

INTERNET

Mercedes-Benz shows dark side in new fashion campaign video

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Image from Mercedes-Benz film

By SARAH JONES

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is highlighting its ties to fashion with an eerie campaign video for spring/summer 2015.

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Luxury Daily

The three-minute film shows actress Tilda Swinton driving in the brand's S Class coupe, burying objects at each secluded spot she finds. Creating a narrative that draws consumers in makes it more likely that the viewer will keep watching until the end of a social video.

"Mercedes has a long and storied history of commitment to the highest quality of craftsmanship and design," said Jonathan Black, founder and director of **Black & Black Creative**, New York. "For me this campaign is an affirmation of that commitment.

"Although I think the video is abstract and some consumers may not get it, I don't think that is important to Mercedes," he said. "This is about positioning the car as an object of great beauty to be desired. I believe it ticks a lot of boxes in delivering a message about what this car & the brand is about.

Mr. Black is not affiliated with Mercedes-Benz, but agreed to comment as an industry

expert.

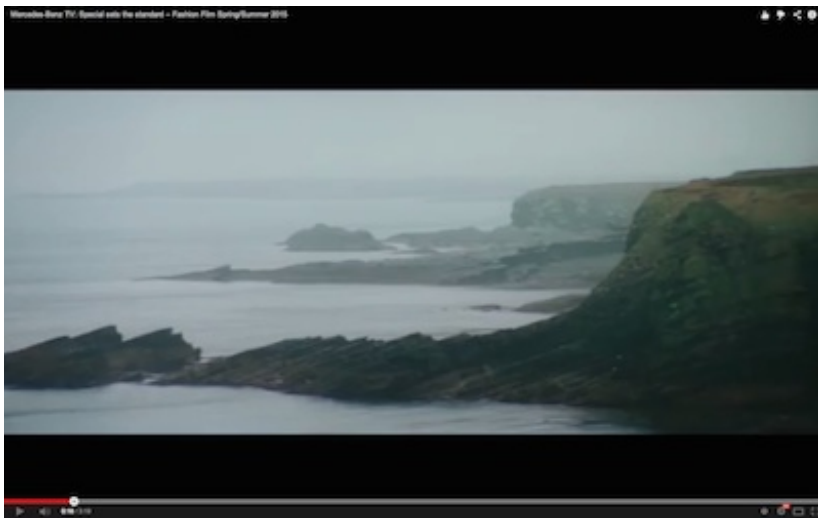
Mercedes-Benz was unable to comment by press deadline.

Creating a mystery

Mercedes-Benz's video "Special Sets the Standard" was directed by Roe Ethridge, a commercial and art photographer. Fashion designer Haider Ackermann styled Ms. Swinton in a long taupe overcoat of his design.

The social video uses no dialogue to tell its story, relying instead on imagery.

Mercedes-Benz's film begins by panning across a seaside terrain. The camera then cuts to a close-up of Ms. Swinton driving a car.



Video still from Mercedes-Benz

As Ms. Swinton drives, the film flashes back and forth between that scene and one where she stands in the middle of a forest holding a box with her medical gloved hands. After pacing around, she finds a spot next to a tree and buries it with her hands.



Video still from Mercedes-Benz

While driving, Ms. Swinton looks into her rearview mirror as if she is being followed, but the shots of the exterior of the car show that she is alone on the road.



Video still from Mercedes-Benz

A shot of the car's popped trunk shows plastic bags inside, before the actress throws her gloves and a shovel in.

Later, Ms. Swinton buries items in the sand by the water. Another set of small objects gets tossed into grass.


After disposing of everything, the actress drives her car down to a cove. She hops out and waves to a boy, who comes over and embraces her as both smile.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/kloEypn3kak](http://www.youtube.com/embed/kloEypn3kak)

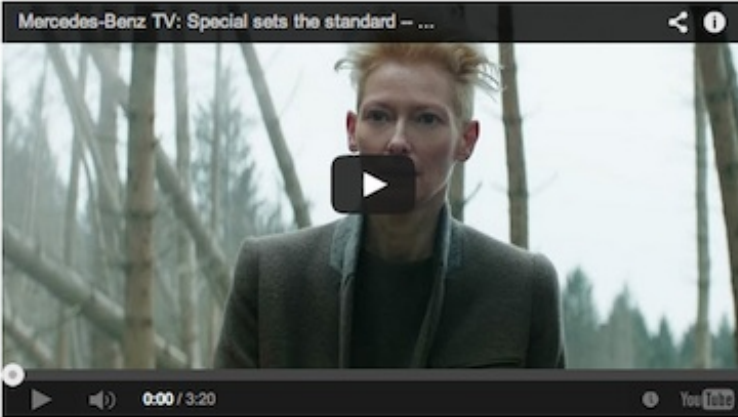
Mercedes-Benz TV: Special Sets the Standard

Mercedes-Benz published the video to YouTube, as well as promoting it on social media.

