, to adapt to the new code of sustainability and the modernized digital-virtual reality.**



***"THE CLOTHES I PREFER ARE THOSE I CREATED FOR A LIFE THAT DOESN'T EXIST YET, THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE."  
(1990, VOGUE)***



