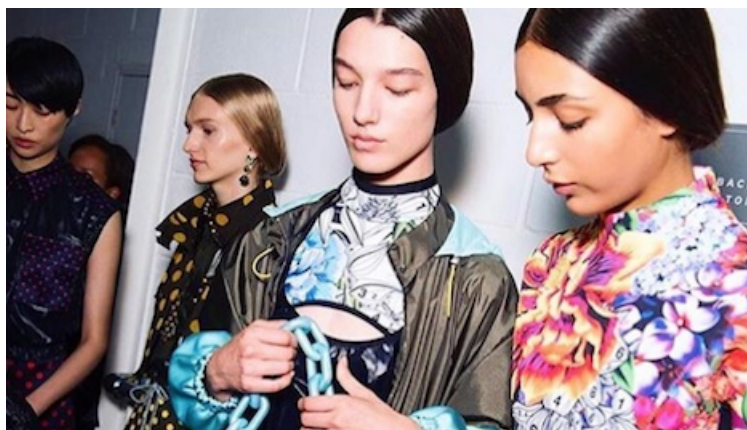


APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

BFC, JD.com team to bring up-and-coming British labels to China

September 20, 2017



JD Fashion supported Mary Katrantzou's spring/summer 2018 presentation during London Fashion Week September 2017. Image credit: Mary Katrantzou

By STAFF REPORTS

The British Fashion Council (BFC) has entered a partnership with China's JD.com to support its fashion fund and introduce emerging designers to the online retailer's 258.3 million consumers.

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China is now the world's second-largest consumer and luxury market, which has caused Chinese shoppers to have an increased interest in British designers. Through its partnership with JD.com, China's largest retailer, the BFC will help talent engage with the Chinese market on a scale that may be unobtainable for independent labels.

Funds for expansion

Earlier this year, JD.com launched JD Fashion to expand its presence in fashion globally and to introduce new brands to the Chinese market. The BFC and JD.com partnership leverages JD Fashion to support British design talent and increase their footprint in China.

JD.com is currently strengthening its positioning in the luxury sector by bringing high-end brands to China such as Chopard, Saint Laurent Paris, Gucci and others. The retailer also entered a partnership with ecommerce's Farfetch to include more luxury options for its discerning consumers ([see story](#)).

Unlike its competitors, JD.com has a well-known reputation for not tolerating counterfeits and has worked to create a high-touch experience both online and offline ([see story](#)).

The BFC's partnership with JD.com will be effective as of January 2018 and will benefit the BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund 2018 winners.

The announcement was made during London Fashion Week where JD Fashion supported the spring/summer 2018 runway presentations of Mary Katrantzou, winner in 2015, and Huishan Zhang, shortlisted for 2017.



Mary Katrantzou won the BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund in 2015. Image credit: Mary Katrantzou, pre-fall 2017

"[China's] market is extremely important to our designers," said Caroline Rush, CBE, chief executive of the BFC, in a statement. "This partnership with JD Fashion is very exciting as it will enable us to offer to the BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund expertise on how to best penetrate the Chinese market.

"JD.com is a company that is known for protecting its brands against counterfeits, something very important as we need to make sure that the creativity and excellence of our designers is protected," she said.

Launched in 2008, the BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund aims to discover new talent and accelerate the development of their labels to become the next leading British brand. 2017 saw the format adjusted to bring on key expertise in designer businesses to assist with development and growth.

The 200,000 pound, or \$270,000 at current exchange rates, is shared among three recipients to assist during a pivotal stage in a brand's development. JD.com will be joining funders that include British Vogue, Burberry, Harrods, LABEL, Paul Smith and Topshop.

Previous winners of the fund have gone on to see great success including Christopher Kane, Erdem, Mary Katrantzou, Nicholas Kirkwood, Peter Pilotto and Sophia Webster, among others.



Christopher Kane's spring/summer 2018 runway presentation during London Fashion Week September 2017. Image credit: Christopher Kane

"We are delighted to partner with the BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund to help support the world's best up-and-coming designers," said Xia Ding, president of JD Fashion, in a statement.

"We believe strongly in partnering with designers throughout their careers, from helping them get their start in the industry, to entering the Chinese market and building their brands, to protecting their IP," she said.

"This marks a starting point for what we expect to be a deep, long-term relationship with the British fashion community."

Applications for the BFC/Vogue Designer Fashion Fund 2018 will open in late 2017.