

MOBILE

## Instagram may be key to fashion's see-now, buy-now democratization

April 21, 2016



*Instagram photo from Balmain creative director Olivier Rousteing*

By JEN KING

SEOUL, South Korea As the velvet ropes of luxury continue to come down, Instagram has created an outlet for storytelling that has democratized the industry, according to panelists at the Cond Nast International Luxury Conference April 20.

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

During "The Power of Social Media" session, panelists discussed what lured fashion figures, such as Donatella Versace and Alber Elbaz, both relatively new to the scene ([see story](#)), to Instagram and how a high-fashion hub has been established on the platform. Using Instagram as a marketing tool provides brands with tremendous reach while allowing for behind-the-scenes and personality-driven content to drive awareness, inspiration and purchasing.

"I think it's a different time right now where the velvet ropes have gone down in fashion," said Eva Chen, head of fashion partnerships at [Instagram](#).

"You can be aspirational and luxurious, and the future of luxury I really think is democracy," she said. "It's an ability to connect directly with your consumer."

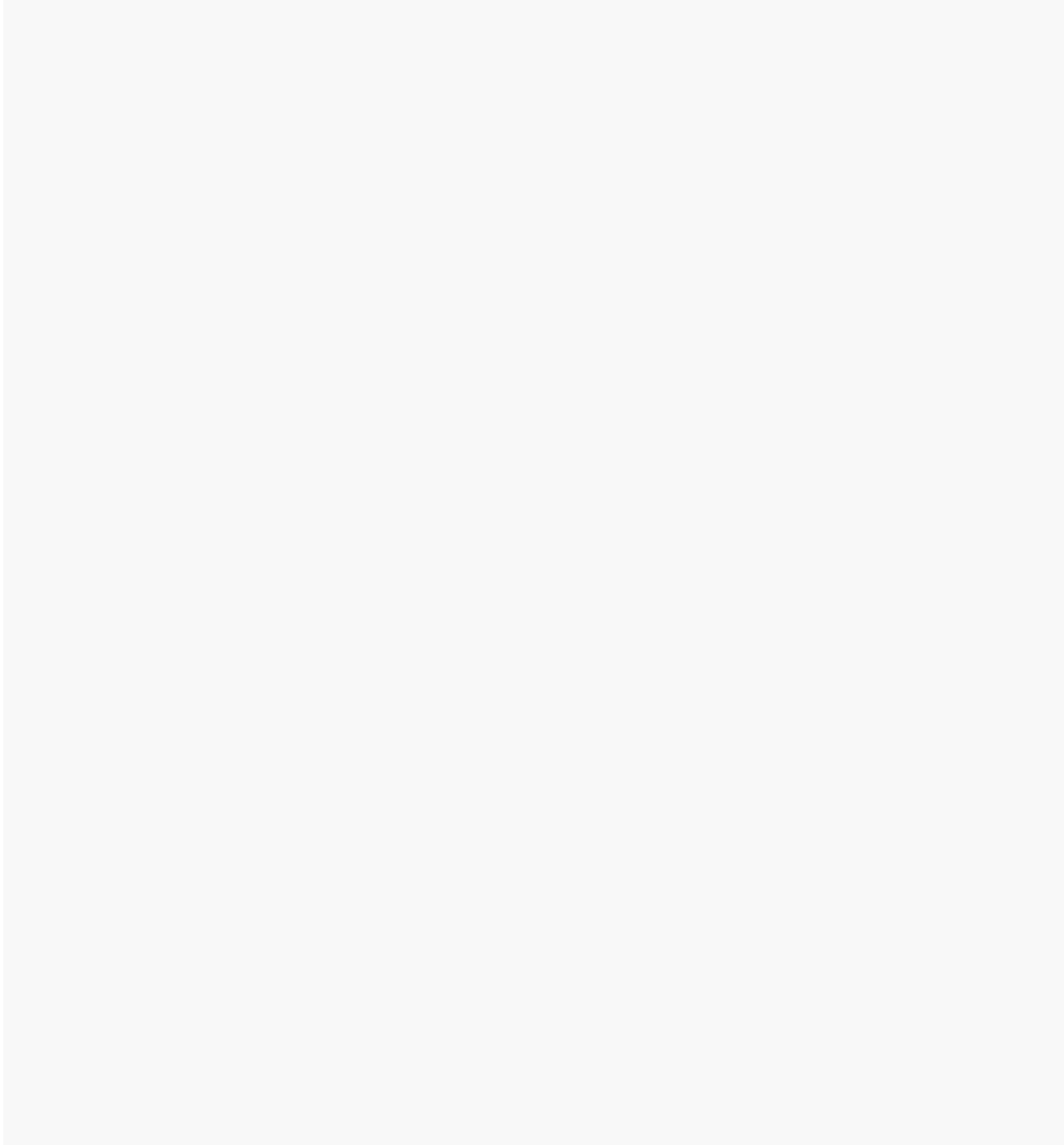
"Olivier [Rousteing] does this brilliantly. A 20 year-old right now is dreaming of that day she can buy a Balmain dress, right now with the velvet ropes down. It's a new way of storytelling."

