

ADVERTISING

Kenzo paints cinematic “teenage wasteland” for fall campaign

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Image from Kenzo's fall/winter 2015 campaign

By SARAH JONES

French fashion label Kenzo is looking back on 1990s teen culture for its fall/winter 2015 campaign that centers on a commissioned short film from director Gregg Araki.

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"Here Now" visits a "teenage wasteland" in southern California filled with angst, romance and rebellion, using Kenzo's collection as costumes that help to differentiate the different characters. Kenzo wanted this campaign to go beyond clothing advertising, therefore incorporating apparel as a narrative device enables the commercial aspect of the film to be more subdued.

"After teaming up with cutting-edge directors like Spike Jonze and David Lynch, it's natural that this time Leon and Lim would work with Greg Araki, an icon of the New Queer Cinema movement and an inspiration to them from their childhoods," said Cenon Advincula, creative director at [Walton Isaacson](#), Los Angeles.

"It's a natural progression for the brand, which has continuously bucked the conventions of the stuffy luxury sector by creating advertising that combines high and low, surrealism and camp," he said.

"L.A., and specifically teen movie stars, are at the center of what's 'hot' right now. Kenzo and Araki have capitalized on this trend, but in a cool, tongue-in-cheek way that's fun and optimistic, key brand qualities."

Mr. Advincula is not affiliated with Kenzo, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Kenzo, an LVMH brand, was unable to comment directly.

Rebellion and religion

Here Now revisits the world created in Mr. Araki's low budget "Teenage Apocalypse Trilogy." These films take a diffused look at the 1990s and portray the variety of experiences, from encounters across the sexuality spectrum to religion and aliens.

Released between 1993 and 1997, when Kenzo creative directors Carol Lim and Humberto Leon were living in California themselves, the films garnered a cult following, including the fandom of both designers. The pair enlisted the filmmaker to create a short that harkens back to his interpretation of the grunge decade.



Poster for Gregg Araki's *Nowhere*

Mr. Araki said in an interview with the brand that the label was a good fit because the clothing made sense in the world his films take place in.

"Under the creative direction of Humberto Leon and Carol Lim, Kenzo has experienced a huge transformation from a quiet French luxury house to a cultural harbinger of what's next," Mr. Advincula said. "In the '90s Araki helped launch the careers of Rose McGowan, Ryan Phillippe and Heather Graham. In a way, Kenzo is anointing the next wave of stars."

In six minutes, *Here Now* lets consumers into the happenings of a clique of friends hanging out in a casual restaurant in Los Angeles. Much like his earlier works, this features a cast of up-and-coming talent.

The film begins with a close up of a couple, played by Nicole Laliberte and Jake Weary, simultaneously devouring a hamburger while exchanging amorous glances. Shad tells Lilith that if she ever ended up with someone else, he would kill her, the guy and himself, which Lilith takes as a very romantic promise, causing her to throw the burger and begin a passionate makeout session on top of their table.

Zooming in on a different table, Jane Levy's Mel is trying to get her boyfriend Dark, played by Avon Jogia, to get over her promiscuity by telling him to think of it as a "glass half full" situation. She leaves with the last word, and Dark is presented with a bowl of oatmeal by a waitress, which ironically has a happy face depicted with blueberries.



Video still from Kenzo's Here Now

Dark's friend Cowboy, played by Jacob Artist, enters and joins him at his table, sharing the news that he had seen the deceased Bart riding in a convertible.

Shad's twin sister Alyssa, played by Grace Victoria Cox, shows up in a full white habit, to confront Lilith and try to help save the others with her newfound religion discovered after her boyfriend's incarceration.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/6cLW5aMd3nQ>

