

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Prada explores fashion, architecture intersection in collaborative venture

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Prada teases its architectural design campaign. Image credit: Prada

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Italian fashion house Prada is exhibiting the versatility of an iconic material by inviting four creative industrialists to develop their own product interpretations.

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Popularized by its famous backpacks, Black Nylon has become an icon of Prada bags and is the focus of the brand's latest unique venture. Unveiled at the label's fall/winter 2018 menswear show, four architects and industrial designers have created uncommon product interpretations of the material.

"This is a return to Prada's roots as the brand was introduced with Miuccia in 1979," said Marie Driscoll, chief financial advisor at Driscoll Advisors, New York. "Though the brand was established in 1913, it was Miuccia's use of lightweight practical nylon that captured the attention of working women and was foundational to her early success in the 1980s-1990s.

"A return to her early success, with a twist-collaborations with conceptual artists will capture consumer attention, may restore lost clients and create new ones while supporting Prada's brand equity," she said.

Designing industrial

Prada is looking to show off the industrial side of its identity with its "Prada Invites" campaign.

During its fashion show on Jan. 14, the label showed off four different Black Nylon products from creative minds in architecture such as Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec, Konstantin Grcic, Herzog & de Meuron and Rem Koolhaas.

The only direction the designers were given was to design a product using Prada's Black Nylon.

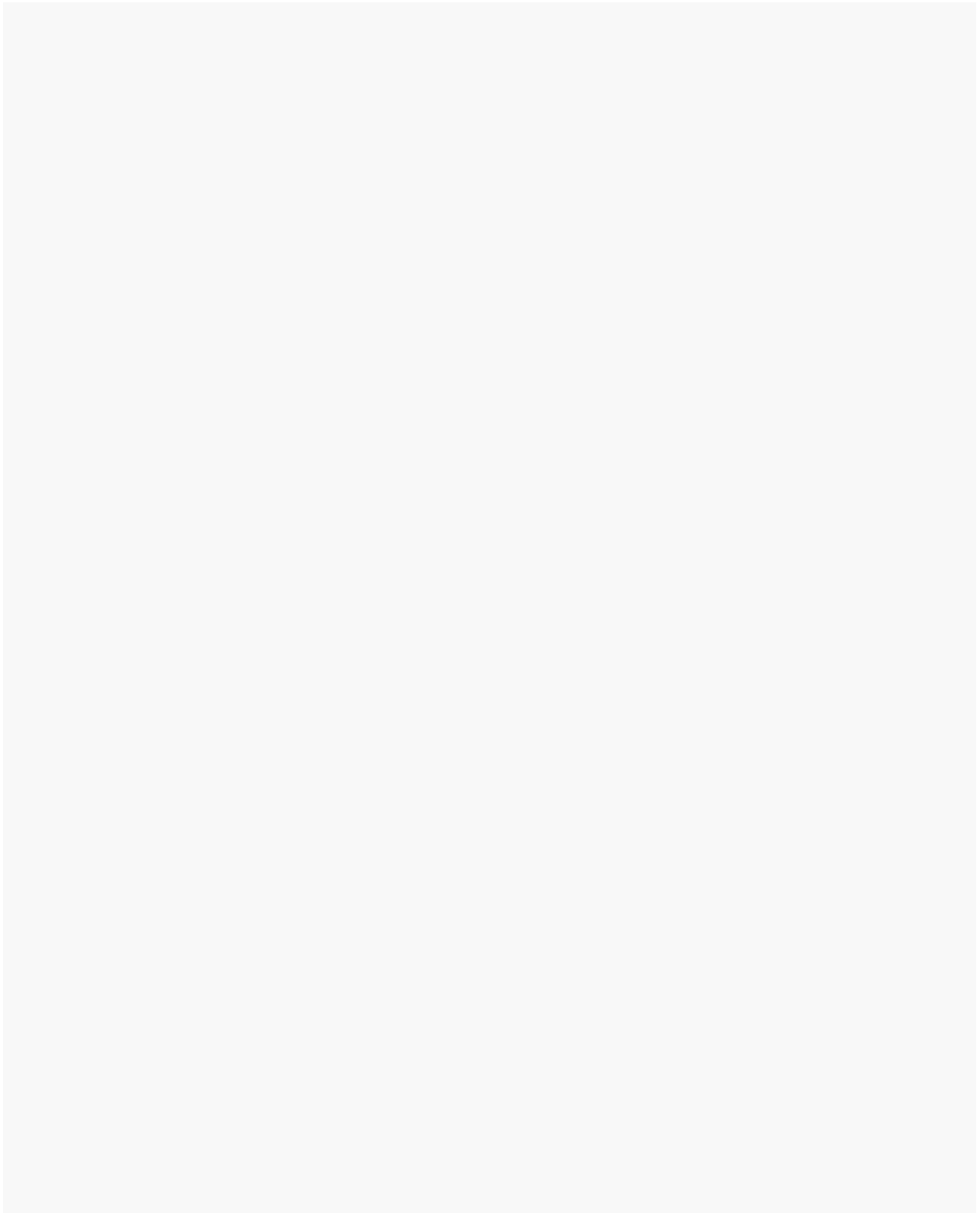
To celebrate the industrial facets of the campaign, Prada's show took place in a warehouse.

