

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Is eyewear on course to become fashion's next statement accessory?

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Valentino's Glamgloss sunglasses

By JEN KING

Italian atelier Valentino ventured onto New York's streets to observe consumers' hopes and thoughts through personal testimonies.

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Valentino's latest eyewear campaign pays homage to the beauty and individuality of contemporary women through the artistic vision of creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli. Eyewear has emerged as a fashion accessory that speaks volumes to a wearer's personality, similar to how statements can be made through a consumer's choice of handbag.

"Eyewear completes every outfit. People look into each others faces first," said Peter Berg, head of marketing at Edel-Optics. "While wearing simple clothes, glasses are able to make a statement and underline one's personality perfectly.

"Building strong brands that people identify with is the main goal," he said. "Eyewear works like any other accessories: a watch, necklaces a belt or even shoes.

"People own just a few of them, which they are wearing more often than other fashion items. That justifies their higher investment. Especially social media increases the demand of a measurement of status, that you could show your community."

Mr. Berg is not affiliated with **Valentino**, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Valentino** was reached for comment.

Through a candid lens

Valentino's "A New York Diary" campaign is Mr. Piccioli's first eyewear collection as the sole creative director of the Italian fashion house. His design partner, Maria Grazia Chirui, left Valentino to fill Dior's empty creative seat in July.

A New York Diary comes on the heels of Mr. Piccioli's first solo ready-to-wear campaign for spring 2017. Similar to the eyewear effort paying tribute to self expression, the spring campaign honors Mr. Piccioli's values for the Valentino brand ([see story](#)).

Photographed by Terry Richardson, A New York Diary shows women wearing the new Glamgloss eyewear style, designed by Mr. Piccioli. The campaign celebrates the best of street style in New York, shown through the lens of Glamgloss.

The eyewear style includes a nylon profile, metals, Valentino's iconic studs and colored lenses. Together the style creates "an unexpected yet ethereal effect."



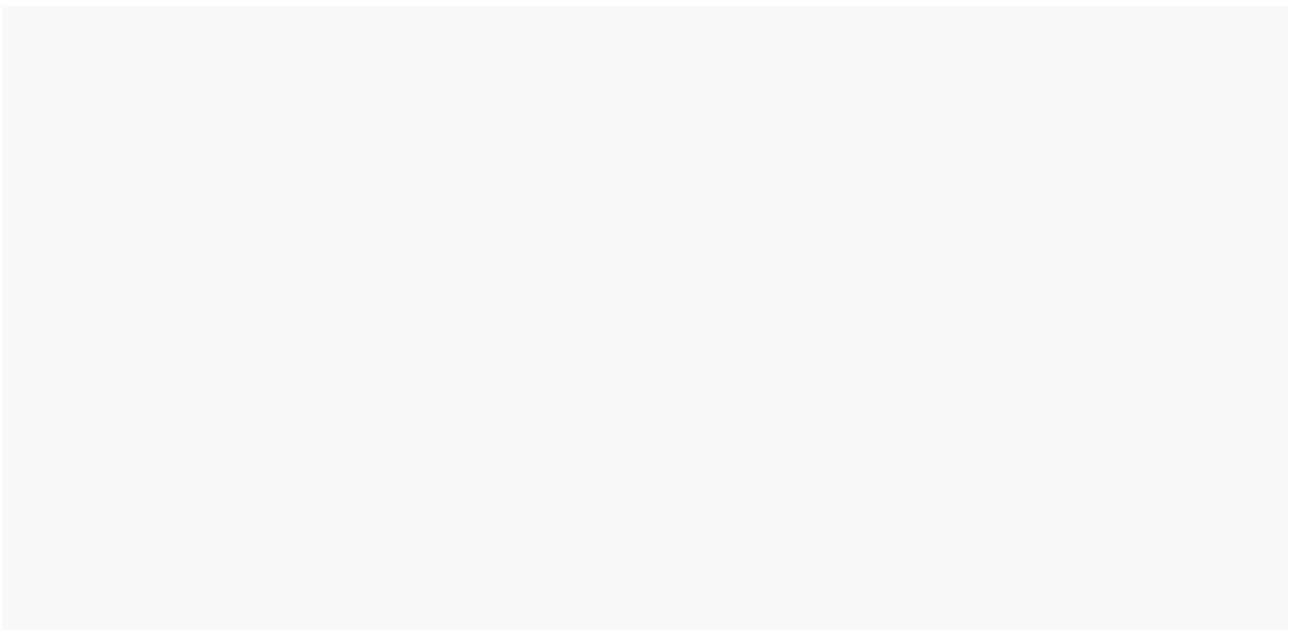
Valentino's Glamgloss sunglasses; photograph by Terry Richardson

