

# Commercial Fashion

How do manufacturers achieve the look of designers clothing at affordable prices?

Study the pictures below.

Designer Clothing v High Street.

The beautiful supermodel Anja Rubik has worn the silver sequined number to this year's *Costume Institute Gala*. If you don't have \$5,000-\$8,000 lying around, but still covet the dress, just read on.



## Bebe Sequin Striped Party Dress

Bebe is determined to ride the Balmain wave until the very end. Once again they have replicated a dress which is very reminiscent of the above shown Balmain Fall 2009 strapless mini dress. Bebe's version might have spaghetti straps and the ruffles on the skirt differ slightly, but it's more than obvious that the dress is inspired by Balmain.



Bebe Sequin Striped Party Dress  
(\$179, Bebe)

In the meantime we'll have to drool at all the pieces from this year's fall collection and may I say it's been a wonderful one (*I think I'm saying this for the 100th time!*)? Some of the strapless mini dresses had long ruffled back trains to create a dramatic effect. Not the most practical accessory, but certainly a show-stopping one. The strapless dress below hasn't hit the stores yet, so the retail price is unknown, but Balmain dresses usually sell for \$8k-\$10k. Expensive doesn't even come close.



Bebe Strapless Sequin Train Dress  
(\$198, Bebe)



- Simplified styling
- Cheaper materials and trims
- Less processes

***Retains the look – but less expensive.***

This practice is widespread in the fashion industry. If challenged manufacturers need to prove they have changed enough of the details in the rip-off version practice to avoid court proceedings on breach of copyright. There is often little designers can do to prevent this practice.

This affects all aspects of the fashion industry but in particular:

- Clothing
- Handbags
- Accessories
- Footwear

## Did Asprey rip off the Hermes Birkin?

BY JIM JOQUICO 2 MARCH 2010 VIEW COMMENTS PRINT THIS STORY

That's a fair question to ask, considering the image below of the Asprey 1781 and the Hermes Birkin side by side which look very very much alike. We all know the deal about the Birkin: Since its introduction 20 years ago, it has been an iconic accessory among the fashion crowd for decades. It was named after British-born actress Jane Birkin, who has developed tendonitis from carrying the bag over the years.

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The Asprey 1781, meanwhile, was introduced just last year as part of the British luxury goods company's Autumn / Winter 2009 collection. Based on the differing times of introduction alone, we could properly deduce who was inspired by (copied) whose design, but that would be quite hasty and irresponsible. Additionally, Asprey argues in a press release announcing the collection that the 1781 was "based on a design from an early travelling bag" and is a "contemporary reflection of today's traveller."