

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Elie Saab's #GirlOfNow raises awareness for women in the workplace

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Elie Saab's #GirlOfNow initiative talks about the struggles and triumphs of entrepreneurial women. Image credit: Elie Saab

By DANNY PARISI

Lebanese fashion house Elie Saab is celebrating entrepreneurial women with a new campaign called #GirlOfNow.

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Each video in the series interviews a different prominent women, many hailing from the fashion world, as they relate their experience in the workplace and impart advice on how to succeed. The campaign puts Elie Saab firmly in the camp of progressive values that have been in vogue for the luxury industry, in response to some of the negative connotations of the fashion world's effect on women.

"The fashion world is in a tremendous position to promote women in the workplace because designers can bring together the both the emotional and tangible elements that help women achieve their career goals," said Karen Kreamer, president of **K2 Brand Consulting**, Overland Parks, KS. "The Elie Saab #GirlOfNow campaign is a great example of connecting with potential customers on an emotional level by demonstrating an understanding of workplace challenges and opportunities.

"These shared values become real in the clothing and accessories offered by the Elie Saab brand."

Working women

Despite major gains for women in the workplace over the last few decades, numerous studies have confirmed what many women still experience: subtle forms of prejudice and sexism, glass ceilings and lack of representation in many industries.

Despite the female-centric nature of fashion design, and a more egalitarian atmosphere, the luxury sector still wrestles with this problem and many brands have done much both internally and externally to combat the issue.

Elie Saab launched #GirlOfNow to celebrate entrepreneurial women both in and outside of the fashion world.

In a series of videos, Elie Saab is exploring the breadth of female experiences in the more glamorous parts of the luxury world. Each video chronicles a different prominent woman, from supermodels to tech gurus to designers, as they relate their experiences being a woman in their respective industries.

Sara Sampaio's #GirlOfNow video

The four women represented in the videos are supermodel Sara Sampaio, tech entrepreneur Lauren Remington Platt, jewelry designer Noor Fares and social media influencer Kristina Bazan.

Each woman gives her own advice on how to make it in the world, but the resounding theme is perseverance. Every video touches at least briefly on the idea that no one in the fashion or luxury worlds will have success just handed to them and especially not in the face of discrimination.

Concrete action

Many fashion brands have been producing campaigns aimed at inspiring women and talking explicitly about the challenges they face in the workplace.

Giorgio Armani brought together a panel of intelligent and accomplished women for its annual S Women's Circle campaign, supporting and emphasizing that women can and should be an accepted element of any industry.

The Armani Beauty campaign is primarily experienced through four videos the brand has produced, interviewing the featured women about their backgrounds and the importance of normalizing women in the workforce. Armani is emphasizing not just the women in the luxury industry, but outside of it as well ([see story](#)).

But talking about women's empowerment and doing something about it are two very different things. While Elie Saab is working to raise awareness of women's issues, the campaign does not include much in the way of practicality.

This is not exclusive to Elie Saab. Many of these women-focused campaigns are released without any accompanying promises of internal change.

Lauren Remington Platt's #GirlOfNow video

For example, Kering Group inked a two-year partnership with French film association UniFrance to further the impact of Women in Motion throughout the world.

Kering launched Women in Motion three years ago at the Cannes Film Festival with the goal of underscoring the onscreen and behind-the-scenes contributions of women in the film industry. Through the Women in Motion platform, Kering raises awareness, via chats and events, focused on topics such as actresses' wage gap, the need for strong female characters and women directors, among other issues ([see story](#)).

While certainly serving an important role in raising awareness of women's issues, more fashion brands should accompany these campaigns with concrete actions that can affect the real-life women who work there.

"It is easy to develop creative campaigns, but more difficult to connect with consumers in credible and convincing ways," Ms. Kreamer said. "The #GirlOfNow is not only credible, but aspirational.

"It effectively spans two targets women currently in the workplace and the next generation of contributors. It is a positive and powerful message that is relatable to many."