

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Chanel marries East and West with latest Gabrielle short film

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Chanel's new video stars Chinese model Liu Wen. Image credit: Chanel

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By DANNY PARISI

French atelier Chanel is continuing to highlight its new Gabrielle handbag style, this time with an eye on China, through a short film.

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The video follows Chinese model and social influencer Liu Wen to a Chanel fashion show in Paris, highlighting the merging of European and Chinese visions of luxury. This video is only the latest in Chanel's Gabrielle series that recruits a wide and diverse array of stars for each short video.

"Over the past years, Chanel has blended the spirit of Gabrielle Bonheur 'Coco' Chanel's iconic nature in the collections it puts out," said Paul Farkas, publisher of [Athleisure Magazine](#), New York. "There are few bigger honors than being attached to the coveted Gabrielle bag, and indeed Liu Wen's trailblazing model dynasty is well within scope.

"Featuring Liu of course aims to sell more to the affluent Asian market," he said. "It resonates as patriotic, nostalgic and fantasy-aspirational.

"Front row shots from Paris shows, New York closets and other leading world fashion capitals, conjoin an international construct of making it at the ultimate levels."

Mr. Farkas is not affiliated with Chanel but agreed to comment in an expert capacity. [Chanel](#) was reached for comment.

### Crossing borders

Chanel's Gabrielle bag is named after founder Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel. Consequently, much of the advertising around the bag has been keeping true to the roots of the French fashion house and highlighting the bag in classic yet glamorous ways.

The numerous video spots created for the bag have taken a number of different forms, from music videos to interviews to short films. Chanel has also casted a wide variety of diverse actors in the starring role.

For this campaign, Chanel sought out Ms. Liu to star in the video.

Ms. Liu is seen exploring the streets of Paris, taking in some of the iconic sights while carrying a Chanel Gabrielle handbag across her shoulder.



*The video has an international flair to it. Image credit: Chanel*

She makes her way through the teeming crowds, takes photos and eventually gets in a car, which takes her to a fashion show.

There, Ms. Liu is bombarded with photographers and paparazzi who snap her photos before she heads inside. Once within, Ms. Liu observes the show with careful consideration.

Afterwards, the model takes selfies with various attendees. The video ends with Ms. Liu strolling along the Seine and smiling at the camera.

An implicit point of the video is the growing relationship between European luxury and China, with many Chinese consumers embracing classic European fashion houses and many partnerships being struck between the two.

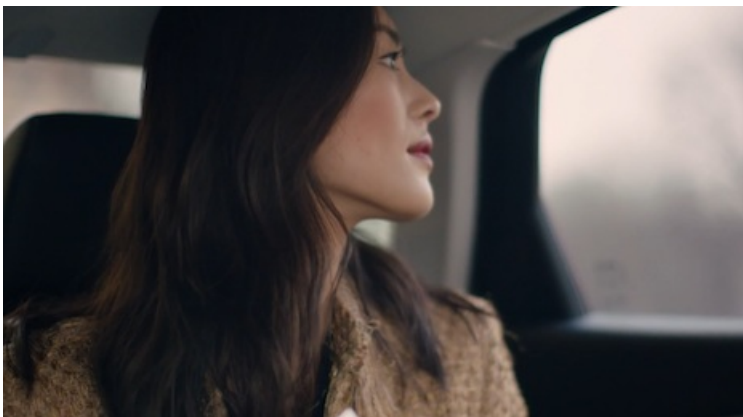
By depicting one of China's most popular fashion icons as a natural fit among the echelons of European luxury, Chanel is tying the two together as it attempts to capture more of the Chinese luxury consumer base.

#### Implicit statements

Chanel has also taken the opposite strategy of its Ms. Liu video in the past, transplanting an American fashion icon into an eastern locale in contrast to a Chinese model in Paris.

Chanel recruited actress/singer Willow Smith for a jaunt through Tokyo and its suburbs in a quiet effort that has a travelogue feel. The film follows Ms. Smith as she explores various environments in Tokyo accompanied by her ever-present Gabrielle bag, shown in a number of styles throughout the effort ([see story](#)).

The fashion house has also used the Gabrielle video spots for more subversive ends, recently recruiting male singer Pharrell to be a brand ambassador for what is typically thought of as a female accessory.



*Ms. Liu on her way to the fashion show. Image credit: Chanel*

Pharrell has worked with the brand before, but this is the first time Chanel has made him an ambassador for a handbag. In doing so, Chanel is expanding the notions of how luxury brands can market traditionally gendered products such as handbags to consumers outside the expected demographic ([see story](#)).

With this latest video, Chanel is again using a simple video premise to make a larger statement. In this case, the statement is that the distance between Europe and China may be large, but culturally, it is shrinking and Chinese fashion icons are just as welcome in European luxury as anyone else.

"This is a long-supported relationship as Liu Wen has been with the house extensively," Mr. Farkas said. "This form of co-loyalty should and will be a bedrock of modern luxury marketing.

"Brand loyalist consumers want to see deeper narratives, ties and commitment on both about the brand and talent sides and why they have and continue to come together, not shallow one-off projects or heavy rotation of new It-celeb or influencers du jour."

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