

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Prada draws on comic book characters for spring campaign

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Prada's Real Life Comix campaign. Image credit: Prada

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Prada is turning models into graphic novel heroes in an advertising effort that blurs the lines between fiction and reality.

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Part of Prada's spring/summer 2018 campaign, Real Life Comix promotes both its men's and women's lines by combining photography by Willy Vanderperre and illustrations from numerous artists. As luxury brands look to tell stories around their products, the comic book format has been adopted by marketers for its eye-catching style.

Prada was reached for comment.

Comic book characters

Prada's Real Life Comix effort for women presents a fearless idea of femininity. Shot in Los Angeles, the campaign features an ensemble of models posing in front of graphic backdrops.

The setting reflects Miuccia Prada's designs for the season, which incorporate art from Brigid Elva, Joëlle Jones, Stellar Leuna, Giuliana Maldini, Natsume Ono, Emma Ríos, Trina Robbins and Fiona Staples. The work of Tarpé Mills, the creator of the first female super hero, is also included via her archives.



Prada Real Life Comix campaign. Image credit: Prada

Taking this concept a step further, Prada created three animated shorts with Stellar Leuna, with animations by Traum.Inc. In the black-and-white videos, a trio of models morph into illustrations as they take on the city together.

A central character of the films is a panther, who helps them find their inner power.

In one of the videos, a model pets the jungle cat, who is conducting electricity. She then raises her hand, and using the power of lightning, transforms the metropolitan landscape into a grid.

Another short sees a model standing outside of a chained up door. Suddenly, a force begins to push its way through.

The protagonist summons the strength to yank apart the padlocked chain, freeing the panther. The model and cat walk away together.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/Rf3Wm18qoYY>

Prada Real Life Comix

Prada's final comic-inspired film takes place as a city block is burning. As flames burst out from buildings, the panther growls at one of the women, prompting her to action.

She raises her hands and puts out the blaze.

Making a connection between the campaign and the digital films, Prada's shorts begin and end with the image of the model in real life as she poses for the label's ads.

Similarly to the women's ads, the men's campaign film shows models heroically taking on Los Angeles.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/eUb-xrp74NM>

365, Prada Spring/Summer 2018 Menswear Advertising Campaign - "Real Life Comix"

Rather than sticking to a singular campaign per season, Prada switched to its digital-friendly 365 concept last year. Having a diversity of content and frequent releases of new imagery and films helps keep the brand's social media marketing fresh ([see story](#)).

Narrative approach

While still a less-used form of storytelling in luxury, a number of brands have tapped into the appeal of comic books for campaigns.

German automaker Mercedes-Benz integrated a few of its newer models into an expansive native marketing campaign centered on Warner Bros.' blockbuster, "Justice League."

In addition to television and digital video ads surrounding the movie, three of Mercedes-Benz's new models will play an integral role in the movie's plot itself.

Ahead of the movie's release, Mercedes' Instagram hosted six one-shot comics featuring characters from the films and adventures involving some of the brand's new models, including the E-Class Cabriolet, the AMG Vision Turismo and the G-Class4x42 ([see story](#)).

French fashion label Jean Paul Gaultier similarly enlisted the crime-fighting prowess of Wonder Woman and Superman in an original narrative with a fragrance focus.

In honor of the limited-edition Classique and Le Male scents bearing the DC character's visages, the brand got into the superhero spirit with an episodic film series modeled after comic books. Associating these scents with the well-known characters enables the brand to tell a new story surrounding the perfumes that originally debuted in the 1990s ([see story](#)).

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