

MULTICHANNEL

British Vogue casts Minions as source of fashion's true inspiration

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Suzy Menkes and Alber Elbaz

By JEN KING

Condé Nast International is strengthening its in-house video content division with its first film released on the Vogue Video Channel.

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Shared socially initially by the media conglomerate's British Vogue title, the video is the debut production of Condé Nast's dedicated video team in partnership with Universal and Illumination Entertainment. As print continues its digital renaissance that has seen the industry expand into different mediums, the video highlights film's capability to capture audience attention while entertaining and maintaining engagement with a publication and its staffers.

"We took a humorous approach to our first video release as we wanted to do something unexpected," said Danielle Bennison-Brown, director of video content at **Condé Nast Britain**. "We felt that this would be a good introduction to our new video approach that combines fashion with popular culture to drive a new millennial audience to Vogue.

"When creating video, integrating popular culture is key," she said. We have a clear strategy at Vogue video which is to combine world class talent with a content strategy that

is derived from cultural understanding - this means that understanding and integrating culture is key to every video that we create. We mix this with a premium execution ensuring that our films have both style and substance."

Banana!

The debut film, "Vogue Presents The Minions" is a mockumentary with Vogue International editor Suzy Menkes as lead. Vogue was likely selected as the launch publication for the video due to the magazine's international standing and status among the industry and fashion enthusiasts alike.

Ms. Menkes, keeping true to form, keeps the subject matter light for the Vogue Presents The Minions asking fashion industry greats about an unlikely topic, The Minions from Dreamworks' franchise children's movie, "Despicable Me." The yellow pill-shaped helpers, dressed in overalls and protective goggles for their eyes, assist Despicable Me's super villain Gru, voiced by actor Steve Carell, in his plots of world domination through behind-the-scenes antics.

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Posted by [British Vogue](#) on [Tuesday, June 23, 2015](#)

In the 4 and a half minute segment, Ms. Menkes begins by saying, "What's the most famous name in fashion? Why, Vogue, of course! There is just one other name that every fashionista knows and loves, The Minions!"

Throughout the course of the film, all of which is taken seriously and professionally, Ms. Menkes interviews Lanvin creative director Alber Elbaz, designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana of Dolce & Gabbana and her own Condé Nast colleague, British Vogue editor in chief Alexandra Shulman, among others.

In one of the first scenes, Mr. Elbaz claims that the Minions are the ones that help and tell him what to do and how he would much rather go to lunch with Kevin over Bob and Stuart while milliner Stephen Jones gives credit to the whole "group" as his muse.

For the sit down interview scenes with Ms. Menkes it is filmed as though the subject was regarding the inspiration beyond a current runway collection, as Vogue traditionally does. Each responds to Ms. Menkes' questions by giving credit to the Minions for inspiration, their career paths and even the physical goods they have designed.



Fictional Minions Vogue cover

The luxury goods industry is ripe with craftsmanship, inspiration and behind-the-scenes content that shows the products being designed and manufactured. It is humorous to see this concept be jokingly discredited by some of the industry's biggest names, but shows that the designers are capable of laughing at themselves and the world of fashion.

Ms. Menkes then steers the conversation with the designers to touch upon what words best characterize the Minions, the appeal of their bright yellow color, which Dolce & Gabbana link to positivity, and the language barrier. The Minions speak a blend French, English, Spanish, Italian and even Greek, which in terms of fashion does represent much of the international community.

The video ends with Lanvin's Mr. Elbaz becoming uncomfortable and "itchy about [sharing his secret]," now that everyone knows the Minions are behind his work.

Ms. Shulman then speaks about the Minions cover of British Vogue, saying that it has been years in the planning, trying to get everyone's diaries in order. Ms. Shulman suggests that the pretend issue may be the publication's best seller, beating out the millennium issue

from 2000.

The video wraps with all of the designers agreeing that there has never been a bigger influence on fashion than the Minions, and Mr. Gabbana saying Mr. Dolce is his “minion” because of the similarly shaped head.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/zoblCvqpcq8>

Are The Minions finally gracing the Vogue cover?

"Shareable videos are all the rage, so brands are jumping on the band wagon, and Vogue's Video Channel incorporates some trending themes and celebrities," said John Casey, senior vice president of [Havas Public Relations](#), New York.

"Naturally, with the release date of the highly anticipated 'Minions' movie set for July 10, Vogue is hopping on board on what will undoubtedly be a social media fun fest for the film," he said. "It's a clever way for a fashion, beauty and celebrity brand to associate itself with the upcoming force of the Minions on pop culture."

Saving print we know it

Condé Nast has recently invested in its video production with the debut of its Condé Nast Entertainment's dedicated platform.

"The Scene" will host digital video content, including original series, from the publisher's titles, such as Vogue and Vanity Fair. Keeping its video content on a distinct branded platform guarantees that Condé Nast Entertainment's films do not get lost in between user uploaded videos, as they might on YouTube ([see story](#)).

Condé Nast has also redefined what traditional media companies encompasses.

For example, Condé Nast is launching an ecommerce business designed to reach global consumers, including its 300 million readers of titles such as Vogue and Vanity Fair.

The new enterprise will be branded Style.com, a name currently being used by a fashion news site owned by the media company, and will sell merchandise directly through the desktop sites and digital editions of its publications on mobile applications, as well as on Style.com. The new venture will launch this fall in Great Britain, to be followed by the United States and later other global markets ([see story](#)).

As the newest Condé Nast feature, this is a new way for the media brand to interact with readers and possibly secure new ones.

"Video is very complimentary to print, it's not an either or situation," Ms. Bennison-Brown said. "As a publisher if you can offer the whole package of print, experiential, digital and video then you have the ability to reach multiple audiences and offer compelling opportunities to your clients."

"By 2019, 80 percent of Internet traffic will be video so creating video content is absolutely essential to any publishers future relevance," she said.

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/mHSAAnE6Lkwg>

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