Mr. Bouroullec looked to geometry for his interpretation of the project and created a shoulder bag. The bag was inspired by the idea of architects, painters and students carrying folders under their arms, exhibited by its inside gusset, low fastening elastic bands and eyelet.

"I've always liked the profiles of people architects, painters and students walking around with art folders; the

movement of that rectangle, its clear-cut, fixed geometry contrasting with the moving bodies," he said.

A complete new interpretation of the idea of a bag makes its way into the collection with a design by Mr. Grcic. The product is a bag that functions as a garment, based off of the famous Joseph Beuys' fishing vest.

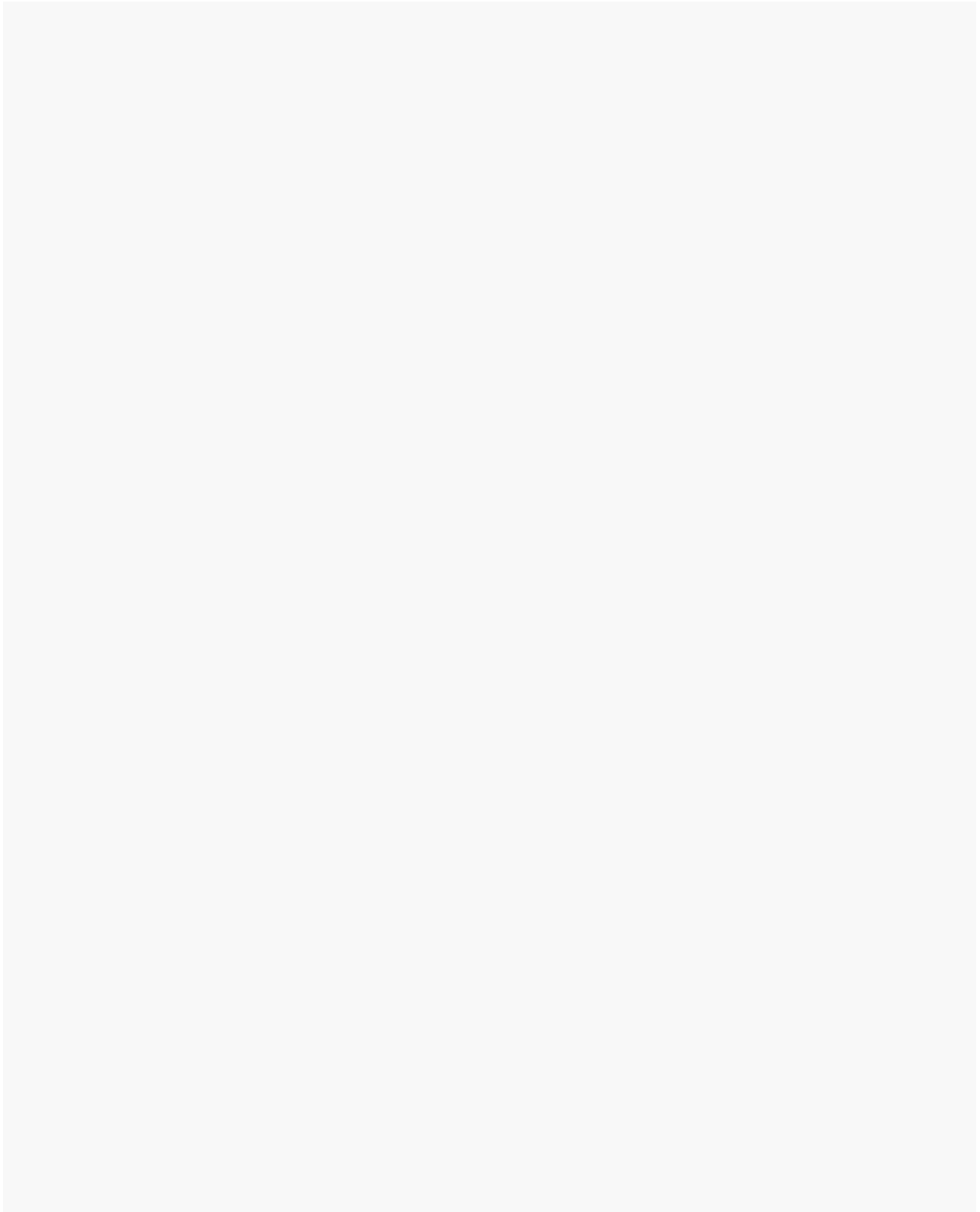


#KonstantinGrcic for Prada: "The key reference for my proposal is the fishing vest, representing the idea of a bag (which is what the nylon material has been primarily used for) as a garment." #PradaInvites top architects and industrial designers to investigate the poetic, practical, technical, and aesthetic aspect of nylon, the Prada icon, to be revealed January 14, during the #PradaFW18 Men's and Women's show. #PradaShows #MiucciaPrada Discover more via link in bio.

A post shared by Prada (@prada) on Jan 11, 2018 at 9:00am PST

The late Mr. Beuys was an artist who frequently dressed in a fishing vest along with a cane, hat and suit. Mr. Grcic's garment-bag hybrid is a new interpretation of this look.

Architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron has been more secretive about its design, only letting on that is in relation to defining language.



@HerzogdeMeuron for #Prada: "Language, words, entire passages as ornamental tattoos? We encounter

language here like an archaeological find, fascinating to us because we sense that its time is running out."

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#PradaShows #MiucciaPrada Discover more via link in bio.

A post shared by Prada (@prada) on Jan 12, 2018 at 9:12am PST

Mr. Koolhaas is looking back to what made the Black Nylon material so popular in the first place, Prada's iconic backpack. The architect is redefining the backpack by making it more functional, removing the "back" aspect of the product.

