

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Maria Grazia Chiuri likely to be Dior's first female creative director

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*Maria Grazia Chiuri with Pierpaolo Piccioli for Valentino*

By STAFF REPORTS

Italian fashion house Valentino's Maria Grazia Chiuri is expected to head to LVMH-owned Christian Dior early next month as its head designer.

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Ms. Grazia Chiuri has worked with her design partner Pierpaolo Piccioli as joint-creative directors of Valentino since 2007, and together they have steered the house toward becoming one of the sector's most profitable. The designing duo were hired by brand founder Valentino Garavani when he announced his retirement.

### Returning the fairytale

According to two sources speaking with [Reuters](#), Dior will announce Ms. Grazia Chiuri's appointment as the atelier's women's wear creative director after its couture presentation in early July. While not specified, it is assumed that Mr. Piccioli will stay on at Valentino, continuing as its sole creative director.

If the rumors prove true, Ms. Grazia Chirui will be the first female creative director in Dior's 70-year history. Others who have held the position include Yves Saint Laurent, Gianfranco Ferre, John Galiano and most recently Raf Simons.



*Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli following Valentino's spring/summer 2017 menswear presentation*

Ms. Grazia Chiuri would be replacing Mr. Simons, who abruptly exited Dior in October 2015 after a three-and-half-year tenure. Since Mr. Simons left, Dior has struggled to find a suitable replacement ([see story](#)).

Beyond creative upheaval, Dior has also seen its fashion sales decline in the last year and half. For the first quarter of 2016, Dior went from double-digit growth to flat sales.

This has left some experts questioning the brand's desirability, but Dior equates its sales decline to the luxury market's overall slowdown.

It is suspected that Ms. Grazia Chiuri will take her "light, graceful and highly romantic designs" she has become known for at Valentino and apply this aesthetic to Dior. Fashion critics have suggested that Dior would benefit from a return to more "romantic, fairytale-like" designs rather than its recent modern styles.

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