

# *Adrene, Is That You?*

## Creative Strategy for Gen Z



LOADING...

STRATEGY BY

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# The Current State

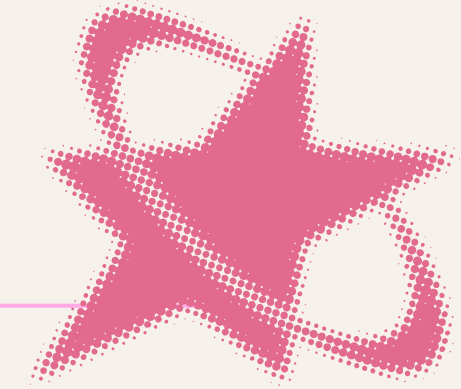
Caught Between Cheap and Chic

**Ardene** is stuck in the mid-2010s—no strong aesthetic, no cultural cache, and hemorrhaging market share on both ends.

- Ultra-fast-fashion (**Shein, Cider, ROMWE**) now captures outsized Gen Z consideration online; Shein holds ~**1.5%** of global apparel and ~**38%** of fast-fashion share.
- Canadian mall traffic is down ~**6% YoY**, putting pressure on mall-dependent chains like **Ardene**.
- Premium '**Everyday Luxury**' players like **Aritzia** are growing double-digits (**47% YoY in FY 2023**) by owning elevated basics for 18–35s.



# Problem: Ardenne's Core Gen Z Shoppper Has *Moved On*



**Below:** Ultra-fast-fashion platforms like Shein/Cider offer endless micro-trends at ultra-low prices, powered by TikTok.

**Above:** Aritzia has captured the premium fast-fashion customer with 'Everyday Luxury' basics and aspirational stores.

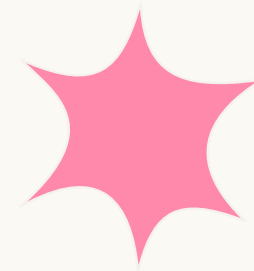
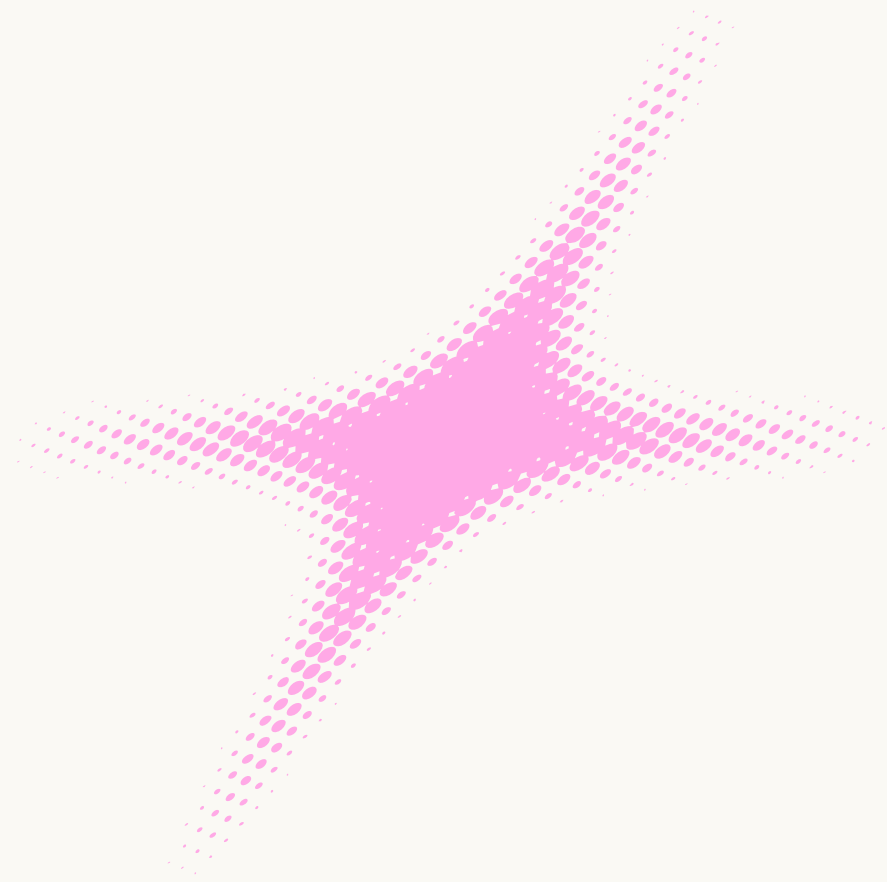
**Garage** has pivoted to aesthetic-first merchandising and strong **e-commerce** growth (~40–45% online revenue growth in 2024).