To help consumers leverage a more convenient method of retrieving their things, Mr. Koolhaas has brought the backpack to the front of the body instead of behind, where it is unreachable.

Prada has teased the designs with a series of social media content, including vertical video clips that excite viewers without giving too much away. Each features a short quote from the designer regarding their inspiration and designs.

Brand happenings

The industrial-focused campaign comes after another collaboration with online retailer Moda Operandi and Prada for a 20-piece edit of kitten heels and flats.

Sling-back Prada styles were developed in partnership with the brand, including the use of brocade fabric seen in its spring/summer 2018 ready-to-wear collection, and will be exclusive to Moda Operandi. Launching Dec. 15, the footwear capsule marked the first time Moda Operandi has partnered with Prada ([see more](#)).

Prada also recently focused on its industrial and architectural side, situating its resort collection in between past and present courtesy of an architectural backdrop.

The latest chapter in the brand's Prada 365 effort, which favors multiple vignettes over a single seasonal campaign, finds model Kris Grikaite posing in Prada's sportswear-infused designs in front of a Belle Epoque building. Apparel brands often associate themselves with architecture, merging two distinct fields over a shared passion for design ([see more](#)).

"The idea of using the constraint of Prada's original black nylon in creating a product today is genius; allowing the artists to explore their creativity within a fashion haiku," Ms. Driscoll said. "Prada the brand is enhanced via the association with these artists while strengthening its code.

"This is unique in that the collaboration has Prada providing the raw materials, while the artistry and design is provided by the artist," she said. "It is a courageous step out the comfort range for a luxury brand and reveals the creativity that has long been a facet of Miuccia Prada's life and work."

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