

A NEW VOGUE: THE EMPIRE REIMAGINED

2025

HUMAN-DRIVEN AI CONCEPT DESIGN
michelle pontes / creative direction / synthography

PORT FOLIO

A NEW VOGUE: THE EMPIRE REIMAGINED

A New Vogue: The Empire Reimagined is a high-concept visual portfolio that reinterprets the iconic aesthetic of Star Wars: A New Hope through the unapologetic lens of fashion's most subversive image lenses.

Each piece in this collection challenges the cultural hierarchy between pop cinema and high fashion, staging stormtroopers, rebels, and Sith lords in surreal compositions, avant-garde poses, and editorial lighting. Set against stark backdrops of crimson and chrome, these characters no longer serve a galactic narrative, they command a visual one.

This is concept.

A cinematic universe recast as a catwalk, where uniform becomes costume, villain becomes icon, and rebellion is dressed in silk.

ARTISTIC COMPOSITION



Each image is deliberately constructed like a fashion tableau: cinematic lighting, precise posing, negative space used like punctuation. The composition leans heavily on contrast both visual and thematic.

You've got the hard gloss of armour against soft fabric. Static figures in battle gear posed like mannequins. Stormtroopers no longer in formation, but in formation styled, staged, and utterly still. These are editorial spreads disguised as imperial propaganda.

Colour does the heavy lifting. Deep reds dominate, bleeding into every surface, creating tension and heat.

Perspective is played with, too.

And then there's movement. Or rather, the illusion of it.

Figures walk side-by-side like a choreographed runway cast, even the pixelated trooper glitching forward. Every image is a moment caught mid-stride, mid-thought, mid-glamour.

This is composition as commentary.

A visual essay on power and spectacle told not through dialogue or battle, but through rebellion.



A defiant vision of imperial femininity draped in ruched ivory and armed with twin katanas, she stands at the helm of a monochrome cavalry of AT-ATs and stormtroopers. Rebellion is stitched in satin and styled with precision.



She stands still in a white dress, surrounded by red-armoured conformity. Innocence or infiltration? Either way, the Empire wasn't expecting her.



Surrounded by silent red sentinels, the only softness in the scene is the white dress folded arms, tilted chin, and not a trace of fear. Rebellion, redefined.



A starcruiser looms above, but it's the woman below, red heels, red umbrella, white dress who steals the frame. The future isn't arriving. It's already walking by.



She walks the line between propaganda and provocation draped in scarlet, crowned in pearls, and flanked by troopers who serve not command, but spectacle.



In a corridor built for command, colour takes control. Yellow dress, red heels, a matching case and not a glance back. This isn't escape. It's arrival.



The future wears lace and red lipstick. A stormtrooper helmet reimaged for the runway where defence becomes design, and the gaze is always returned, never avoided.



Silence follows as she moves draped in pink, framed by red-armoured guards and machine muscle. No weapons, no words. Just presence. And that's enough.



Red in a world of white. She waits at the edge of empire, cloaked, calm, unshaken. The stormtroopers guard her, but you get the feeling, they're not in charge.

HUMAN-DRIVEN AI: THE PROCESS



1. Conceptualisation and moodboarding

We begin by defining the thematic core: reimagining the Star Wars universe through the lens of high fashion. This involves curating a comprehensive mood board that blends iconic Star Wars imagery with avant-garde fashion photography.

2. Prompt engineering

Creating detailed prompts for AI image generation tools, we describe scenes that merge Star Wars elements with high-fashion aesthetics. For example: "A stormtrooper in a couture gown, posed against a minimalist backdrop, dramatic lighting reminiscent of a fashion runway." These prompts guide the AI to produce images that align with our conceptual vision.



3. AI image generation

Utilizing advanced AI prompts and parameters we generate a series of images based on the original concept. This iterative process allows for exploration of various compositions, styles, and interpretations, ensuring a diverse and rich visual output.

4. Post-processing and refinement

The AI-generated images undergo meticulous post-processing. Adjustments are made to colour grading, lighting, and composition to enhance the fashion-forward aesthetic and ensure cohesiveness across the portfolio.

5. Curation and presentation

From the refined images, we curate a selection that best represents the fusion of Star Wars and high fashion. Each image is paired with descriptive captions, providing context and highlighting the interplay between the sci-fi elements and fashion motifs.



A stormtrooper helmet hides her eyes, but not her intent. Soft pleats, red lips, and silence sharper than armour, this is uniform turned personal.



Intricacy meets intimidation. In embroidered armour and cable-knit calm, this stormtrooper doesn't fight, she reflects. Power, in this universe, is quietly ornate.



Power reimagined in white roses and red heels. She is the revolution. Weapon in hand, elegance intact, command never looked this sharp.



A stormtrooper in full bloom, lace, petals, and sneakers. This is a statement. The uniform just got personal.

HUMAN-DRIVEN AI: EXECUTION

Material study:

AI-assisted styling explored the reflectivity of armour and the drape of couture fabrics under fashion photography lighting. Special focus was placed on light interacting with glossy surfaces like Darth Vader's helmet and stormtrooper suits, mimicking lacquered fashion editorials.

Composition experimentation:

Multiple AI-generated iterations tested positioning of fashion-forward figures alongside Star Wars icons. Each composition pushed narrative tension, who leads, who follows, and how silhouette and stride alter perception of power.

Cinematic influence integration:

The AI was fed references from both high fashion runways and iconic sci-fi stills, merging cinematic grandeur with editorial stillness. This produced frames that feel paused mid-film, yet staged like magazine covers.

Emotional resonance:

AI lighting experiments captured the eerie calm of empire control, the defiance of rebellion, and the absurdity of fashion as armour. Subtle changes in shadow and hue were used to evoke irony, melancholy, and surreal glamour.

A New Vogue: The Empire Reimagined stands as a confrontation between power and presentation. It's a re-authoring of myth through textile, pose, and lens. Here, AI doesn't imitate. It collaborates. And fashion becomes the language of a galaxy far, far more fabulous.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Michelle Pontes is a visual storyteller, creative director, and synthographer reimagining iconography through the lens of fashion, feminism, power, and AI. With a background in marketing and concept design, she builds bold visual narratives that collide iconography with futurism.

Her work plays with contrast, softness in hard places and rebellion dressed in silence. She uses AI as a co-creator, bending its logic toward human emotion and cultural tension.

In *A New Vogue: The Empire Reimagined*, Michelle doesn't remix Star Wars, she restyles it. Troopers become models. Heroines wear threat like perfume. Every frame is a question: What if empire was aesthetic? What if fashion led the resistance?

This is storytelling through aesthetic resistance.

This is Human-driven AI concept design.

Michelle Pontes collaborates with brands, publications, and creative teams looking to challenge visual norms. Her work sits at the intersection of concept design, AI-led image creation, and sharp creative direction. For those building new narratives or breaking out of tired formats, Michelle brings a clear eye, a strong point of view, and visuals that speak louder than strategy decks.

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