

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

## YSL Beauty goes Before the Light to encourage freedom of expression

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*Video still from YSL Beauty's Before the Lights*

By JEN KING

YSL Beauty is exploring the transformative relationship female musicians have with their cosmetics in its first music-meets-beauty-themed Web series.

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The brand's "Before the Light" series launched Oct. 6, after a number of promotional teasers were shared to its Instagram account. The first episode goes behind-the-scenes with singer, actress and brand ambassador since May, Zoe Kravitz, as she does her makeup in preparation for an on-stage performance.

"We live in a generation where people are focused on being individualistic and differentiating themselves from others, and in which they see the importance of leaving their own distinctive mark," said Sebastian Jespersen, co-author of [Entangled Marketing](#) and founder/CEO of [Vertic](#). "There is in the same vein an increasing appeal of stripping away falsities, natural beauty aligns with this trend as it is associated with authenticity.

"Authenticity is a brand value that is being baked into any brand that is seeking to relate and build relationships with the emerging millennial luxury customer," he said. "Millennials are focused on primarily building relationships and therefore enjoy story telling as it can help to personify and personalize a brand further aligning well with the millennials goal of differentiating themselves.

"For these reasons Edgy, au naturel' beauty appeals to the YSL Beauty customer as it amalgamates both trends, and focuses on the consumer having an edge that is authentic in itself and in being original, this allows the audience to define their own beauty according to their standards and rules much like the millennial mindset."

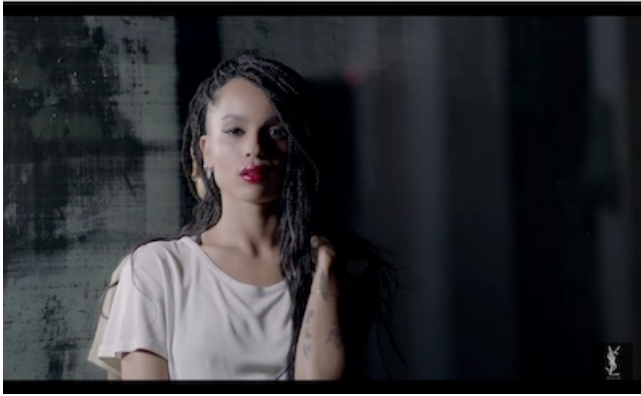
[YSL Beauty](#) was unable to respond directly by press deadline.

is not affiliated with [YSL Beauty](#), but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Backstage prep

Ms. Kravitz' participation in YSL Beauty's Before the Light embodies the L'Oreal-owned brand's message that every woman is free to "invent, define and create beauty in her own terms and live her life according to her own rules."

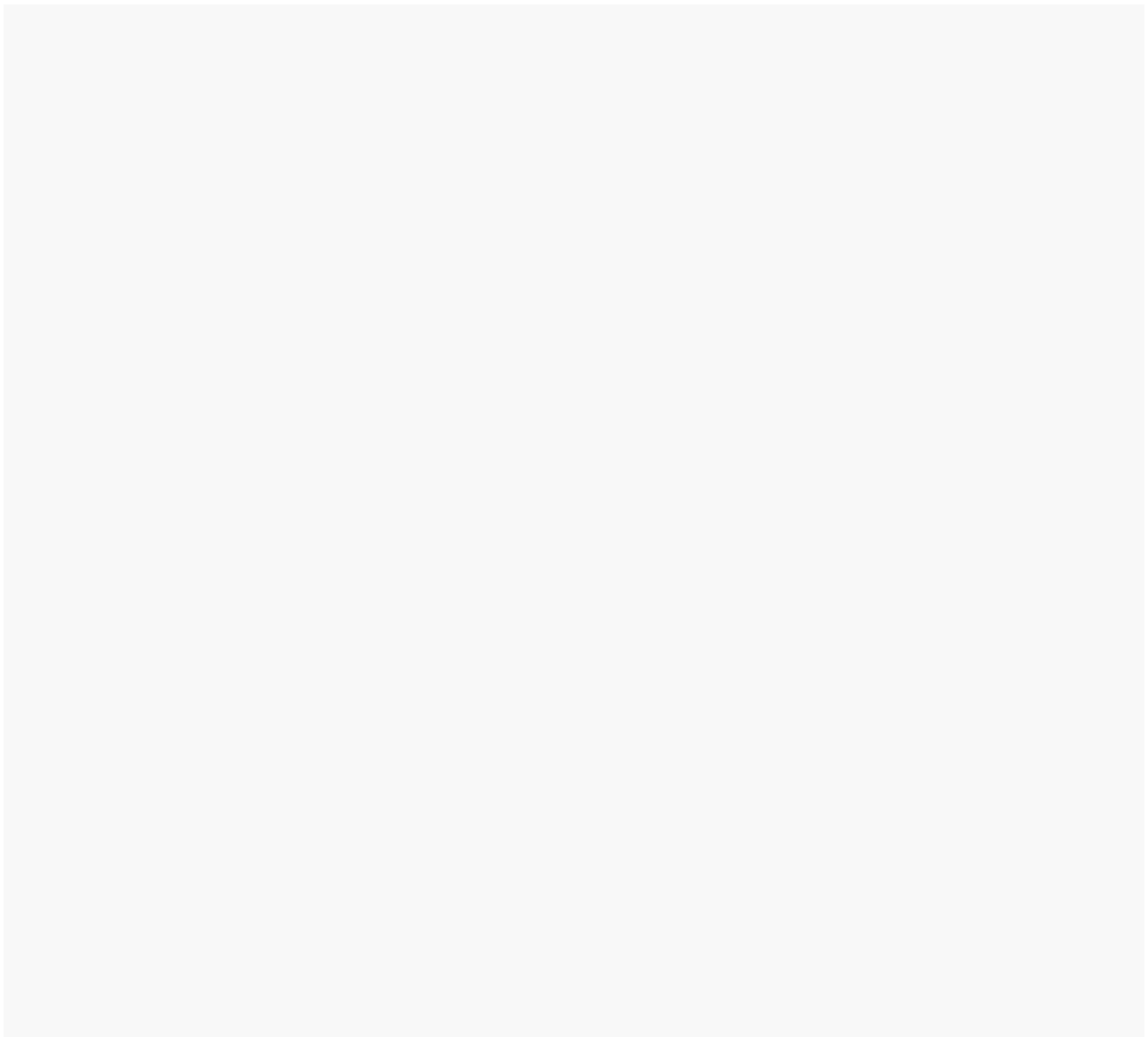
YSL Beauty selected Ms. Kravitz as an ambassador and first protagonist for this social media collaboration due to her free spiritedness, effortless and edgy style and her rock n' roll cool factor.



