

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

John Varvatos films Hozier performance as fall/winter 2016 ad element

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Hozier for John Varvatos, fall/winter 2016

By JEN KING

U.S. menswear brand John Varvatos is reiterating its rock 'n' roll appeal through an original music video featuring pieces from its fall/winter 2016 campaign.

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For the fall/winter 2016 advertisements, the menswear label worked with Irish singer/songwriter Andrew Hozier-Byrne, known as Hozier professionally. Since debuting its "iconic rock star" ads in 2005, the brand has used only black-and-white imagery, but for fall/winter 2016, John Varvatos opted for color photography, a move that is likely to give pause among enthusiasts who have become accustomed to its grey-scale aesthetic.

"When I first saw it, I didn't realize it was a John Varvatos ad since I, as well as many others, have been accustomed to seeing its ads in black-and-white," said Romey Louangvilay, chief curator and director of digital marketing at [Curate Directive](#), New York.

"This is an iconic move for John Varvatos since the brand has been associated with a certain brand aesthetic, and it will definitely make consumers talk about this move," he said.

Mr. Louangvilay is not affiliated with John Varvatos, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[John Varvatos](#) did not respond by press deadline.

Concert footage

Hozier, a Grammy-nominated musician, was photographed by Danny Clinch for John Varvatos' fall/winter 2016 campaign, a departure from the brand's visual rock star series shot on black-and-white film. The series features a mixture of legendary musicians and icons in the making, putting Hozier in company of greats such as Willie Nelson ([see story](#)), Ryan Adams and Gary Clark, Jr.

The campaign images will debut in print and digital beginning in September.



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The menswear brand also worked with Hozier to create an original music video.

John Varvatos' video concept was produced by Yard, a creative agency, and directed by Mr. Clinch. In the video, Hozier performs his song "To Be Alone" while dressed in a number of pieces from the fall/winter 2016 collection.

The video brings John Varvatos' advertising concept to life with an "unplugged" feeling. Hozier is shown seated on a chair with only a guitar and microphone stand.

As he performs, the camera pans from the movement of his fingers on guitar's strings and up to the microphone, and back again. As the video concludes, the camera recedes down a brick alleyway to show Hozier unplugging his guitar from an amp, along with the feedback noise, before the John Varvatos logo appears on the viewer's screen.

Hozier performs "To Be Alone" | Directed by Danny Clinch for John Varvatos

"We're living in a day and age where everything is in flux, but music always seems to find a way to cut through and make us feel good," said Stephen Niedzwiecki, founder/CEO of Yard and longtime brand collaborator, in a statement.

"It happened in history with the voices of Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell and Bob Marley," he said. "And it's why Hozier felt like a great choice for this season's campaign as he really struck a soulful chord with his song 'Take me to Church' and gained acknowledgment as a new talent, truly earning the respect of many icons in the industry.

"The video is based on a one-take approach and we were inspired by the filmed concert performances of Bob Dylan in the '60s and '70s."

Pieces seen in both efforts, which toe the line of modern sensibility and timeless craftsmanship, include a plaid, degrade coat made of long-haired alpaca yarn, an antique-finished motorcycle jacket, a double breasted peacoat in leather and a hand-knit merino and alpaca cardigan.

"Singers such as Hozier are influential," Mr. Louangvilay said. "They commands respect within their own fan base and fans respect, and aspire to be like them.

"From the fashion choices to how the band live their lives, their fans respect their choices," he said. "By wearing the clothes, [Hozier] is essentially introducing the brand to his fans and giving [John Varvatos his] stamp of approval.

On the road again

Continuing its relationship with Hozier, John Varvatos will collaborate with the singer for the "JV on Tour Series."

Premiering in October, the series will take John Varvatos through Hozier's Ireland, visiting popular destinations and interesting places to "eat, drink, create, rock, record and stay" alongside the singer and his friends.

In a similar effort, John Varvatos' namesake founder spent 24 hours in Russia as the brand geared up to celebrate its first store opening in the country.

John Varvatos, despite economic uncertainty in Russia, announced plans to open a Moscow boutique in December 2015. The boutique, located in the Crocus City Mall, was scheduled to open in March, but the brand is just now feting its official entrance into the Russian market.

The travel journal-type content includes black-and-white imagery of the city and its cultural landmarks ranging from the Krymsky Bridge and the Kremlin to a former chocolate factory and record store that Mr. Varvatos visited ([see](#)

story).

"The clothing brand has always been closely associated with music and most likely experience cross-over consumers and audiences," Mr. Louangvilay said. "This was a great move on the brand's part."

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