

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Chanel ponders paradoxes of its raison d'tre in latest film retrospective

November 14, 2016



Video still from *Inside Chanel* chapter 17, "The Paradoxes of Chanel"

By JEN KING

In the seventeenth installment of *Inside Chanel*, the French atelier explores how its founder leveraged style, material and feminine paradoxes to establish the ultimate expression of luxury.

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

Inside Chanel's latest chapter uses various phrases to explore the French fashion brand's heritage, focusing on how its founder, Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel, mixed unexpected properties to create one of luxury's defining houses. As a whole, *Inside Chanel* serves to educate consumers on the brand's illustrious heritage through captivating visual storytelling and explores ideologies that extend beyond its apparel and accessories.

"Coco Chanel grew up in a time where women's clothing was very constrictive," said Lauren Bates, marketing manager and lead storyteller at [Blue Moon Digital](#), Denver, CO. "Women wore corsets, and most of their clothing wasn't exactly what most would consider comfortable.

"Though not necessarily required, these corseted silhouettes were a defining piece of 'femininity' at the time," she said. "Chanel was able to transform what was considered 'feminine' without making women feel less feminine. That, I believe, is the basis for the brand and her aesthetic. She redefined what feminine dressing was. And the brand continues to honor her vision.

"The attributions in the film (beautiful and practical, black and white, style and comfort, rough and noble, etc.) speak to Coco Chanel's character. She was raised in an orphanage and rose to affluence; she loved dressing up but also wanted to be comfortable. And for that time, those two things were not one in the same."

Ms. Bates is not affiliated with [Chanel](#), but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Chanel](#) was reached for comment.

Opposites attract

Inside Chanel Chapter 17, "The Paradoxes of Chanel" begins by exploring the paradox of Ms. Chanel herself, who was a country girl who rose to become the definition of Parisian chic.

The fast paced video features a female narrator and black-and-white graphics that illustrate the topics explored.

Each frame explores paradoxes within Chanel's heritage such as finding inspiration in the austerity of the orphanage where Ms. Chanel was raised as well as the splendor of Venice, Italy.

Inside Chanel continues to underscore how Chanel's borrowing of male silhouettes have in turn resulted in a feminine aesthetic that at the time was unexpected and refreshing.

Continuing on, the video stresses that Chanel has made "simple" the ultimate definition of "luxury" by mixing "real" with "imitation."



Video still from Inside Chanel Chapter 17

Chanel's concept has resulted in pairing costume jewelry with diamonds, layering strands of pearls over resin bracelets and refusing to choose between black and white.

By embracing contrast, Chanel has reconciled "beautiful and practical" and "style and comfort," and has allowed consumers to choose "and" over "or." Chanel's ideology is explored further by touching on its use of contrasting fabrics such as tweed and silk, jersey and lace and denim and muslin.

Moving on from its approach to fashion, Inside Chanel continues with the floral essences of Chanel N 5. It is at this point in the film, that Chanel connects its Inside Chanel film with the tagline of its latest retelling of Chanel N 5, Chanel N 5 L'Eau, "You know me and you don't."

In the campaign created for Chanel N 5 L'Eau, brand ambassador Lily-Rose Depp explores a series of paradoxes that define the Chanel woman and work to celebrate her complexities ([see story](#)).



Video still from Inside Chanel Chapter 17

Exploring female complexities further, the narrator states that women have been given permission to be anything and everything – vulnerable and invincible, muses and artists, in love and independent, and "just as much as a paradox as Chanel."

"These films do an excellent job of creating a connection with the viewer," Ms. Bates said. "This film or chapter, in particular, does a great job of capturing Chanel's soul, its DNA.

"Throughout the film, it highlights paradoxes that are at the heart of the brand," she said. "The narrative and story of the film highlight the Chanel story, particularly, things that people might not have known and that had a huge impact on Coco Chanel herself.

"Featuring the paradoxes of who Coco Chanel was and what Chanel, the brand, is captures the brand's DNA effortlessly."

The Paradoxes of Chanel - Inside Chanel

A lesson in history

Other fashion houses have taken note of Chanel's Inside Chanel video series, and have launched their own versions to explore brand heritage and codes.

For example, French couture house Christian Dior is one of many classic fashion labels bringing its history to light in modern ways with online video.

Dior Stories is a new online video series that taps into the history of the fashion house to help solidify an emotional connection to consumers. The first video details the story of how its founding designer Christian Dior transformed fashion after World War II, in a time when women were looking to reclaim their femininity ([see story](#)).

Chanel and Dior both keep their founding designer close.

In the fifth chapter of Inside Chanel, Chanel explored its founder's early life, influences and motivations. Exploring the early life and influences of a brand's founder via social content can personalize a brand while engaging consumers ([see story](#)).

Keeping its founder as a primary element of its modern-day communications is also linked to female empowerment.

"How women dress is still a hot topic of conversation in our culture," Ms. Bates said. "Many have their opinions on what women should wear, what a woman's clothing says about her, etc.

"These short films elevate that conversation and do an amazing job of capturing the soul of the brand through the lens of empowerment," she said. "There is a line toward the end of the film that summarizes the underlying theme, the voice of the brand, 'Giving women the permission to be anything and everything' That is what Coco Chanel sought to do, and that is still relevant in the brand's collections today.

"Women, or at the very least women who shop luxury brands, want to feel good about what they are wearing. They want to have their clothing be an extension of their personality. To speaking without speaking, so to say.

"And to feel empowered by your clothing is a sought after emotion, for many women, when it comes to shopping and dressing. Being able to foster that emotion in your consumers will create a lifelong customer."

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.