

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Chanel continues East-West theme with K-Pop superstar short

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Chanel's latest Gabrielle film juxtaposes East and West as well as nature and modernity. Image credit: Chanel

By DANNY PARISI

French fashion house Chanel is continuing to bridge the gap between East and West in its ongoing Gabrielle handbag campaign with a new short film starring South Korea's G-Dragon.

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Previous Gabrielle short films have drawn on stars from a variety of disciplines and countries, all united around the concept of the Gabrielle bag, named for Chanel founder Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel. Previous videos have drawn on prominent Chinese icons for starring roles, and now Chanel is recruiting a Korean singer, rapper and fashion icon.

"G-Dragon is the most influential cultural icon in Asia today," said [Thoma Serdari](#), Ph.D., founder of [PIQLuxury](#), co-editor of [Luxury: History Culture Consumption](#) and adjunct professor of luxury marketing at [New York University](#), New York.

"His music and fashion style have contributed to an unprecedented increase in followers who also happen to cross two generations: millennials and Generation Z," she said. "These are young adults who have developed a taste for luxury early in life, have disposable income, primarily due to their families, and have also traveled abroad.

"They completely understand Western culture but feel a strong bond with G-Dragon, a phenomenon of a trend-setter, who probably owes his success to his genuinely individual style."

East and West

Chanel's Gabrielle series has recruited such diverse names as Willow Smith, Pharrell and Kristen Stewart.

Each video in the series focuses on one star and their Gabrielle bag, usually in an evocative setting and with wildly different tones ranging from playful and jaunty to somber and mysterious.

This latest video takes an interesting approach. In addition to the bridging between Eastern and Western fashion sensibilities, the video also plays with juxtaposing scenes of nature and peace with scenes of modernity and chaos.



Popular Korean singer and fashion icon G-Dragon. Image credit: Chanel

For example, in one section, the film shows a massive crowd of G-Dragon's adoring fans raising their hands in the air in a sea of flashing lights.

The film then immediately match cuts to an image of a slender sapling with branches reaching up in almost a mirror image of the crowd's hands.

Similar cuts and juxtapositions abound throughout the film and are a major theme of the campaign. G-Dragon is a perfect fit for this theme, given his androgynous and eclectic aesthetic.

"As a Chanel ambassador, he represents more than a celebrity," Ms. Serdari said. "He's a male rapper, whose inspiration and visual cues stem from street culture, and whose fashion vocabulary speaks across social groups: male/female/unisex; Asian/Western/hybrids; Generation Z/Generation Y/ and beyond; high brow/ low brow/in between."

Gabrielle bag

Chanel's Gabrielle campaign has made merging East and West a central theme over the last three videos, including the most recent one with G-Dragon.

Prior to this, Chanel's aimed at combining the house's traditional French ideals with Chinese aesthetics.

The previous short film 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. Ms. Liu is seen exploring Paris and visiting iconic sights along the way ([see story](#)).

This is the inverse of the Gabrielle video prior to that, which followed an American star exploring an Asian environment, this time centered on Tokyo.



A scene from a G-Dragon concert. Image credit: Chanel

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 latest addition to the Gabrielle short film series further cements the brand's commitment to joining Western and Eastern sensibilities to appeal to a global audience.

"The video reinforces the idea of duality: It speaks to anyone who admires Chanel primarily as a fashion brand for

women but it also speaks to those who defy conventions and see beautiful clothing or accessories for what they are and not for the gender they are supposed to serve," Ms. Serdari said.

"[Chanel] heightens the idea of beauty in Macau with a cleverly narrow-frame shot video that includes impressions rather than snapshots of Macau," she said. "It transports us there while also it makes us linger through the eyes of G-Dragon.

"Artistically, it is a smart piece that genuinely suits the pace of the younger customer Chanel is trying to reach."

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