

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Stuart Weitzman punches up boot collection with Gigi Hadid design

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*Gigi Hadid for Stuart Weitzman*

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By SARAH JONES

Footwear label Stuart Weitzman is heading into the boxing ring with It-girl model Gigi Hadid to debut a collaborative style.

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To launch the brand's heeled combat bootie developed alongside the model, Stuart Weitzman added additional celebrity talent, tapping James Franco to direct a short film. With models gaining influence, design partnerships such as this one enable brands to reach new fashion forward audiences.

"Gigi is a great partner for Stuart Weitzman," said Hannah Kang, senior account supervisor at [Edelman Portland](#).

"Not only is she a fashion icon on the runway but she's already cut her teeth as a designer, proving that she's up for the challenge," she said. "She's also a fresh face for the brand, probably reaching a new and younger demographic than they're used to."

Ms. Kang is not affiliated with Stuart Weitzman, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Stuart Weitzman](#) did not respond before press deadline.

Grit and glam

Ms. Hadid has a standing relationship with Stuart Weitzman, having appeared in the brand's fall and spring advertising campaigns this year.

Now, the model is taking on a new role within Stuart Weitzman as designer. Her hiker-style Gigi boot reflects her simultaneous glamour and street style edge.



### *Gigi boots*

The stacked heel style includes metallic eyelets and an option of either a crocodile embossed calf skin or two metallic leathers. Ensuring that interested shoppers engage with the brand to buy, the boots are only available in Stuart Weitzman boutiques and the brand's own ecommerce site. Gigi boots will arrive in a special Gigi box.

"Marketers are truly struggling these days to reach the millennial demographic, which is the core foundation of Gigi Hadid's network," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#) and [MommysToolbox.com](#), New York.

"It was extremely strategic to leverage another collaboration with Gigi especially after her recent Hilfiger hype, now that she's extremely relevant and highly sought after by her target audience," she said.

Promoting the launch is a short film, titled "Do It Right." Set to a soundtrack by the same name by Martin Solveig and Tkay Maidza, the two-minute black-and-white video is featured on Stuart Weitzman's social channels, as well as its Web site.



*James Franco and Gigi Hadid on the set of "Do It Right"*

At the start, a pair of Gigi boots is seen dangling from power lines alongside pairs of sneakers. Footage of Ms. Hadid walking down the street is intercut with shots of her at a boxing gym, as she shuffles around the floor throwing punches in her shoe design.

The model is then seen stepping into the ring with multiple male opponents gathered by a female trainer. As they spar, the film cuts to flashbacks of her training, as she jumps rope or punches a trainer's focus mitts.

One by one, her opponents are knocked out, with Ms. Hadid performing victory dances as she comes out on top. After the final challenger is beaten, Ms. Hadid celebrates with her own coach as the opposing coach throws off her jacket in defeat.

## *Gigi Hadid Stars in "Do It Right": Stuart Weitzman fall 2016*

An authentic representation of Ms. Hadid, the video reflects her exercise regimen, which includes boxing. Stuart Weitzman's ad campaign this season similarly showcases the model's simultaneous gracefulness and power.

"The short shows that the shoes are more than just fashionable," Ms. Kang said. "It's fashion meets functionality, it's more than meets the eye, just like Gigi.

"She's beautiful, she's a model but she's more dynamic than just that," she said. "Gigi was recently in the news when someone tried to pick her up and she used her boxing skills to fight back.

"She's not just a model, she's a fighter. People might underestimate the shoe because it's shiny and pretty but there's more to it than its looks."

Using Ms. Hadid's social media celebrity for good, the boot is also a representation of Stuart Weitzman's commitment to the charity Pencils of Promise, an organization that works to increase access to quality education for children in developing countries. Together with PoP, Stuart Weitzman is joining the organization's mission to build schools, program and global communities around the common goal of education.

Stuart Weitzman will be involved in the funding of three schools planned to be built in Ghana, Guatemala and Laos ([see story](#)).

"[Ms. Hadid's] celebrity presence will elevate the desire for these shoes along with sales and also provides the value of social good with each purchase," Ms. Strum said.

"This partnership with Pencils of Promise also highlights the fact that Fashion is not focused on third world countries for their labor, but rather providing them with a valuable education," she said. "This elevates focus on making sure the younger demographic can be more successful in the future."

### Model mania

Other famous models have stepped inside the design studio for fashion labels, using their personal style as a reference for their designs.

For instance, British apparel and accessories label Mulberry targeted younger consumers with a handbag collection designed by Cara Delevingne.

To generate interest in the bags, Mulberry created a microsite destination where consumers could learn about the project and sign up to find out when the handbags will be available for purchase. Since Mulberry is considered a classic brand, shaking things up with a model-infused collection helped introduce the brand to a new audience ([see story](#)).

The rising fame of the new class of models on social media has made them popular collaborators for luxury labels aiming for a millennial audience.

Models are the vanguard of the digital revolution, according to an executive from Pacific Global Management speaking at Cond Nast's International Luxury Conference on April 21.

The frequent, rapid communication environment that social media has created has helped brands connect with consumers, but it has primarily helped the individual connect with other people. Because people will always be drawn to and trust one another more than a brand, models have emerged as indispensable marketers and content creators ([see story](#)).

"Gigi has historically been known for having a heart of gold and giving back whenever she can," Ms. Kang said. "When the campaign first launched, Gigi shared three posts on Instagram to her 24.5M+ fans, all which garnered more than 315,000 likes in less than an hour.

"Her willingness to leverage her own influence will truly elevate the visibility of this organization but also the visibility and sales of the shoes she designed for Pencils of Promise," she said. "It also elevates Stuart Weitzman's commitment of \$105,000 to build three schools in Ghana, Guatemala and Laos."

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