

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dior rumors escalate as Maria Grazia Chiuri exits Valentino

July 7, 2016



Pierpaolo Piccioli and Maria Grazia Chiuri take a bow after their fall/winter 2016 couture show

By STAFF REPORTS

After 17 years at Italian fashion label Valentino, co-creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri is leaving the brand.

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Ms. Chiuri, who took on the head design position at the house along with creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli eight years ago, is said to be departing to "pursue a new professional experience." The designer's name has been linked with Dior in recent reports, and this resignation makes a move toward Dior seem an even greater possibility.

Venturing out

With Ms. Chiuri's exit, Mr. Piccioli becomes the sole creative director of Valentino. The pair has worked together for 25 years, and in 1999, they both joined the brand's accessories department at the personal request of Valentino Garavani.

The duo took the creative direction reins in 2007, and they are credited with transforming the brand into a modern, cool label. Their Rockstud handbags and shoes, among other accessories, became It items.



Valentino Rockstud pump

Recently, Valentino reached the billion dollar mark, bringing in 10-figure revenues in 2015.

"Everything achieved in these years would have been impossible without Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli's talent, determination and vision that together have contributed into making Valentino one of the most successful fashion companies," said Stefano Sassi, CEO of Valentino, in a brand statement.

"A new and exciting phase for the brand begins under the creative leadership of Pierpaolo Piccioli," he said. "The brand is strongly determined to continue its affirmation and development process accomplished in the past years."

Ms. Chiuri is expected to head to LVMH-owned Christian Dior this month as its head designer.

According to two sources speaking with [Reuters](#), Dior will announce Ms. Chiuri's appointment as the atelier's women's wear creative director after its couture presentation in early July. If the rumors prove true, Ms. Chirui will be the first female creative director in Dior's 70-year history ([see story](#)).

Dior has been without a creative director since October, when Raf Simons left.

In her statement, Ms. Chiuri thanked Mr. Sassi, Mr. Garavani and the label's co-founder Giancarlo Giammetti, adding, "I am ready to embark on a new professional challenge."

This announcement came right after Valentino's couture presentation on July 6.

Remarking on the end of their more than two decades of collaboration, Ms. Chiuri and Mr. Piccioli said in a joint statement, "After 25 years of creative partnership and of professional satisfactions we gave ourselves the opportunity of continuing our artistic paths in an individual way with the reciprocal desire of further great achievements."