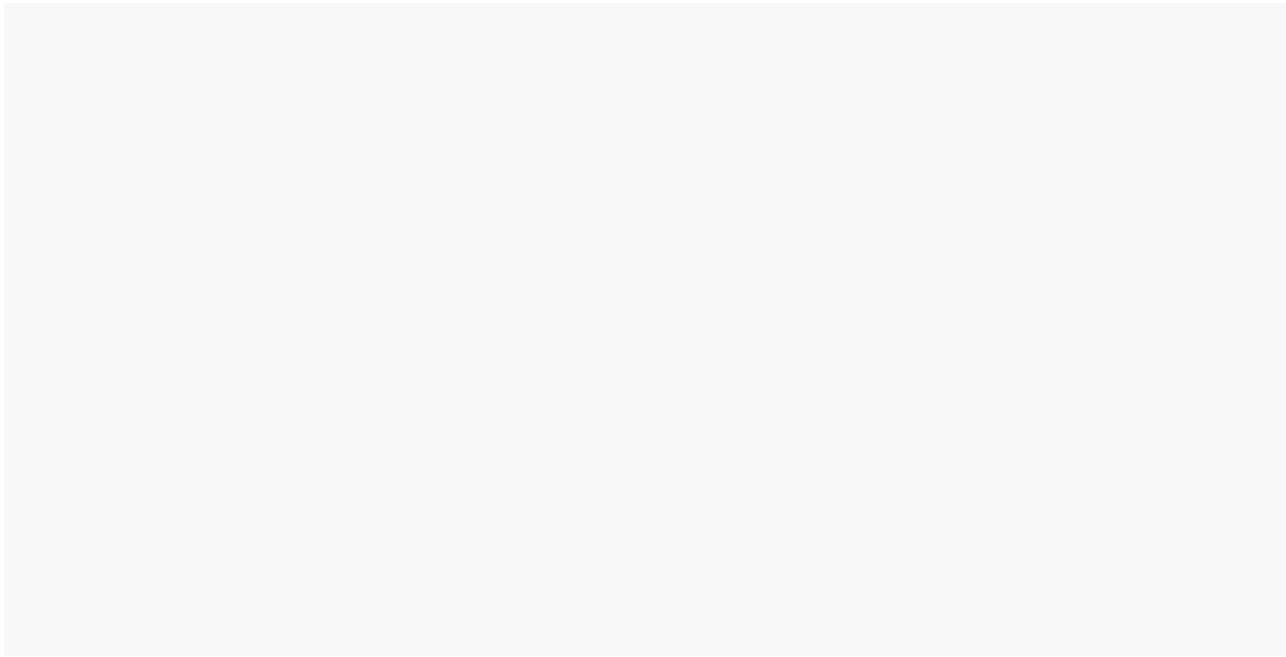
In addition to stills captured by Mr. Richardson, Valentino also filmed question and answer segments. The first prompt asked New Yorkers, "What would you like to see in the future?"

Responses from men and women range from Mars to more books and Marty McFly to common sense to black lives mattering and peace. All participants wear similar style frames and are of different genders, races and ages.

A second prompt asks, "Who has the most beautiful eyes in the world?" New Yorkers answered with funny responses such as saying zebras, dogs and Lil Wayne have the most beautiful eyes in the world.

Others took a personal approach, naming their grandmother, boyfriend or partner as having the most beautiful eyes. To end the vignette, a man answers by saying, "I do and so do you, because all our eyes are unique, from within ourselves."





A New York Diary, featuring the new #ValentinoGlamgloss Eyewear Collection designed by #PierpaoloPiccioli and photographed by @terryrichardson: Who has the most beautiful eyes in the world?' #ValentinoEyewear

A post shared by Valentino (@maisonvalentino) on Feb 22, 2017 at 6:10am PST

In this Q&A clip, all participants wear Valentino Glamgloss frames, priced at about \$400.

In January, Valentino entered a 10-year agreement with eyewear manufacturer Luxottica to license its optical and sunglass styles ([see story](#)).

Framing a statement

The eyewear category has surged in popularity due to the demand for fashionable corrective lenses and an affordable, entry-level luxury good that doubles as a statement piece. According to [Euromonitor](#), the eyewear market is valued at \$121 billion globally for 2016.

As a fashion trend, a survey conducted by German online eyewear provider Edel-Optics found that the category is set to become an essential part of fashionable wardrobes in the year-ahead.

Edel-Optics' survey asked designers and fashion experts to respond to questions on eyewear. The results show that accessories are becoming more of a focus in overall conceptual design than they had been in the past.

Accessories such as handbags, jewelry, footwear and eyewear most noticeably, are no longer regarded as "an optional extra." Increasingly, these pieces are become the highlights of an overall design.

To this point, Italian eyewear creator Safilo is reviving the origins of its craftsmanship with the introduction of an Atelier Eyewear division.

Safilo's Atelier will design frames positioned above its current fashion luxury category via a selection of sophisticated brands. The Atelier eyewear concepts will evoke design, art and fashion trends to speak to the world's most discerning consumers ([see story](#)).

Edel-Optics' survey also uncovered that 2017 will bring an unprecedented variety of frames to the eyewear market.

Current trends include large, "oversize sunglasses," round frames, retro models such as cat-eyes, delicate and minimalist frames. Valentino's Glamgloss style, for example, falls within the oversize category, leaning toward a futuristic minimalist design.

Also, 69 percent of Edel-Optics' respondents felt that the importance of the eyewear category is likely to increase or remain as high in the future.

"Customers nowadays are mixing high-fashion with H&M," Edel-Optics' Mr. Berg said. "Wearing exclusive eyewear gives everyone a luxury feeling. You could upgrade your style just with one accessory."

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