

RETAIL

## Barneys turns to Instagram for digital talent scouting

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*OAMC designs*

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By STAFF REPORTS

Department store chain Barneys New York's menswear team is tapping Instagram as a platform for designer discovery.

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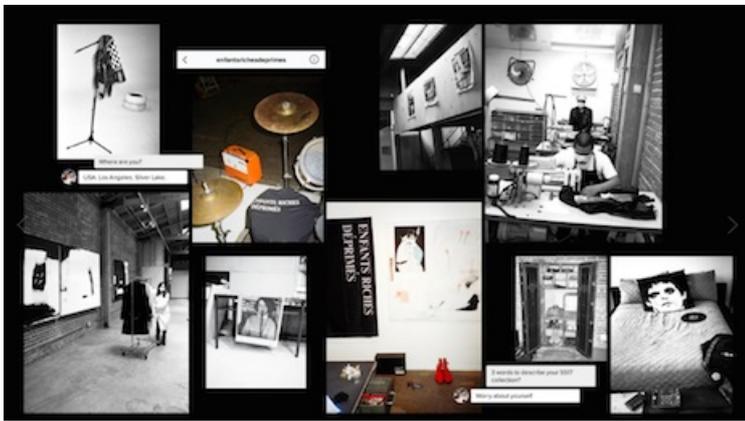
Guided by the social network's visual medium, the buying team has uncovered a number of "buzz-worthy" labels outside of the traditional showroom environment. Taking the social media approach a step further, Barneys' buying team used Instagram's messaging feature to make first introductions and negotiate wholesale purchases.

### Social search

Barneys is currently featuring a collective of 10 designer labels that were found by its buyers on Instagram.

When Barneys' executive vice president of designer Jay Bell was drawn to photographs from these brands, he leveraged Instagram's direct messaging to reach out. Snippets of these exchanges feature in a digital look book on Barneys' ecommerce site.

Consumers can see these talents share their perspectives, including their influences, their favorite music of the moment, where they are based and how they would describe their most recent collection.



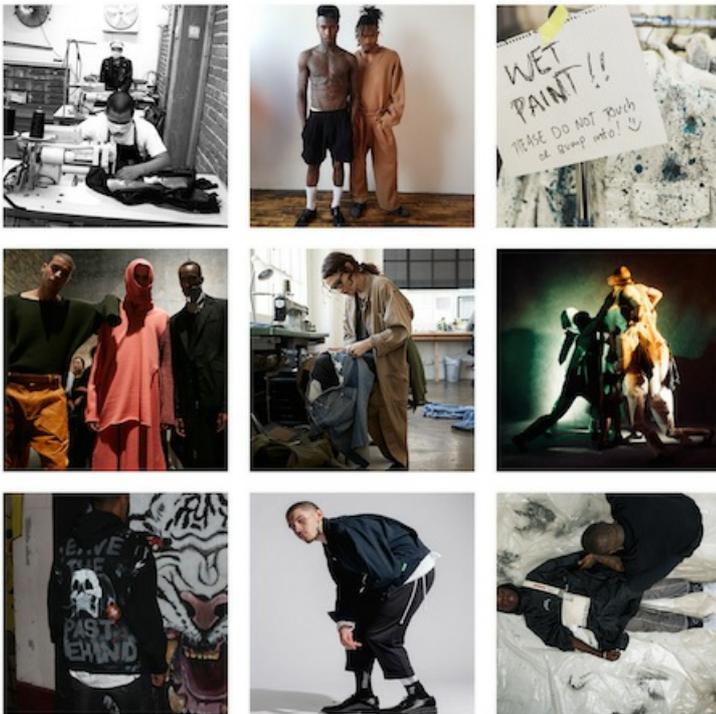
Page from Barneys' "The Discovery Channel" look book

Barneys has included the handles of these designers within the look book so consumers can investigate their feeds themselves.

"I love this idea of discovery," Mr. Bell said. "I truly enjoy learning about a brand and its background its spirit and smell. Seeing brands in their environment makes me tick. Translating that sensation into a customer experience at Barneys gets me so excited!"

"You can ignore Instagram and social media, but if you do, it'll show," he said. "I consider Barneys our blank canvas to tell a story, and it behooves to find these interesting people and stories."

"All of these designers are a different hue in the painting, and they make a gorgeous tapestry that's rich with unique beauty. I love, love, love it it makes me tick!"



Designers discovered by Barneys on Instagram

The designers, who hail from locales such as Tokyo, Paris and Copenhagen, include Sulvam, Willy Chavarria, Resurrect by Night, Ksubi, Martine Rose, A Cold Wall, NSF, OAMC, Craig Green and Enfants Riches Deprimés.

As the velvet ropes of luxury continue to come down, Instagram has created an outlet for storytelling that has democratized the industry, according to panelists at the Cond Nast International Luxury Conference in 2016.

During "The Power of Social Media" session, panelists discussed what lured fashion figures, such as Donatella Versace and Alber Elbaz, both relatively new to the scene (see story), to Instagram and how a high-fashion hub has been established on the platform. Using Instagram as a marketing tool provides brands with tremendous reach while allowing for behind-the-scenes and personality-driven content to drive awareness, inspiration and purchasing (see story).

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