

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Tod's pens homage to indescribable woman in fall ads

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Image from Tod's fall/winter 2017 ad campaign. Image credit: Tod's

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Tod's is exploring the essence of its woman in text with a literary campaign.

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In a advertising-meets-reality concept, writer Derek Blasberg was cast in the marketing effort as an author struggling to find the right words to describe his costar Andreea Diaconu. Throughout a short film, Tod's builds the idea that the woman who wears Tod's cannot be contained to a narrative, allowing the brand to create allure while making itself relatable to a wide range of female customers.

"The strategy in this Tod's campaign seems to be centered around romance, mystery and a bit of nostalgia," said Lauren Bates, marketing manager and lead storyteller at [BlueMoon Digital](#), Denver, Colorado.

"In a word where we are connected 24/7 via our smartphones, this campaign feels as though it is in a different time while remaining completely relevant in the present," she said. "Perhaps it is the focus on the typewriter or the car, but it, almost subconsciously, transports you to decades past while keeping you firmly in the now."

Ms. Bates is not affiliated with Tod's, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Tod's](#) was reached for comment.

Drafting desire

Tod's print campaign follows a similar visual structure to the brand's spring/summer 2017 effort, which also starred Ms. Diaconu ([see story](#)). In the images, Mr. Blasberg and Ms. Diaconu are seen in snapshots of Milan, with handwritten notes framing the photos, acting as a diary of their time in the city.

For instance, the model shares her social calendar, from drinks with a friend to a lunch meeting with "you-know-who."



Image from Tod's fall/winter 2017 campaign. Image credit: Tod's

The campaign also draws on Mr. Blasberg's true to life persona. A well-known figure in the fashion community, the writer and editor has contributed to titles such as Vanity Fair, Harper's Bazaar, Vogue and The New York Times.

In addition to his writing, Mr. Blasberg has appeared in style-centric television content, including his current gig hosting "CNN Style."

"Choosing Derek Blasberg to play the writer speaks to the audience Tod's is trying to reach," Ms. Bates said. "A writer himself, he has largely made his living and name off speaking to women and focusing on them.

"He has a report with women and they trust and value his insights," she said. "He has contributed to just about every women's fashion magazine and is CNN Style's host. So, women are likely to respond well to him.

"As for the men, Derek Blasberg is an immaculate dresser. The clothes that he wears in the campaign are clothes that he would probably wear in real life. He looks natural and relaxed in the clothes."

Mr. Blasberg is seen on his phone as he brainstorms a story about a woman and staring at the spot where he first saw a woman he simply refers to as "her."



Image from Tod's fall/winter 2017 campaign. Image credit: Tod's

A campaign film by director Fabien Baron brings this writing pursuit to life, as Mr. Blasberg is seen tapping away at a manual typewriter. His work, titled "Essenza di Donna," or "Essence of Woman," begins with the line, "She was grace in motion, as if in a dream."

As he types, his voiceover reads his words, accompanying shots of Ms. Diaconu. The Tod's woman is also described as "determined" and mysterious.

However, encapsulating this woman on paper proves difficult, and the writer has to start over a number of times, his discarded drafts littering the floor around him. Eventually, he writes that she is "impossible to contain to the page."

Tod's fall/winter 2017 campaign film

Through Mr. Blasberg's words, Tod's also communicates that this woman "will write her own story."

"There is such a romantic and nostalgic aspect to writing," Ms. Bates said. "Writing, to many, is a lost art, a tedious task that will soon be taken over by AI and calculated algorithms. And while myself and many other writers don't see the written word as archaic, there is arguably a very wistful piece to crafting a story.

"Writers are storytellers. It is their job to make the words on the page come alive, to fully immerse the reader into their world, and that is what Tod's is doing here," she said. "Using the writer's story, his adoration of this woman, Tod's pulls the viewer into the story without so much as a nod to the collection.

"The collection and the woman are one in the same, how she dresses and the accessories she chooses are a part of her allure. When the writer, as he is explaining this woman, says, 'impossible to contain to the page,' that embodies what personal style is all about, what women are about: it is impossible to contain to a page."

In profile

While Tod's most recent effort takes a serious tone, the brand has previously turned to humor to identify the profile of its woman.

The brand took a whimsical approach to advertise its spring/summer 2015 handbag by focusing on the type of woman who may carry the Cape.

Model Elisa Sednaoui starred in the short film that focused on stereotypes that women try to uphold, but are often flawed at. The campaign is embellished across Tod's social media accounts, creating a multi-platform campaign that will draw attention to the new collection ([see story](#)).

Tod's has also been dipping its toe in filmmaking, as it recently unveiled a new short film in promotion of its latest men's and women's collection that pushes the boundaries of promotional film by obscuring the line between advertisement and genuine cinema.

The short film, titled "Harvest Moon," in contrast to many fashion shorts that are focused on mood and tone, is much more narratively ambitious. The film features fleshed out characters and a much more plot-focused presentation than many films from comparable brands ([see story](#)).

"The Tod's woman and man are classic yet modern," Ms. Bates said. "They are not defined by the world around them as they are worlds in and of themselves."