

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Moncler camouflages spring collection in artistic ads

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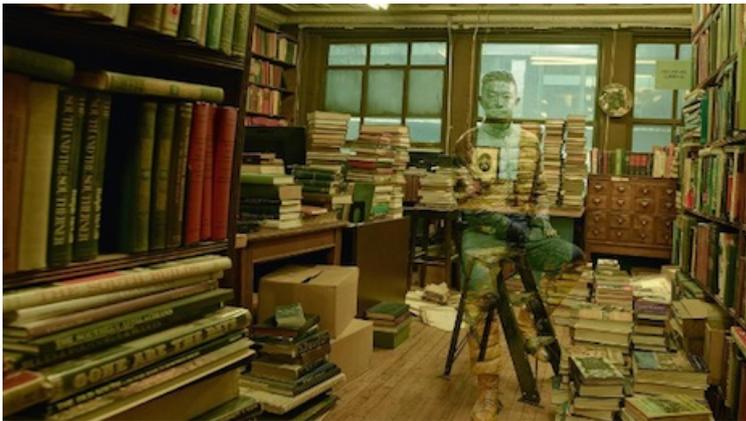


Image from Moncler's spring/summer 2017 ad campaign

By SARAH JONES

French-Italian outerwear label Moncler is subtly advertising its latest fashions with a disappearing act.

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Chinese performance artist Liu Bolin stars in the brand's spring/summer 2017 campaign, bringing his ability to blend into his surroundings through surreal body paint. This nontraditional imagery may help Moncler stand out amid more classic fashion photography in magazines and social media feeds.

"Liu's work explores the relationship of the individual to their surroundings," said Jennifer Bowles Tyriver, senior art director at **MDG Advertising**, Boca Raton, FL. "This is a natural fit with a brand that is known for its performance in harsh weather, where you depend on yourself, and even your clothing, for survival.

"Fashion retailers, especially ones with international distribution channels, have to appeal across country lines if they are going to be successful in growing their market share," she said. "Liu Bolin is a famous Chinese artist who will help Moncler to make its high-end jackets appeal to an up-and-coming Chinese consumer with more money to spend.

"Knowing who your audience is one of the key disciplines of a successful campaign. I would say in that context this campaign is a smart move for Moncler."

Ms. Bowles Tyriver is not affiliated with **Moncler**, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Moncler** was reached for comment.

Invisible man

Nicknamed The Invisible Man, Mr. Bolin's most popular series is "Hiding in the City." This art was inspired by China's destruction of Beijing's Suo Jia Cun, an artist community where he lived.

Wanting to silently protest the government's lack of protection for its artists, he began to become one with sites in Beijing. He has since continued the series with stunts in cities such as New York and Milan.

For its campaign, Moncler created a Doudoune Legre snowsuit for Mr. Bolin. For each of the scenes captured by

photographer Annie Liebovitz, Mr. Bolin's suit was painted to match his surroundings.

Inside of a bookstore, the legs are painted to resemble the wooden floor while the torso recreates a stack of books, a view through a window and a framed picture. With the detailed art, Mr. Bolin is barely visible in his surroundings, with just his face and his silhouette able to be perceived.



Image from Moncler's spring/summer 2017 ad campaign

In a forest, Mr. Bolin becomes one with the trees, appearing transparent with the addition of green, brown and orange.

In a behind-the-scenes film, consumers can watch Mr. Bolin being transformed, as painters reference a photo of the bookstore while they cover him.

This campaign marks the fifth time Moncler has collaborated with Ms. Liebovitz.

Behind the Scenes - Liu Bolin Performance photographed by Annie Leibovitz for Moncler

"Bringing Liu's signature style to the forefront of this ad suggests that Moncler wants to challenge the viewer to think about what fashion means and what the possibilities are," Ms. Bowles Tyrriver said. "It's almost a non-fashion approach.

"Moncler is highlighting the functionality of the garment and how it allows you to blend seamlessly in with your environment, but it does it in a beautifully unexpected way."

Making a statement

Moncler is not afraid to use its campaigns as a platform for artistic storytelling, making the image and not the apparel the main event.

The label communicated a message beyond clothes in its narrative fall/winter 2015-16 advertising campaign inspired by Nordic, Russian and Slavic folklore.

"An Icelandic Fairytale" wove the story of a twin brother and sister who set out on an adventure across a snowy landscape through successive images shot by Ms. Leibovitz. This narrative approach opened up opportunities for Moncler to engage with consumers on an emotional level as it gradually releases more of the story online ([see story](#)).

Looking at its basic coats as a jumping off point, Moncler has previously asked artists to reinterpret them through photography.

In 2015, Moncler united creatives for a cause through a photographic project launched during New York Fashion

Week.

Art for Love asked 32 artists to interpret the theme of love using the brand's Maya duvet jacket, with the resulting prints auctioned online via Paddle8 to raise funds for amfAR. Uniting a group of established artists for this type of charity event helped draw attention for Moncler and make a larger impact in the fight against HIV ([see story](#)).

"The snowsuit as canvas art demonstrates how when the performance and functionality of a product works well you stop noticing that it's your clothing it just becomes part of you," Ms. Bowles Tyrivier said. "It becomes a beautiful relationship between the wearer, the clothing and the environment."

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