

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Stella McCartney blends playfulness and purpose in winter effort

July 27, 2016



Still from "This Film May Contain Gluten"

By SARAH JONES

British fashion label Stella McCartney is putting its founder's vegan values front-and-center in its winter 2016 advertising campaign.

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

In the brand's print effort, images of model-actress-environmentalist Amber Valletta posing in the collection are overlaid with text from artist Ed Ruscha spelling out phrases such as "Meat free." Juxtaposing the cruelty-free messaging of the print campaign is a witty mockumentary that takes consumers into a humorous alternative behind-the-scenes environment.

"An interesting twist and faux backstage on the ironic lifestyle of the vegan bitch," said David Benattar, CEO of **Hyperbolic**, a New York-based creative agency. "There is a fair amount of self deprecation in this movie, with the clear intention to tune up all the clichs and play on the complex relationship we have with being a good doer versus a bad ass rock star.

"Choose your battle," he said. "It's a tone that means to provoke. Let's wait for consumer reaction to judge the efficacy of the campaign."

Mr. Benattar is not affiliated with Stella McCartney, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Stella McCartney declined to comment directly.

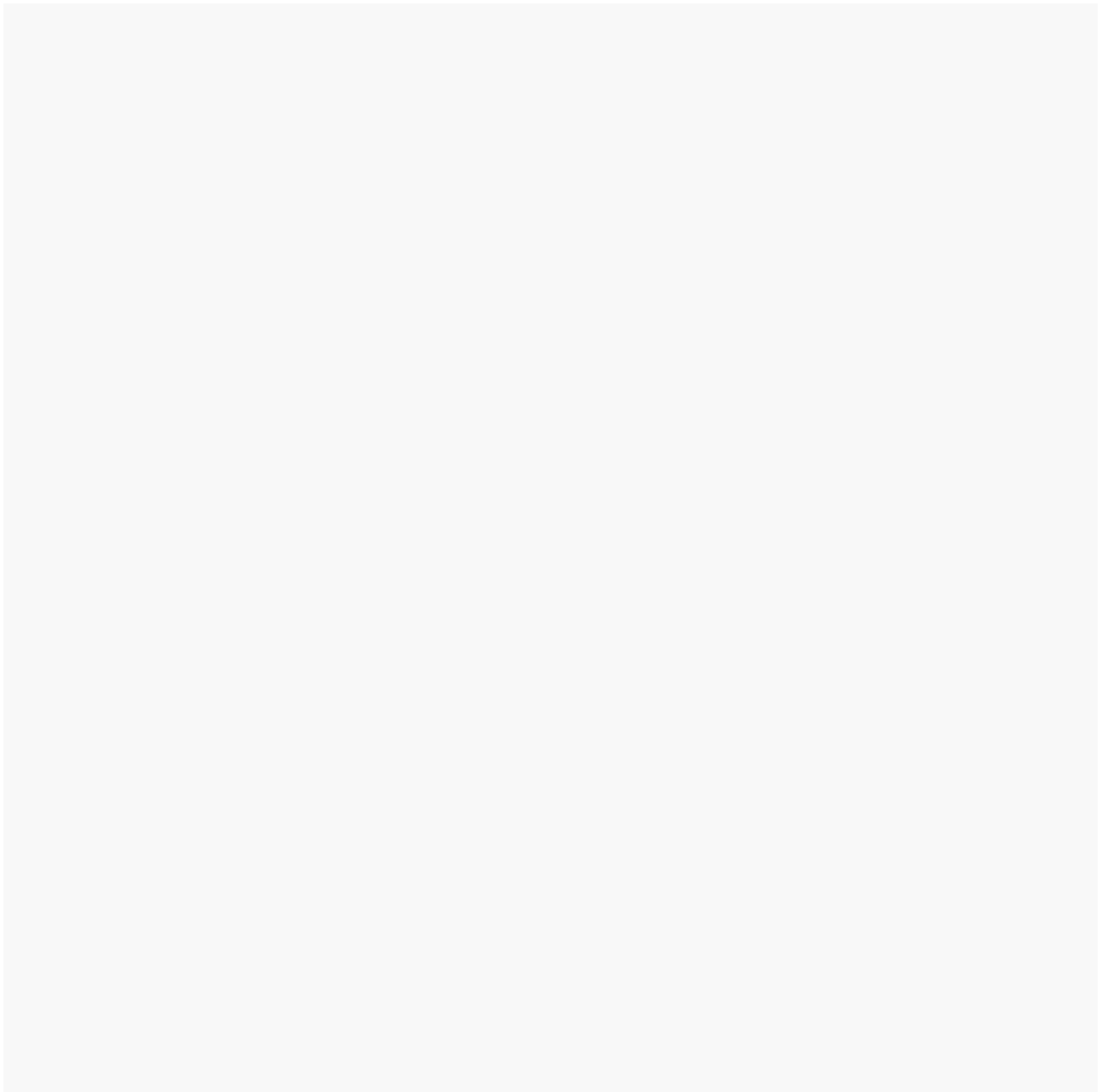
Humor with heart

Ms. McCartney has had a longtime friendship with Mr. Ruscha, but this marks the first time she is collaborating with him for her brand. The artist is known for his mixing of text and image, embellishing landscapes with phrases.

