

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Design is more than the product, it is about environment: Mulberry creative director

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Mulberry's celebrates its family with its factory craftsmen. Image credit: Mulberry

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

LISBON, Portugal The theater of staging a product line in stores and the marketing surrounding it is just as important as creating the design of the object itself, according to British fashion label Mulberry's creative director.

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During a discussion with International Vogue Editor Suzy Menkes at the Cond Nast International Luxury Conference on April 19, the designer laid out the thought process that goes into his creations. Not only does the artistic director create products with the entire world in mind, but he also cares deeply about their presentation.

"For me, design is not related to a product, it is about the entire environment," said Johnny Coca, creative director at **Mulberry**. "In a way we are now trying to understand how to communicate through the product, with a system to elevate it.

"I don't like the way it can often be just a line of bags, one after the other," he said. "I think it should be a mixture of color and life."

Heart at a global level

With a global brand such as Mulberry, designing for culture can be an important theme for Mr. Coca.

Mulberry greatly values its British heritage, which shines through in design and marketing.



Mr. Coca talks with Ms. Menkes and Ms. De la Torre. Image credit: Cond Nast.

However, Mr. Coca takes a global approach to his creations. Since the brand is worldwide, he designs to make products that everyone across the globe will enjoy while keeping Mulberry's British roots at the heart of his creations.

He says that when he designs, he is designing for the brand, not for himself. Mr. Coca believes it is his job to create for Mulberry and stay true to its brand ethos.

In keeping with its British roots, the brand produces 50 percent of its products within the United Kingdom in its factories.

The brand's Somerset-based production facilities are a very family-oriented place. The employees here often work alongside their sisters, brothers, mothers, other family members and their neighbors.



Image credit: Cond Nast.

This shines through within the manufacturer's work. The company has heart, which shows in its marketing.

British heritage

Mulberry not only built up its image of craftsmanship and quality, but also of intimacy and family in a recent campaign and video.

"Meet Our Family" was the fashion brand's campaign to build more of a connection with fans and consumers by showing its intimate company atmosphere. The video brings users behind the scenes at Mulberry's Somerset factories, where the ethos of the brand begins ([see more](#)).

Keeping its British roots is so important to the brand that even though manufacturing in the United Kingdom has been more expensive following Brexit, due to extra import taxes, Mulberry still continues to produce half of its designs there.

The history of the label is also very important to Mulberry.

For instance, Mulberry recently manifested its British history with interactive events at a landmark residence to spur purchases through tangible experience.

"Beyond Heritage" was a series of workshops and presentations this past February at London's iconic Spencer House. The exhibit celebrated the launch of its spring/summer 2018 collection, encouraging sales with a two-way purchasing route ([see more](#)).

"To keep the Britishness in tact is something we value," Mr. Coca said. "To protect the heritage is important.

"Everything needs to fit and be consistent of the original message through stores, packaging and everything," he said.

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