

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dior's feminist message feels much more muted in China

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One of the most-talked about designs from Maria Grazia Chiuri's first collection for Dior, spring 2017, was the "We Should All Be Feminists" T-shirt. Image credit: Kamdora

By [Huixin Deng](#)

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When Maria Grazia Chiuri became the first female artistic director of Dior in 2016, she shifted the brand's design focus from "feminine" toward "feminist." Last year, for instance, she printed the phrase "we should all be feminists" on a \$710 **T-shirt**, promising an undefined percentage of profits would go to charity.

A few days ago, Ms. Chiuri again demonstrated her belief that fashion designers define femininity and that contemporary femininity should be feminist. In a show opening Paris Fashion Week, she papered the walls with feminist slogans including "women's rights are human rights" and offered up a sweater that seemed to demand greater regard for the importance of consent. "C'est Non, Non, Non, et Non," the sweater reads, which means "It's No, No, No, and No" in English.

In the age of #MeToo and Time's Up, Ms. Chiuri's bold stance has quickly captured the attention of the Western hemisphere. But were Chinese consumers equally invigorated?

Angelababy is no Margaret Atwood

As live-streams of the Dior show began, comments on Weibo suggested little interest in the feminist ideas behind the clothes. Some said their first impression of the show was that it was a mix of "Forever 21 and Zara."



Comments on Weibo comparing Maria Grazia Chiuri's feminist-inspired collection to a mix of high-street brands Forever 21 and Zara. Image credit: Weibo

Fashion KOL and television show anchor Linda () live-streamed the Dior show on Tencent Fashion (), where she also conducted interviews with [Angelababy](#) and Su Mang (). Angelababy herself took over Dior China's Weibo handles for a time, posting a livestream show on her personal Weibo account.

In recent years, Dior has hired two controversial brand ambassadors, Angelababy and Zhao Liying (), both of whom are popular with young Chinese. However, they have also been [criticized](#) for not being feminist enough to represent Dior.

[Angelababy](#) has been described as the [Kim Kardashian of China](#). She is [widely perceived to have used cosmetic surgery](#) to get ahead, and even her husband admits [her acting is bad](#).



Chinese influencer Linda's Weibo comments on Dior brand ambassador for China, Angelababy. Image credit: Weibo

Is feminism a popular idea in China?

The United States feminist movement has been reinvigorated under President Trump, but some [Chinese people](#) still have little understanding of its goals.

China is a historically patriarchal society, where men were much more valued than women. Although things are considerably better in today's China, feminism is still not widely accepted.

"Chinese pastoral feminism" () is a popular phrase in China used to dismiss women influenced by the supposedly "Western ideology." These women are perceived as fighting for a fictitious equality that makes no sense given the cold, hard facts about the differences between genders.

IDENTIFYING AS a feminist is relatively uncommon in China, making it less likely that Dior's collection will

resonate in the China market. But that may also make the message all the more important.

However, whether \$710 cotton T-shirt is the best way to share it is another question altogether.

Huixin Deng writes for [Jing Daily](#), the leading digital publication covering Chinese luxury. Reproduced with permission and adapted for style.

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