

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Stella McCartney builds masculine image in dramatic short

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Stella McCartney's "Black Park" campaign. Image credit: Stella McCartney

By SARAH JONES

British fashion label Stella McCartney is weaving a mysterious plot to mark the arrival of its second menswear collection.

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"Black Park" features elements of the surreal as a man roams the woods alone, confronting his memories. With menswear a new addition to the brand, this content further develops the idea of the Stella McCartney man.

"Stella McCartney is known for her signature style of sharp tailoring, natural confidence and sexy femininity, and her venture into menswear is no different," said Romey Louangvilay, chief curator and director of digital marketing at [Curate Directive](#), New York. "Even from the first season to the second, you can still see her musical genes in the patterns that are bold and fun, and the video focuses on the details of the tailoring."

Mr. Louangvilay is not affiliated with Stella McCartney, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Stella McCartney](#) was reached for comment.

Into the woods

For its fall/winter 2017 film, Stella McCartney tapped director Sean Ellis and actor Cillian Murphy, known for his roles in the television series "Peaky Blinders" and movies such as "28 Days Later" and the "Dark Knight" trilogy.

The film opens on a point of view shot, capturing the actor's perspective of the trees above him as he lies on the ground.

In between shots of the protagonist splayed out on the ground, he is seen walking through the woods in the same outfit he is currently wearing.

Suddenly, the soundtrack created by Ms. McCartney's father Paul McCartney picks up, as shots of a circle of otherworldly lights and nature are seen.



Image from Stella McCartney's Black Park campaign

As the actor continues his journey, he arrives at a seemingly abandoned cabin in a clearing. Seemingly revealing a memory, Mr. Murphy is shown standing in the doorway of the cabin at night. Another flash looks back on a wooden button nailed to a tree.

The cabin ignites and the protagonist is shown both running and walking back through the forest, leaving his culpability in question.

Black Park / Stella McCartney Menswear AW17 Film Featuring Cillian Murphy

"From watching the film, it juxtaposes the perception of what masculinity is by showing Cillian running through the woods with the delicate details in the clothes he wears," Mr. Louangvilay said.

"Stella makes her point of view of the Stella McCartney man is a complicated one," he said. "She comes from a musical family and she has mostly designed for women, and she finds a way to tell this story of a male consumer by boldly stating he is confident in who is, appreciates exploration, enjoys details in his clothes and also, he isn't perfect.

"As seen in the video, a memory of the cabin triggers a memory of Cillian as he is wandering through the woods. Flashbacks of his memory is intertwined in the present, alluding to viewers that something happened in his past. The video does a good job at giving the Stella McCartney man depth within the nearly two-minute video."

This marks Stella McCartney's second menswear collection, following the debut of the category for the brand in the spring/summer 2017 season.

Category potential

With a market size of \$570 billion and annual revenues of \$333.4 billion, the menswear category is expected to grow at a constant rate of 2-3 percent a year, according to a new report by Fashionbi.

As size and revenues for the market has increased, so has consumer spending, with menswear seeing an 18 percent jump in purchases over the last five years. While far from a new market segment, menswear has seen a type of resurgence as men of all demographics have begun to embrace style and trends ([see story](#)).

Category extensions offer brands the chance to establish their identity in a new format.

Italian fashion house Prada is imbuing its debut jewelry line with a sense of the mystical and natural through a walk in the woods.

The label's first semiprecious jewelry collection, dubbed Talisman, is an homage to what the brand refers to as the original designs, as individuals in ancient times would construct and revere objects for their magical properties. Introducing the unisex accessories, the brand is exploring some of the imagined powers of these semi-precious objects through a short film ([see story](#)).

"Make sure your design team has someone who you're targeting," Mr. Louangvilay said. "For instance, pay attention to some of the male team members as they will better know how clothes fit their bodies better than someone who identifies as female and have never worn men's clothing.

"The same can be said for a male designer who wants to venture into women's wear," he said. "Listen to the females on your team.

"Understand the competition in the space you're trying to go into, from the design to their marketing, know your space."

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