

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

DVF looks toward future with chief creative appointment

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DVF spring/summer 2016 ad

By STAFF REPORTS

U.S. fashion label Diane von Furstenberg is establishing new creative oversight with the appointment of designer Jonathan Saunders as its chief creative officer.

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In the newly creative position, which Mr. Saunders will fill immediately, the executive will be in charge of the overall creative direction of the brand. While the 69-year-old eponymous designer has not officially made any plans to step away from her label, she has made a number of strategic hires in recent years as she looks to cement her brand's future.

Fresh talent

The London-based Mr. Saunders began his own fashion label since 2003, but closed his eponymous brand in December. Known for his work with prints, his appointment is a natural fit.

"Jonathan's extraordinary passion for colors and prints, his effortless designs, and his desire to make women feel beautiful make him the perfect creative force to lead DVF into the future," said Diane von Furstenberg, founder/chairwoman of Diane von Furstenberg Studio, LLC. "I could not have found a cooler, more intelligent designer and I cannot wait to watch him shine as our chief creative officer."



Jonathan Saunders fall/winter 2015

Mr. Saunders will report directly to CEO Paolo Riva.

"Jonathan is an incredibly talented designer who is able to express his creative vision with great clarity," Mr. Riva said. "He will evolve the identity of DVF and passionately embrace our mission of putting women at the center of everything we do. I look forward to this partnership with him."

Mr. Riva was hired last year, taking over some of the day-to-day operations of the company from Ms. von Furstenberg.

With a resume in fashion design and business, including executive roles at Tory Burch, Valentino and Ferragamo, Ms. von Furstenberg came out and called her new CEO her "heir" in a [WWD](#) interview.

Talking with the [Wall Street Journal](#) in 2014, Ms. von Furstenberg spoke of wanting artistic director Michael Herz to succeed her as the label's designer.

"The spirit with which this brand was founded is incredibly relevant today. I am thrilled to be part of its next chapter," Mr. Saunders said. "Diane has a unique ability to deeply connect with women and I am excited to be working with Paolo on the future of the brand."

DVF wrapped the second season of its brand-centric television show last fall.

"House of DVF" cast millennial fashion-conscious women to vie for the opportunity to represent the brand around the world at parties and events. Through this TV show, DVF has not only introduced itself to a younger audience watching at home, but has also gained two spokeswomen who appeal to a younger demographic.

Building up a personal brand will help DVF retain its image when its founder does choose to leave ([see story](#)).

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