*Zoe Kravitz for YSL Beauty, Before the Lights video still*

"Zoe is not afraid to stand up for what she believes in – we love her confidence and authenticity as much as we admire her kindness, humility and deep respect for individuality," said Alexandre Choueiri, president of L'Oreal International Designer Collections Division, in a statement.

"In addition to her incredible talent as an artist, Zoe's inner and outer beauty truly represents today's modern woman," he said. "As a YSL Beauty muse, Zoe represents the brand's vision of beauty, appealing to women of all ethnicities to become empowered through style and beauty."



For actress and musician @zoeisabellakravitz, makeup is a paradox. It's a kind of war paint mask that, once worn, reveals how you truly want to be seen. Today, we want to ask you, what role does makeup play in your life? Let's dive into your "makeup psyche"! #yslbeauty #dareandstage #zoekravitz #beforethelight #newserie #makeup #rock

A photo posted by YSL Beauty Official (@yslbeauty) on Oct 5, 2016 at 10:45am PDT

In *Before the Light*, directed by French filmmaker Fabien Constant, Ms. Kravitz discusses how she views makeup as a type of "war paint" before a show, that allows a woman to decide how she wants to be seen. The video includes footage of Ms. Kravitz hanging out backstage with members of her band Lolawolf, showing before-the-show antics, adding to the authenticity of its positioning.

As the video continues, viewers see Ms. Kravitz applying a bright red lip gloss, applied from a tube with her first name inscribed on the applicator brush and a dramatic cat-eye drawn from liquid liner.

In her monologue, Ms. Kravitz explains that how she chooses to do her makeup on a given day impacts the type of performance she gives on stage. *Before the Lights* ends as Ms. Kravitz takes the stage with her band, ending just before she begins to sing.

If viewed on YouTube as a full video, instead of short installments shared to Instagram, consumers can shop the look, which features YSL Beauty's Vinyl Cream lipcolor and Le Dessin Du Regard Waterproof Stylo eyeliner.

*YSL Beauty's Before the Lights featuring Zoe Kravitz*

YSL Beauty plans to further the *Before the Lights* Web series through the coming weeks. Additional episodes will feature other up-and-coming female musicians and their beauty routines including South Korean singer Gain and singer Nili Hadida from Lilly Wood & the Prick, a French band.

Beauty and the edge

YSL Beauty often portrays an edgy aesthetic for its cosmetic communications.

For example, YSL Beauty helped consumers become cosmetic chameleons through an attitude-driven effort for its Mascara Vinyl Couture.

To introduce the glossy, heavily pigmented lash product, the brand used its digital channels to demonstrate the diversity of looks accessible with a swipe of mascara. When launching a new beauty product, generating varied content allows consumers to gain an understanding of how it would best be incorporated into their makeup arsenal ([see story](#)).

Messages of female empowerment have also been explored by the brand.

YSL Beauty urged consumers to hold onto their wild tendencies with its latest promotions for its Black Opium scent.

Model Edie Campbell, who has been the face of the fragrance since 2014, reprises her role as an "urban restless huntress" who will not stop until she gets what she wants. Recurring spokesmodels offer brands the opportunity to build further on an established character ([see story](#)).

"This campaign strategy works well for several reasons, the main one being that it meets its audience through shared values," Mr. Jespersen says. "For example, women often struggle with insecurity, self-esteem and the brand understands this, and utilizes this insight in its campaign theme for YSL's audience.

"By using this theme to engage with its audience, it is clear that YSL has an understanding of the deepest concerns of their customers," Mr. Jespersen said. "The idea of beauty is often tainted and misconstrued with an overwhelming amount of conflicting pressures from media, brands and peers.

"It's something most women tirelessly strive for, to be perceived similar to a picture that has been created for them rather than defining for themselves what beauty actually is," he said. "YSL's messaging strategy encourages women to create and define their own notion of beauty and this is effective as it elevates the brand from only a fashion and

luxury beauty house to having a higher purpose.

"By doing so, YSL is enabling its brand to go beyond engagement and create a **Share of Life** with customers."

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