

INTERNET

Poltrona Frau puts “Icons in Motion” in clever mockumentary

April 18, 2016



Poltrona Frau Icons in Motion

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Italian furniture maker Poltrona Frau made its presence at Milan Design Week known by bringing its products to life.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Chester, Dezza, Lyra, San Luca, 1919 and Vanity Fair are the elegantly upholstered stars of Poltrona Frau's film, as well as its film-within-the-film. Scattered with clues throughout, the short film will engage enthusiasts who know the brand story while also luring in new consumers with its humor and mystery.

"In line with contemporary communication, which sees video as one of the most widespread and cutting-edge media, Poltrona Frau is broadcasting Icons in motion on the social networks where it's being extremely successful," said Nicola Coropulis, brand director at **Poltrona Frau**. "We wanted to communicate the values of the brand in an innovative way still with a lot of flair. Consistently with the positioning of the brand.

"Filmed as a mockumentary, it has a rather rough, realistic feel to it," she said. "The locations are splendid.

"To mention just two of the many historical theatres scattered throughout Marche, the Tolentino-based company's home region, to which it pays homage, one is the Piermarini Theatre in Matelica, designed by the great architect of the same name and the other is the Gentile Theatre in Fabriano, where the foyer in particular was used."

Brought to life

"Icons in Motion," directed by Damiano Giacomelli, unfolds in "mockumentary" style, with interviews with the characters punctuating the primary story. A film crew is shooting in a theater but is running out of time, unable to get a deadline and missing its actors.

As the crew establishes the set, pulling curtains and rigging lights, Marta checks in with the director. In a cut to an interview segment, Vittorio Ponti, the director of the film-within-the-film, notes that working with performers of that level is a gratifying experience, but "like every rose, even this one had its thorn."



Poltrona Frau Lyra armchair

In a shot of Vittorio's viewfinder, we see a man looking at his watch and a couch. As Vittorio is warned that he's running out of time, he responds, "Only the English guy is here," playing on the word chesterfield, a British name for a sofa with padded arms and seen in the shot.

While unfamiliar viewers may miss the joke and think instead of the man also seen in the frame, those familiar with the brand will be made to feel more exclusive for getting the joke.

Marta is tasked with finding all the players before shooting ends and begins running through the hall.

She first checks the makeup room, where we see only the makeup artist, who requests three minutes, and the reflection of "Lyra," Poltrona Frau's leather chair dating back to 1934. In another interview segment, the makeup artist says that it looks like "Mother Nature's job, you don't see the effort behind it," a nod to the brand's craftsmanship delivered via another joke about moviemaking.

She then makes a call, where a man says that another star is finishing up autographs. In the background, the brand's Dezza model, dating back to 1961, is seen attracting a crowd and photographers.



Icons in Motion still

The third stop has her telling "The Duke" that the crew is ready to shoot and reminding him that there is no smoking as a cut shows a puff of smoke rising from the furniture. Moving on, she runs into another room, looks up and sees Sanluca, whom she alerts via text message.

Marta returns to Vittorio, and they see all the furniture, including "Vanity, whom always shows up when she needs" to in the viewfinder. As the director calls "action," a string score begins to play and a camera is seen dolly into a darkened soundstage, where the Poltrona Frau furniture is spotlighted altogether.

At the beginning of the credits, each piece of furniture is named with its director and design year, and in a frame within the frame, the part of the movie in which Marta found the "actor" is shown to let less familiar viewers in on the joke.

Poltrona Frau - Icons in Motion

While short films are a common way of enlivening products, a mockumentary is an unusual form for the content, giving it an original touch that could make it more sharable. Similarly, the cleverness of the video will appeal to brand enthusiasts who are in on the jokes as well as newcomers, who at the end will have incentive to re-watch the film.

Such prolonged exposure will make a greater impression on consumers, who will recognize the brand name and the associations of craftsmanship and design reinforced throughout the film when shopping.

Stand apart

Besides its reach on the Internet alone, the novel approach of Icons in Motion likely helped the Poltrona Frau stand out at Milan Design Week April 14-17, where many home furnishers are competing for the same high-value customers.

As Milan Design Week brought a global creative community to the Italian city, luxury brands leveraged the extra foot traffic through artistic installations and events.

Comprising the milestone 55th annual furniture fair Salone del Mobile and the city-wide Furiosalone activities numbered more than 1,000, Milan Design Week attracted participants from both the interior space and other design-centric categories, including jewelry, automotive and apparel. With 400,000 attendees from five continents descending on Milan last week, it offered a chance for brands to start a discourse on innovation and style ([see story](#)).

In trying to extend its reach, Poltrona Frau has also been known to strike up partnerships.

Last year, for example, American fashion designer Alexander Wang helped Italian furniture brand Poltrona Frau reach urbanites with a capsule collection.

Mr. Wang is known for his typically dark color palette and streetwear influences, which translated to an all-black trio of pieces for Poltrona Frau. The home furnishings brand frequently collaborates with traditional designers, but this likely helped raise awareness among a younger set ([see story](#)).

"In line with contemporary communication, which sees video as one of the most widespread and cutting-edge media, Poltrona Frau is broadcasting Icons in motion on the social networks where it's being extremely successful," Ms. Coropulis said. "We wanted to communicate the values of the brand in an innovative way still with a lot of flair. Consistently with the positioning of the brand."