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## Bang & Olufsen highlights aesthetic appeal with fashion-forward portraits

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*"Sign of the Future" from Portraits by B&O Play*

By SARAH JONES

Danish audio and video brand Bang & Olufsen is making a connection between fashion and wearable technology through a series of stylized imagery.

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The brand worked with five up-and-coming Danish fashion designers to reinterpret its B&O Play headphones as an accessory for an avant-garde fashion ensemble, with the resulting portraiture unveiled during Copenhagen Fashion Week. Design details and the appearance of technology such as headphones often factor into consumers' purchase decisions as much as performance, making this project a way for Bang & Olufsen to focus on the aesthetic value of its products.

"To me, B&O sound systems have always felt like accessories for the shelf at home," said Greg Monaco, founding partner of [Monaco Lange](#).

"Their headphones make a similar statement on a personal level," he said. "I don't think this is out of character for them."

Mr. Monaco is not affiliated with Bang & Olufsen, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Bang & Olufsen** did not respond before press deadline.

### Painting a picture

Bang & Olufsen's project premiered at Copenhagen Fashion Week. Portraits by B&O Play were on view at the Galleri K shopping arcade in the Danish city from Feb. 5-6.

At the installation, each portrait was given its own room, allowing the brand to amplify the mood captured in the photography with a special soundtrack. Further enhancing the viewing, the images were hung in uniquely decorated spaces.

For instance, "Urban Gentleman," which styles a model in a deconstructed trench coat by Anne Sofie Madsen, was situated in a neon pink and purple space, playing off the woman's brightly hued makeup.



*"Urban Gentleman"*

The geometric lines framing a black-and-white ensemble by Henrik Vibskov continue out of the frame and into the room for "Graphic to the Max."

Extending the influence of this project globally, Bang & Olufsen created a special page of its Web site for the portraits. Here, the viewer can scroll through the photos and read about the influences of the outfit and picture composition.

"Glam Patrol" was inspired by Vogue magazine covers from the 1980s featuring personalities such as Jerry Hall. The blond model Vincent, who is described as a "satellite somewhere between a man and a woman," is dressed in a fluffy orange coat by Saks Potts, with a bold red lip.



*"Glam Patrol"*

Another look pays homage to Mary Quant, with a simple white shirtdress accented with a large floral necklace and black-and-white eye makeup.

"Baroque Tribalism" juxtaposes classic art with tribal themes, dressing a pale model in a Nicholas Nybro straw dress.

From here, consumers can explore the range of B&O Play headphones that appeared in the shoot. They can also go to the brand's content section Journal to read more and watch a video detailing the making of the project.

Bang & Olufsen creative director Uffe Buchard explains that he looked at the headphones as accessories, and he

created a little story around each headphone in the scene. He explains each scene, describing how they arrived at the futuristic look for the H7.

*Portraits by B&O PLAY: Uffe Buchard*

Bang & Olufsen previously targeted fashionable female consumers with a line of BeoPlay H6 headphones suited for the best-dressed audiophiles.

Although electronics are not gender specific, oftentimes marketers in this sector skew campaign efforts to appeal to the male consumer and end up marginalizing female enthusiasts. Bang & Olufsen's special-edition BeoPlay H6 headphones aims to bridge this gap by using a high-fashion aesthetic in the new advertising effort ([see story](#)).

"Fashion is obsessed with new and next," Mr. Monaco said. "B&O's partnership with fashion fuels their story of pushing the boundaries of design.

"Associating their products with couture presents an opportunity to create brand distance from other manufacturers."

Fashion meets function

In the past few years, a number of fashion labels have extended their accessories range with high-fashion headphones.

Dolce & Gabbana created headphones that resembled tiaras, with a number of styles trimmed in fur or covered in crystals, all of which debuted on the fall/winter 2015 runway ([see story](#)).

Also, Fendi developed a line of headphones with Beats by Dr. Dre, which were revealed at the label's spring/summer 2015 menswear show.

The headphones, which are covered in the brand's Selleria leather used for its handbags and hand-stitched by Fendi artisans, are intended for both male and female consumers. Since headphones are a personal statement, consumers loyal to the brand will likely appreciate being able to show off their aesthetic through these devices ([see story](#)).

"Just as eyewear, at some point in time, made the leap from pure function to aesthetic form, wearables like headphones are on the same track," Mr. Monaco said. "Sure, they sound good, but they look fabulous."