For this campaign, his text includes "No leathers feathers or fur" and "Veg out." These phrases are superimposed over photographs of Ms. Valletta shot by Harley Weir. The model, who has not been featured in a Stella McCartney campaign since 2008, is a vegetarian herself, adding a personal element to her appearance.

While a cruelty-free belief is at the core of the Stella McCartney business, the label typically shies away from overtly promoting it in marketing initiatives.

Accompanying the campaign images on social media is the frequently used hashtag #StellaCares, bringing the designer's cruelty-free positioning to the forefront.



@ambervalletta unveils our latest collection in a campaign collaboration with artist, #EdRuscha. See whimsical prints, bold colours and sexy, sophisticated silhouettes overlaid with slogans by the artist to represent our Vegetarian ethos. Pre order the new collection on #StellaMcCartney.com #StellaCares #StellasWorld Shot by @harleyweir Styled by @jane_how

A video posted by Stella McCartney (@stellamccartney) on Jul 22, 2016 at 7:36am PDT

The ad campaign will first appear in September editions of Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, W, V, Elle and Interview in the United States, as well as magazines in the U.K., France, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Russia, Japan and China.

Complementing the print effort is the social video "This Film May Contain Gluten," which also stars Ms. Valletta. The two-minute mood film by Simon Aboud portrays a fictionalized version of the making of the campaign.

At the opening of the mockumentary, a director played by Steven Cree checks in on the beauty team's timeline while they get to work on Ms. Valletta's hair and makeup. As they spray her hair and brush product on her face, she is shown filing her dog's nails and answering a bystander's questions about working with Ms. McCartney.

The viewer next finds Ms. Valletta sitting in front of a mirror wearing a wig and large sunglasses, as she confides

with members of the prep team that her immune system benefited from eating dirt as a child.

Wielding a carrot topped with a dip, she asks the director if it is gluten free. When he says he does not know, she feeds it to one of her hairstylists.

In a later scene, she is shown on the phone talking about wanting to do a benefit for Venice and complaining about the lack of almond milk on set as the director is heard in the background yelling about the gluten free status of the food in question.

After an appearance of live animals, Ms. McCartney herself and musician Jess Glynne, Ms. Valletta is finally ready for the camera.

Winter 2016 Campaign Film: This Film May Contain Gluten!

The model extinguishes a cigarette in the dip before she gets up and walks on set. The last thing the viewer sees is a note that the food might contain everything from gluten to dairy and sugar.

"With this campaign, Stella McCartney promotes irreverence as a lifestyle," Mr. Benattar said. "She's staging the worse of the worse, the cigarette smoking attitude riddled celebrity diva that demands gluten free, planet saving organics.

"What i love in this plot, is the mirroring effect," he said. "We can all recognize ourselves and our vast supply of living contradictions. Well done, Stella."

Added value

While advertising campaigns are not a commonly used vehicle to communicate values, some brands have taken a stand for a cause in the pages of magazines.

Department store chain Barneys New York aligned itself with the fight for transgender equality with an ad campaign and outreach.

Barneys' "Brothers, Sisters, Sons and Daughters" campaign featured 17 transgender individuals with diverse backgrounds and stories that were told through a series of short films. With this campaign, Barneys shows a more personal, human side to its brand that allows it to connect on a deeper level with consumers ([see story](#)).

Showcasing values is particularly important for reaching the next generation of consumers.

Millennials communicate their value systems through the products they support rather than traditional affiliations such as religion, making a company's social initiatives and positions all the more important.

During a panel discussion at Fashion-Culture-Design June 9, an executive from Marvin Traub argued that a brand's corporate social responsibility is one of the ways to create value for shareholders. While not all in agreement, the panelists discussed the ways in which a brand's values impact its bottom line ([see story](#)).

When aiming for an emotional appeal, there is no right or wrong answer.

"There are no ultimate rules or science on the nature of media that gets consumers to react," Mr. Benattar said. "Look, I loved the exceptional ad video of Gisele for Under Armor, as much as the tear inducing Thank you, Mom work from P&G, all different type of video treatments that have achieved global resonance.

"Stella chose behind-the-scenes, a well known format that consumer keep embracing," he said. "At the end of the day, it's about creativity and uniqueness staging entertainment that sells."