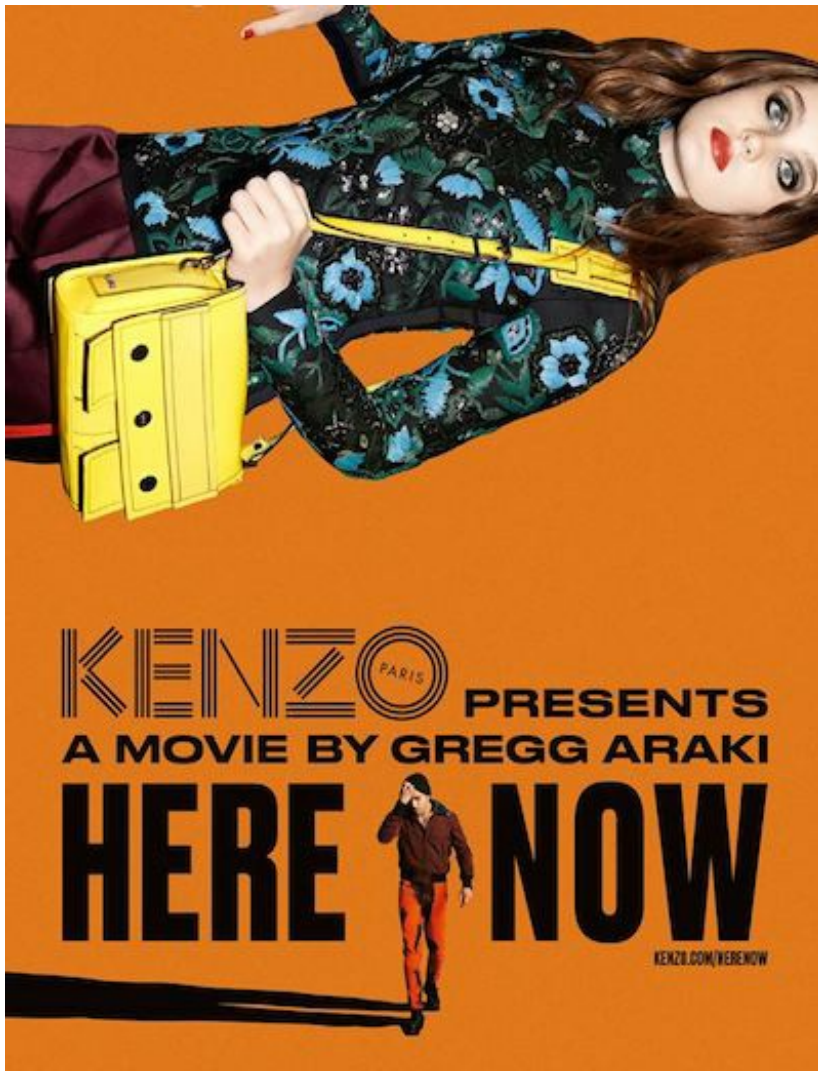
Kenzo Here Now a movie by Gregg Araki

In addition to being published on a dedicated page of Kenzo's Web site, the video was

shared to YouTube to reach the brand's subscribers and make it easier to share.

The film came first and Kenzo's print campaign followed. Mimicking old movie posters, the ads shows the actors against solid bright orange or pink backgrounds.

Leading consumers back to the film, each ad features the text "Kenzo Presents a movie by Gregg Araki 'Here Now,'" along with a direct link to the video on the brand's Web site.



Kenzo fall/winter 2015 ad campaign image

"The accompanying print campaign combines 60s Warhol with '90s grunge in a movie poster format," Mr. Advincula said. "They feature the stars and starlet of tomorrow decked out in Kenzo pieces that are psychedelic and very California."

Providing perspective

Commissioned films offer brands an opportunity to share a different point of view with their audience.

For instance, Italian apparel and accessories house Prada is furthering its relationship with film through a series of five shorts surrounding its Galleria handbag.

Filmmaker Autumn de Wilde's videos for "The Postman Dreams," which meld childhood fantasies with adult longings, a statement on fashion's innocent, youthful infatuation with beauty. The series, launched April 7, is designed so that the shorts can be explored and

viewed in any order, a new concept for Prada film ([see story](#)).

Also, Prada-owned Miu Miu questioned the ordinary with the latest installment of its commissioned Women's Tales series.

"De Djess," which premiered at a screening during New York Fashion Week, tells the story of a cognizant gown that decides its own fate. This ninth short film, directed by Alice Rohrwacher, helps Miu Miu turn fashion on its head, giving garments a power they have not had before ([see story](#)).

Similarly to Kenzo, Miu Miu's Women's Tales let the brand's apparel be part of the larger action, rather than having them be the prime focus. This helps the films resonate with an audience outside of brand loyalists.

"'Here Now' does a brilliant job of highlighting Kenzo's trippy California-inspired fall/winter collection," Mr. Advincula said. "Tie-dye jackets, bold graphic prints in bright colors are the perfect wardrobe for this highly stylized and highly entertaining film.

"Kenzo doesn't take itself too seriously as a fashion brand and comes off as the cool, smart brand it has become."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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