**Ardenne** sits in the middle: mall-heavy, category-first UI, weak aesthetic POV.

**Perception:** 'stuck in the mid-2010s' and not a default destination for Gen Z fits."

# *The Opportunity?*

Position Arden's "**flop era**" as the setup for a cultural **comeback**. Lean into the **glow-up narrative**.



# *Strategic Insight:* Gen Z Shops by Aesthetic, Not Category



## The Gap

- Discovery is aesthetic-first (TikTok, Pinterest, IG moodboards), not category-first navigation.
- Choice overload is real; 18–24s respond better to guided experiences (quizzes, bundles, suggested outfits).
- No accessible Canadian fast-fashion brand currently owns ‘aesthetic-first, bundle-driven’ shopping at scale.

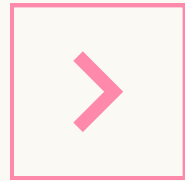


*Gen Z doesn't search for 'leggings'; they search for 'coquette' or 'cyber-Y2K' and expect curated, scroll-ready fits.*

# *Ardene, Is That You?*

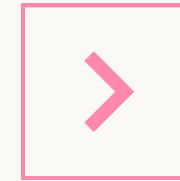
From forgotten mall brand to self-aware, aesthetic-first fast fashion for Gen Z.

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## Typography

- **OUT:** Strict, severe sans-serif (signals generic, utility-driven)
- **IN:** Bubbly, rounded letterforms (signals playful, approachable, camp)



## Colour Palette

- **Bubblegum Pink** — Y2K anchor, nostalgic, feminine without being saccharine
- **Chrome Silver** — Metallic, early-2000s pop culture, flip phone energy
- **Digital Blue** — Online-native, TikTok-coded, speaks to a digital-first generation
- **Lime Green** (accents) — Disruptive, slightly chaotic, prevents the palette from feeling safe

# *Ardene, Is That You?*

Reframe the '**flop era**' as backstory, using self-aware language to create a **glow-up** narrative.

Own **curated** Y2K-inspired aesthetics (coquette, cyber-Y2K, clean girl) **without** feeling costume-y.

Anchor the experience in **bundles** and **aesthetic-based navigation**, not generic category grids.

# Merchandising System: From Catalog to *Curated Capsules*,

## **“Shop by Aesthetic”–**

Filters like Coquette / Cyber-Y2K / Clean Girl / Downtown Cool.

## **“Vibe Quiz → Algorithmic Bundles” –**

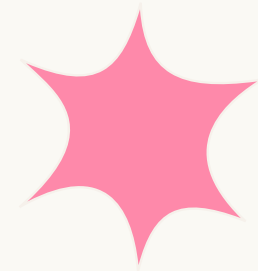
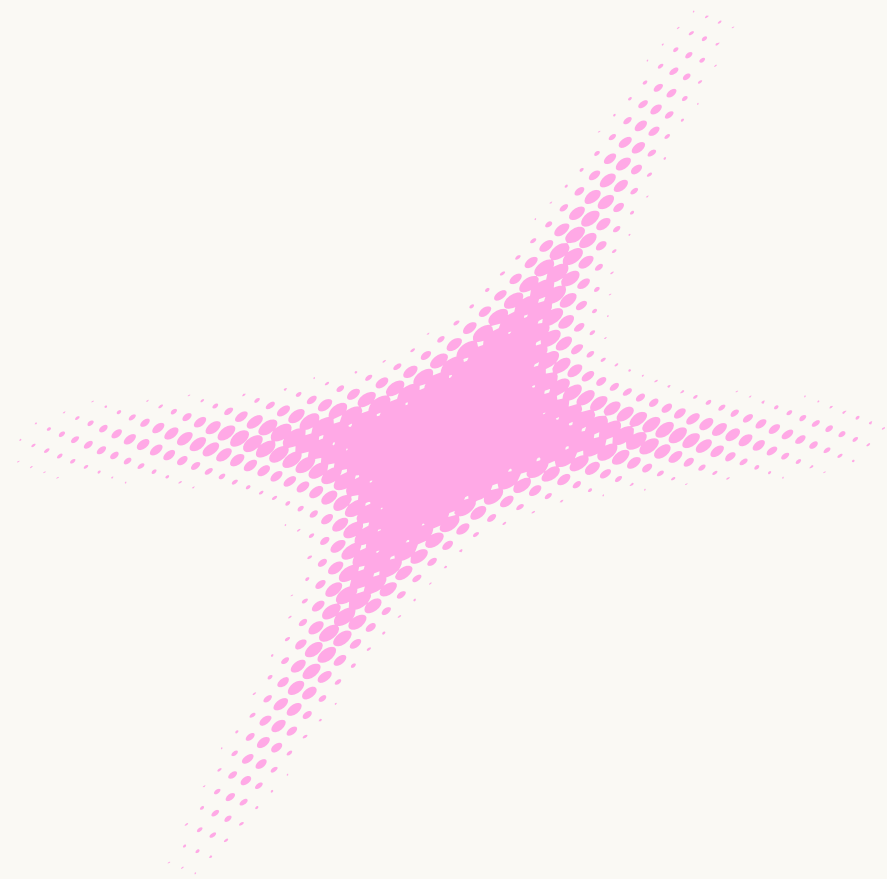
Quick quiz tags a micro-trend, algorithm suggests 2–3 bundle options (**tiers**).

