

INTERNET

Mercedes pulls strings in humorous Fashion Creatives video

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Mercedes A-Class

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Germany's Mercedes-Benz is reminding its fans that its brand stands for more than just automobiles in comic fashion.

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The brand has released its fourth "Fashion Creatives" film to enhance its ties to the sector, this one directed by Toben Seymour and starring Michel Gaubert, one of fashion's leading sound designers, and his puppet friend. The humor of the video will likely cause the video to spread beyond Mercedes loyalists, giving the brand an opportunity to establish new clients as it ties itself to a lifestyle.

"Much like Mercedes-Benz is an iconic brand and an expert in a number of sectors, Michel Gaubert and Toben Seymour are masters of their own trades, Michel in sound design and Toben in writing and directing," said Tobias Mueller, head of lifestyle and brand communications at Daimler AG, Stuttgart, Germany. "It was therefore the perfect match for the brand to join forces in order to create a credible and authoritative voice to further communicate Mercedes-Benz commitment to the Global Fashion Engagement and emerging talent worldwide."

Puppet master

In early 2014, Mercedes began its "Fashion Creatives" Web series of short videos with fashion influencers, focused on drawing connections between Mercedes and the fashion sector. The first three videos featured fashion blogger Leandra Medine, Bang & Olufsen creative director Johannes Torpe with fashion influencer Kristina Bazan and mytheresa.com buying director Justin O'Shea, respectively.

Michel Gaubert & Fashion's Favorite Puppet - Mercedes-Benz original

The fourth video, directed by puppet master Toben Seymour, shows the adventures of Mr. Gaubert in Los Angeles with his puppet lookalike. As Mr. Gaubert rides along in the 1970 280SEL, he discusses what he likes about the city, including "the sounds on the street." Sentimental music plays, but when his puppet assistant interjects, it suddenly drops out.

The video takes on a more humorous tone, showing the puppet throwing a party while Mr. Gaubert is absent and Mr. Gaubert stuffing his assistant into the trunk of his car in an attempt to pick up girls. The two sit and banter, as cuts show their relationship as they dance, share a drink and even sew together.



1970 Mercedes 280SEL

Mr. Gaubert tells a story of "the night everything changed" when the assistant "broke into my laptop, and he remixed all the remixes of my remixes without telling me, when I was sleeping." As it turns out, however, when Mr. Gaubert moves to play music for a client, he initially suspected sabotage, but after a moment when he and the client liked the music, he realized that his assistant is a musical genius.

As a result, Mr. Gaubert decides to send his assistant to Fashion Week Berlin in his place. The two banter back and forth, and Mr. Gaubert is coerced into reading out loud a letter in which he professes, "you are not my puppet, you are my friend."

The video does push Mercedes products, as even the car is only used in short bursts and is not clearly identified. Avoiding sales pushes allows viewers to make a more emotional connection with the brand.



Mercedes' fashion GLC advertising image

Without an overt sales push, the video can use humor without detracting from the products, and viewers will also be more likely to share it. As a result, it offers Mercedes a way to raise awareness and build its brand in an unobtrusive and memorable manner.

The latest episode reaffirms Mercedes' ties to fashion, a sector it likely aligns itself with because of the shared values of craftsmanship and exclusivity.

"Design plays a central role, both in the worlds of fashion and automotive," Mr. Mueller said. "The film displays a series of brand values, specifically Mercedes-Benz Fashion's growing relationship with emerging creative talent and its commitment and support of established and emerging fashion platforms globally."

Fashion vehicle

Mercedes' connection to fashion extends beyond the Fashion Creatives series.

Before the series began, German automaker Mercedes-Benz highlighted its ties to fashion with an eerie campaign video for spring/summer 2015.

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 ([see story](#)).

Because automakers are often selling a single product that the consumer will use for years, brands must find creative ways to sell consumers a brand lifestyle, particularly in today's experience-oriented world.

Recently, Mercedes fine-tuned its image by examining "Passion, Curiosity, Necessity" through sponsored content.

The brand helped produce a series of videos with Variety and Women's Wear Daily featuring celebrities, influencers and creators in the world of fashion, in which the subjects discuss glamour, celebrity, success and the challenges of being a woman in the industry. Although the content does not push Mercedes' vehicles, it helps associate the brand with positive values that could stick with readers further down the road ([see story](#)).

"The Mercedes-Benz fashion platforms allow the brand to convey an image which distinguishes them from others and allow us to present our brand personality," Mr. Mueller said. "For many years it has been a core objective for the communication of the Mercedes-Benz brand to present itself in the living environments of its target group and beyond."

"The Mercedes-Benz fashion commitment enables us to reach not only existing Mercedes-Benz customers, but also reaches many new target groups."

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