

EVENTS/CAUSES

Lexus taps emerging designer to disrupt fashion week conventions

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Lexus RC F performance coupe

By JOE MCCARTHY

Toyota Corp.-owned Lexus is looking to stand out at this year's New York Fashion Week Sept. 4-11 with a multi-faceted installation by British fashion designer Gareth Pugh.

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The automaker will also make the Lexus RC F performance coupe a centerpiece of the event. Design Disrupted and similar campaigns have helped Lexus associate its brand image with innovation.

"Gareth Pugh is a provocative designer and aspires to present his work in unexpected ways to stand out from others," said Brian Bolain, [Lexus](#) corporate marketing communications manager, Los Angeles. "Gareth shares Lexus' desire to push design boundaries.

"He challenges convention and takes everyday risks," he said. "Something Lexus strives to do and celebrates.

"Gareth has canceled his Paris show to debut his new collection at Lexus Design Disrupted so this will be the first time he has shown a collection in New York, and we're thrilled."

Disrupting conventions

Mr. Pugh was tapped to lead the event due to his embrace of fashion film and new technology. In addition to supporting films for his eponymous label, Pugh also creates film for causes he is passionate about.

For instance, to retaliate against the crackdown on LGBT rights in Russia, Amnesty International enlisted Pugh and filmmaker Ruth Hogben to create a short film.

The video, titled "ShowSTUDIO: Proud to Protest," is an onslaught of movement, with jaggedly proceeding, black-and-white objects and graphics overpowering one another as loud, ominous noises clash. The words "One Voice" and "Love is a Human Right" appear defiantly at the end.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/YbZmF0KWDrS](http://www.youtube.com/embed/YbZmF0KWDrS)

ShowSTUDIO: Proud to Protest

For Lexus, Pugh will unveil his spring/summer 2015 collection, and create performance pieces and film installations to infuse New York's Pier 36 with a "singular and compelling vision."

"I hope to explore a new visual language," Mr. Pugh said in a press release. "Something that transcends the nature of a traditional fashion show — where images penetrate and the audience have a deeper understanding of the story I want to tell."



Gareth Pugh Fall 2014 ready to wear

Pugh's monochromatic, daring style and experimentation with peculiar materials fits with Lexus' presentation of Design Disrupted in the past.



Gareth Pugh Fall 2014 ready to wear

During last year's New York Fashion Week the brand showcased the IS model in similarly artistic circumstances.



Design Disrupted 2013

Lexus showed a live holographic performance art experience that centered on the brand's commitment to technology design and featured model Coco Rocha and a retrospective

from the archives of designer Giles Deacon ([see story](#)).

Lexus will also teamed up with multimedia studio LEGS to help build a provocative environment.

From Sept. 4-10, the automaker will host a backstage lounge at MADE Fashion Week and provide a complementary fleet of vehicles and drivers to transport key figures.

"We are targeting a younger, design-oriented, tech-savvy, trendsetting audience that isn't afraid to push boundaries," Mr. Bolain said. "Many of whom are interested in NYFW.

"We want to attract those consumers and influencers that value the innovative, forward-thinking approach of Lexus' design and performance," he said.

"The new RC F is a vehicle for performance seekers who don't follow others or ask permission. They lead the pack and need a vehicle to match their lifestyle that pursues unrestrained exhilaration."

Bold energy

Lexus recently reframed the "bold" dimension seen in the Design Disrupted campaign as an alter ego with its new multichannel effort for the F performance lineup.

The F lineup campaign centers on a commercial that showcases the RC F, LFA, IS F Sport and GS F Sport models in a series of vignettes that attempt to ascribe brand meaning to the letter "F." Maintaining the frenetic energy of the Design Disrupted campaign, Lexus is able to achieve brand continuity and provoke the interest of younger consumers ([see story](#)).

New York Fashion Week is an ideal space to both channel the energy of Design Disrupted and to gain supporters.

"Lexus wouldn't participate in New York Fashion Week in an ordinary way and the disruptive nature of MADE appeals to Lexus' commitment to thinking outside of the box," Mr. Bolain said.

"As evident in our relentless pursuit to create exceptionally styled vehicles that deliver excellent performance, Lexus cares about great design," he said.

"Fashion designers share that same spirit and pursuit of innovation so it is a great fit for the brand."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff writer on Luxury Daily, New York

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