### Behind-the-scenes at Balmain

Olivier Rousteing, creative director of Balmain, joined the conversation as the poster child of how a fashion house can leverage Instagram for positive promotion. Since becoming creative director nearly five years ago and opening his Instagram account shortly thereafter, Mr. Rousteing has lived by the mantra, "This is my reality," via his presence on the platform ([see story](#)).

Upon launch, Mr. Rousteing wanted to show his life and personal story with posts regarding his family life and background. Doing so showed not only his character, but also invited consumers who lacked prior access to Balmain a discovery point.

As someone who was adopted, is of color and was not raised by a "fashion family," it has been important for Mr. Rousteing to use Instagram as a way to show others that dreams do come true, even in an industry that is often without diversity.

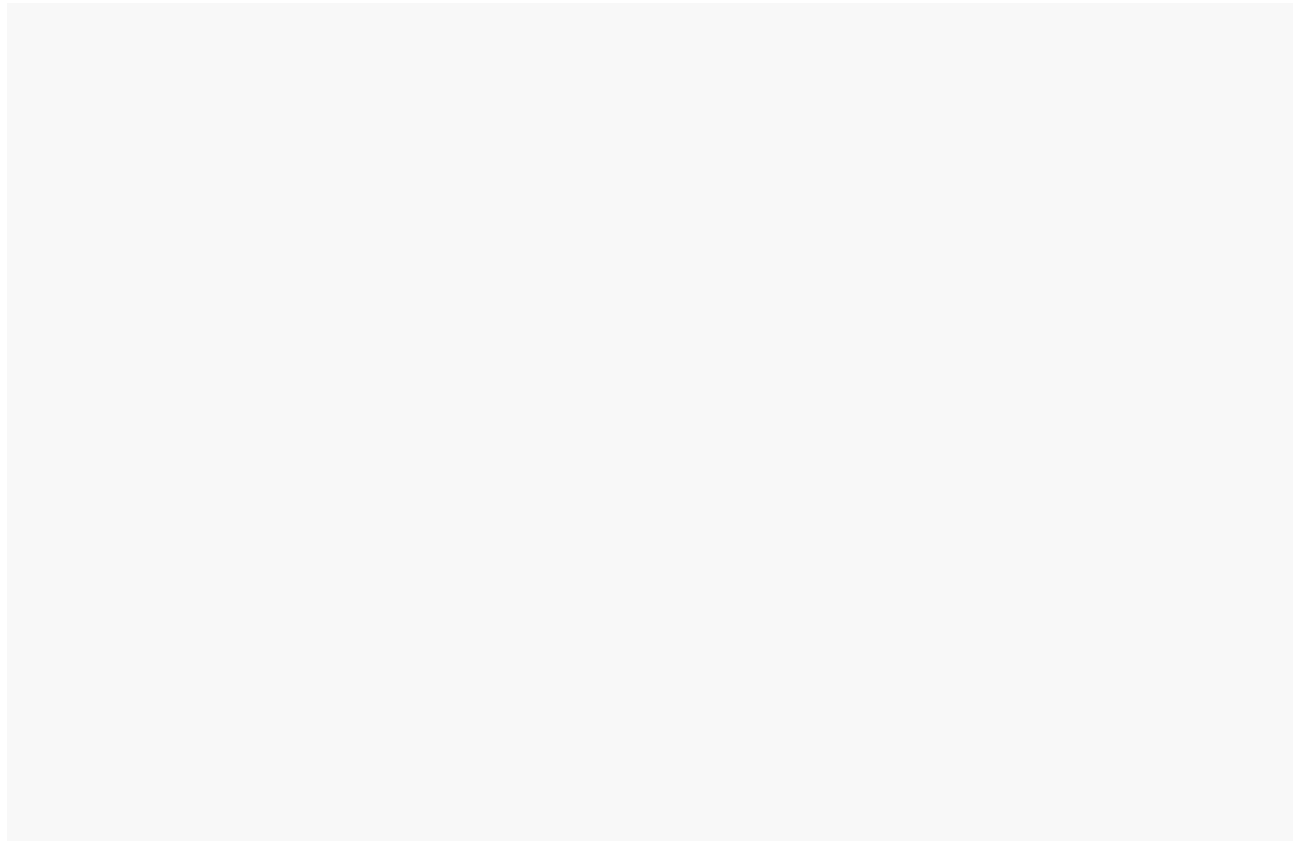


HAPPY BDAY MY RORO ITS 5 years That You are part of my Life , thank U for all our amazing moments and emotions , I m proud To call You my friend , I m proud To know The amazing person You are #loveU #itsROsieBday #letsallwishherhappybday @rosiehw

A photo posted by OLIVIER R. (@olivier\_rousteing) on Apr 16, 2016 at 3:10am PDT

Boasting nearly 3 million followers, Mr. Rousteing's account balances the personal with the professional by offering peeks at the inner workings of Balmain through behind-the-scenes snapshots, portraits of key collection pieces and the pleasures of a runway presentation.

Instagram has become the surefire way to promote a collection and maximize exposure among the millennial generation. To be successful on the platform, as Mr. Rousteing has shown, a brand's presence, especially when told from a designer's perspective, must evoke enthusiasm, passion and authenticity while being true to the self and giving sense of personality.



BALMAINARMY #couture #paris

A photo posted by OLIVIER R. (@olivier\_rousteing) on Apr 9, 2016 at 6:24am PDT

"When I started [my Instagram], there was not a publicist behind, that's the thing, so there was a kind of panic at Balmain, What is he doing with these pictures, his selfies? Why is he inviting everybody to the luxury world?" said Olivier Rousteing, creative director of **Balmain**.

"I think it's been really interesting because it has to come from the heart and it has to be honest and true," he said. "If you're not true with yourself and not true with your followers, everyone's going to feel it."

"Month after month, my publicist, and my president as well, realized what I was doing and they really understood what I was thinking. I was giving a positive message and talking about the brand."