Pinned Tweet

 Mercedes-Benz @MercedesBenz · Jun 11
Just released! #mbFashion S/S 2015 feat. a stunning, sublime Tilda Swinton & the new #SClass Coupé. Watch now: youtu.be/kloEypn3kak

 YouTube



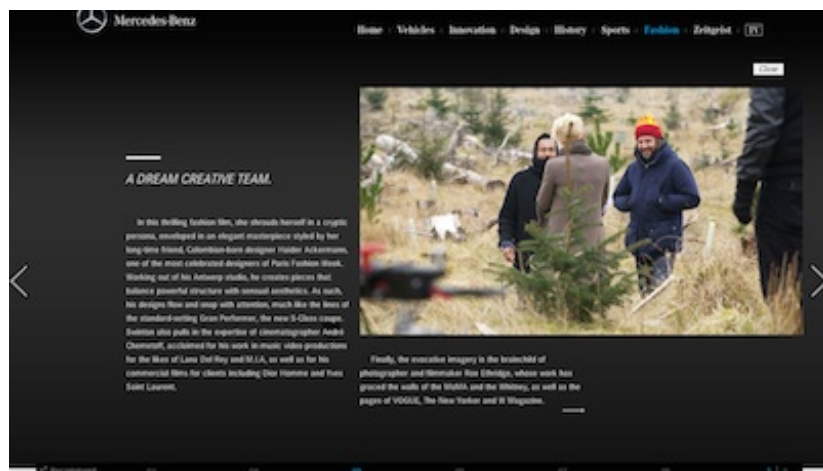
Mercedes-Benz TV: Special sets the standard -- Fashion Film Spring/...

Mercedes-Benz TV: Special sets the standard -- Fashion Film Spring/...
Tilda Swinton and the new S-Class Coupé star in the Fashion Campaign Spring/Summer 2015 in a film directed by Roe Ethridge with André Chemetoff as cinematogr...

Tweet from Mercedes-Benz

The YouTube video provides a link to the Mercedes-Benz Web site, where an article about the film is featured.

In the article, Mercedes-Benz talks about “unsettling landscapes” and “poetic mystery.” Along with images of the shooting process, Mercedes-Benz explains why it chose the creative to work on this film, explaining how Mr. Ackermann’s lines mimic the “flow and snap” of the S Class coupe.



Mercedes-Benz article

At the end of the article, Mercedes-Benz provides links for consumers to delve into the topic further, whether through social media posts or YouTube videos worked on by cinematographer André Chemetoff.

"Tilda Swinton is really the perfect ambassador for this car for the following reasons," Mr. Black said. "She is a beautiful fashion icon and Mercedes believes this car is iconic.

"Tilda is sculptural, absolutely unique, refined and beautiful in physical looks, another analogy for what Mercedes believe this car is," he said. "Tilda is also associated with 'good taste' and this car is for those of 'good taste.'"

Mercedes-Benz has created other films that mix fashion and automobiles, showing the connection between the two.

The brand has been the primary title sponsor of the biannual fashion weeks in New York since 2007. Mercedes-Benz also acts as the sponsor of fashion weeks in international cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin and Madrid.

Story telling

Taking a less expected route for a fashion film can help a brand stand out in the crowded social media landscape.

For instance, LVMH-owned French fashion house Kenzo highlighted its creative directors' heritage through a surreal video featuring the spring line.

Kenzo's "Dawn in Luxor" told the story of an alternative California, the inspiration for the brand's spring/summer 2014 collection and the childhood homes of Carol Lim and Humberto Leon. The film highlighted a mix of cultures, allowing the brand to point to its own mix of cultures that went into the formation of the Kenzo label ([see story](#)).

Other luxury car brands have turned to fashion to help highlight the design behind their own vehicles.

Ermenegildo Zegna and Fiat's Maserati are cross-marketing their Italian brands through a long-term design partnership to produce 100 limited-edition vehicles and offer Zegna customization options.

Zegna and Maserati signed on for a three-year partnership during which they will launch the Maserati Quattroporte by Ermenegildo Zegna and let consumers choose from new bespoke options for all models. Similar to other fashion marketers who have partnered with automakers, Zegna could get the most from this collaboration since it will raise brand awareness among its target audience of affluent men via Maserati showrooms ([see story](#)).

Mercedes-Benz's video will help the brand reach an audience outside its typical target.

"[This video is] very polarizing in my opinion," Mr. Black said.

"However I don't think this is a campaign aimed at generating sales at all," he said. "It's purely a brand image piece and I think it does that well in being traction in the luxury publications and with influential taste makers, which is probably what they are aiming for.

"I think it will be shared by fashion industry insiders and tastemakers but I don't think it is as appealing to the regular Mercedes brand audience."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/DKay_xBDmtk](https://www.youtube.com/embed/DKay_xBDmtk)

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