## **“Bundle-Centric Cart” – UI**

nudges completion of the ‘Main Character’ bundle; price **drops** when you add accessories.

# *Impact?*

Higher AOV, reduced decision fatigue,  
more differentiated vs Shein's infinite  
scroll.

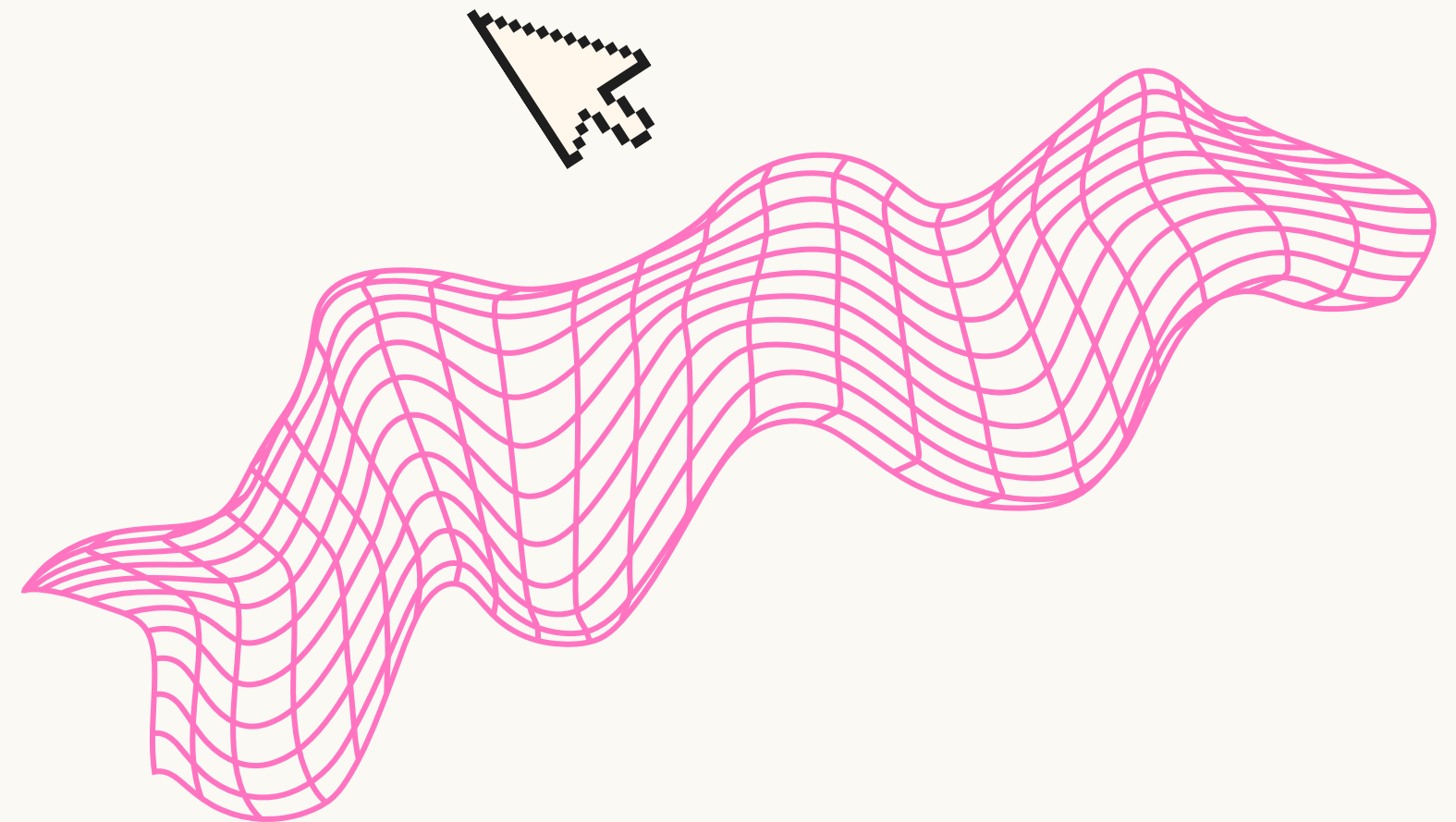


# Don't Be an NPC. Your Main Character Bundle is *Waiting*.

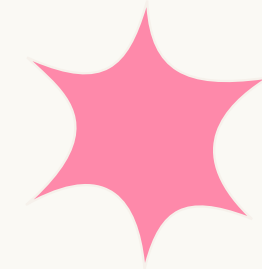


## SHIFT:

- **OUT:** Mystery bags (random, low perceived value) **IN:** Algorithmic bundles (curated, intentional, cheaper than buying separately)



# How It Works



**Step 1:** The "Vibe Check" Quiz Quick, aesthetic-based quiz (Choose a room. Choose a snack.) tags users into a microtrend.

**Step 2:** Algorithmic Curation System suggests bundles based on quiz results, reducing choice paralysis.

## Step 3: Bundle Tiers

**TIER 1:** Cherry on Top Bundle The accessory add-on (sunglasses + mini bag + choker = complete the fit)

**TIER 2:** The Main Character Bundle Full outfit + accessories (the "I need a fit for tonight" solution)

**TIER 3:** [Aesthetic Name], Is That You? Bundle Maximum curation (head-to-toe aesthetic immersion)

**The UI:** Visual "**closet**" interface. Adding suggested accessories drops total price automatically. Gamified, satisfying, frictionless.



# Launch Campaign: 'Ardene, Is That You?' (TikTok-First)

## Channels

- **Owned:** Ardene TikTok/IG, homepage hero, app.
- **Paid:** Spark Ads on creators' 'Ardene, is that you?' videos, TikTok TopView for launch week.
- **Earned:** Hashtag challenge encouraging users to style old vs new Ardene pieces."

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## Concept

Freeze-frame the Ardene glow-up in everyday chaos (nail salon, locker room, kitchen) with the line 'Ardene, is that you?'

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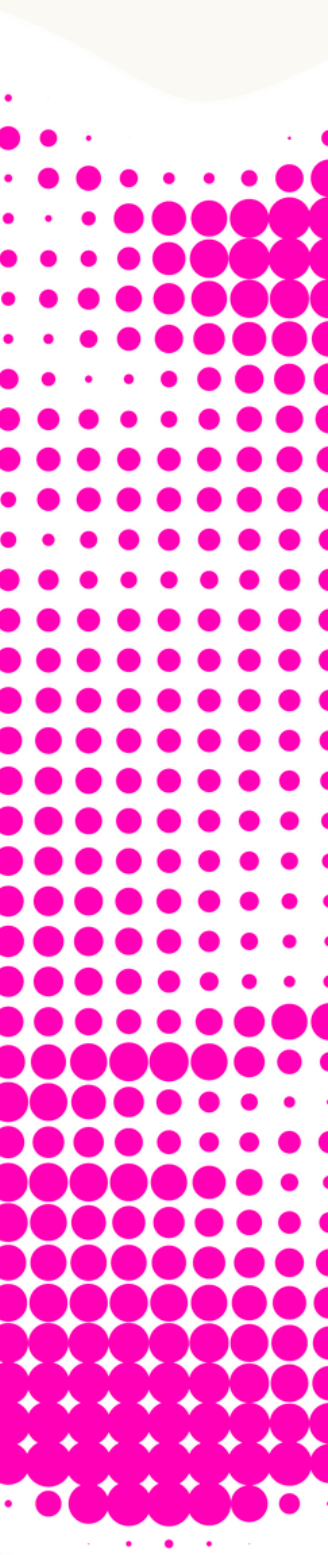
## Objective

Reintroduce Ardene as a surprising, aesthetic-driven option, using self-aware humour.