As seen on Instagram

With such high potential for storytelling and awareness building, Instagram's resistance toward seamless ecommerce via shoppable links has complicated the platform's advantages. During the panel, conference host and Vogue International editor Suzy Menkes asked how marketers could drive consumers from Instagram into stores.

The answer may lie within the emergence of the "see now, buy now" trend.

Recently, brands, including Burberry, Gucci and Michael Kors, have adapted the fashion calendar to acknowledge the global consumer's yearning for instant gratification through the launch of runway capsules available for immediate purchase to support in-season relevancy.

For instance, New York-based department store Bergdorf Goodman capitalized on this desire with the "Right from the Runway" events series.

Bergdorf invited consumers to visit its store on set days to pre-order items seen during runway shows at New York Fashion Week. Consumers have expressed interest in being able to purchase runway pieces immediately, and many brands have developed ecommerce platforms to cater to this need, but an in-store component may have swayed interest even more ([see story](#)).

While some brands and designers have voiced opposition to see now, buy now, Mr. Rousteing sees that need for the

transition, feeling that a collection's anticipation can be driven further by keeping some key pieces exclusive to the fashion calendar and making others available as soon as they are seen on the runway.

For both options Instagram can generate the spark of consumption, inspiration for future and a measure of early intent. In terms of the key collection or couture pieces, Instagram gives a brand more time to explain and invite followers to discover the work through sharing the details.

To Mr. Rousteing's point, Ms. Chen shared that Instagram has noticed a growing trend of detail-specific images showing stitching, fabric and how goods are being made as well as inspirations.

"I have more [of a] chance to explain why [pieces] are special on my Instagram than in magazines," Mr. Rousteing said. "I can show [pieces] with Instagram, and explain how much time I spent on it. I just write hashtag 20 hours of stitching."

"I can explain everything. With Instagram I can push my details, and show people," he said. "When I post the details, [my followers] really enjoy seeing the couture. I really believe that luxury and couture can be with Instagram [because] they are connected."

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.