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## Role of TikTok:

Seed a sound and format that UGC creators can copy with their own 'glow-up' fits.





# Aesthetic Bundles. No BS.

Find Your Aesthetic. Fast.

ARDENE

SHINE LIKE A BOY



# Self-Aware Not Serious

Fluent in Gen Z language without trying too hard

## SALE ALERT

**Old:** "Everything is 50% off today."

**New:** "Inflation is a flop. These prices? A cyber dream. "

## ABANDONED CART

**Old:** "You left something in your bag!"

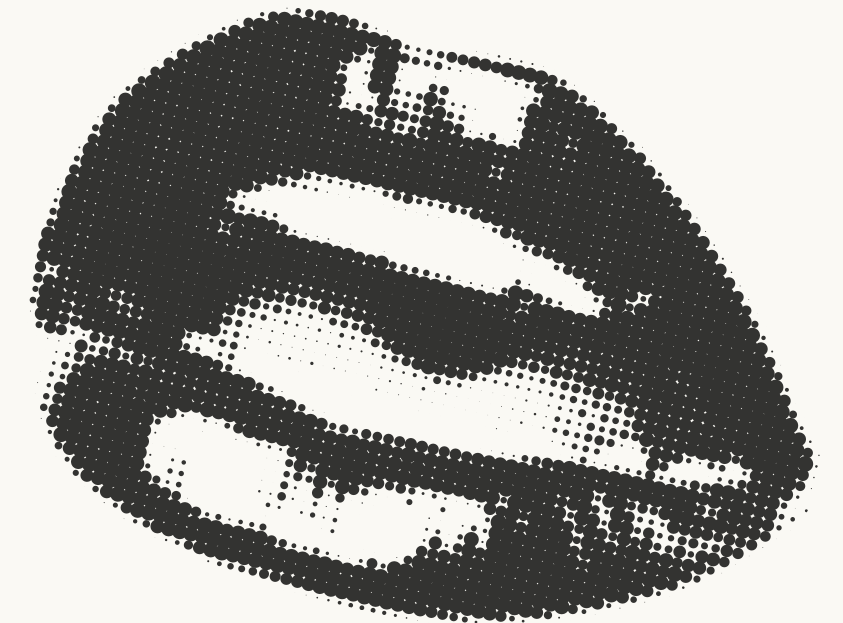
**New:** "Left on read? Your cart is starting to feel like a side character. "

## NEW DROP

**Old:** "Check out our new arrivals."

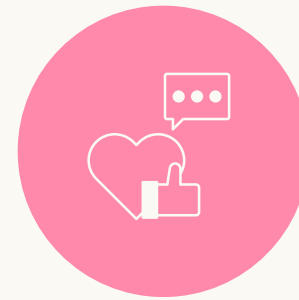
**New:** "Ardene, is that you? The glow-up just landed. Don't miss it. "

Fluent, self-aware, playful but never cringe.



# Measurement Framework

**The goal:** Prove that cultural relevance drives commercial results.



## Awareness

Aided/unaided awareness 16–24, share of voice vs Garage/Cider/Aritzia, TikTok reach.



## Engagement

Sound usage, UGC volume, save/share rates on capsule content.



## Commerce

Bundle attach rate, AOV vs baseline, 90-day repeat rate, e-comm revenue lift.

# Why This Works

## Nostalgia + Camp + Systems Thinking

*Solves real shopping friction  
Choice paralysis, decision fatigue,  
"I don't know what goes  
together"—the bundle system +  
vibe quiz removes these barriers.*

# 1

**Taps into Y2K without being dated** The aesthetic is a reference point, not a costume. It signals cultural fluency, not a trend chase.

# 2

**Positions the "flop era" as the setup** The stagnancy wasn't a failure—it was the first act. Now comes the glow-up. Self-awareness = relatability.

# 3

**Meets Gen Z where they shop** TikTok-first, aesthetic-driven, bundle-optimized. This isn't a rebrand for Instagram—it's built for how Gen Z actually discovers and buys fashion.

# Sources

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- Aritzia competitive and growth outlook – WestPeak Research & related equity research notes (2024–2025).
- J.C. Williams Group – “Declining Sales and Footfall Plague Canadian Retailers” (Retail Insider, May 2024).
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