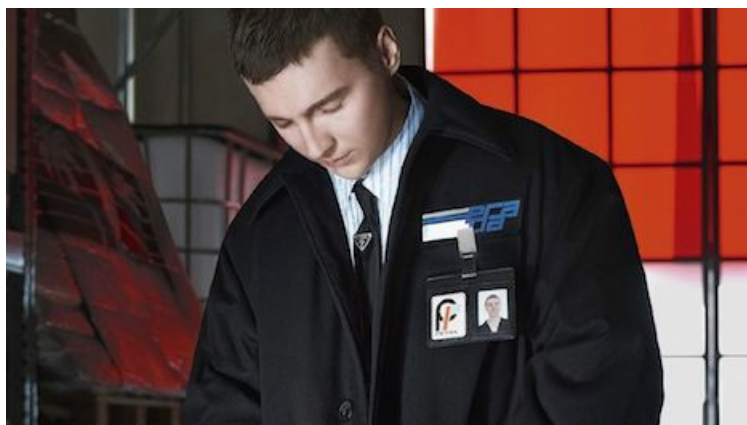


APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Prada builds mystique as part of its 365 push

June 18, 2018



Prada's Observia film mirrors its menswear runway. Image credit: Prada

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

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Italian fashion label Prada is heightening its menswear initiatives in tandem with its fall/winter men's show in a film campaign that mirrors the runway.

A Prada warehouse acts as the setting for the new advertising campaign, but it is more of a mystery when viewers realize it is essentially just a mirage. Paranoia and confusion are a few of the feelings Prada's film conveys as viewers watch three actors walk around the space with their thoughts being the only things that can be heard.

"Framing a story in a mystery is always an intriguing approach," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at Flugel Consulting. "Campaigns like this most recent one from Prada are almost always executed in video format and typically feature a sequential rollout.

"Mystery is particularly effective for both of these distribution strategies, as the intrigue is best built in film and helps drum up interest subsequent films in the sequence," he said. "Several short, mysterious videos are far more likely to have higher overall viewership numbers than one long-form video."

Mr. Rains is not affiliated Prada but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Mystery and intrigue

"Observia" is a new leg to Prada's 365 campaign, its overreaching strategy that focuses on multiple storylines rather than a single seasonal concept. This latest effort features three different actors in their own worlds.

Each is stuck wandering through Prada's warehouse mirage. The actors live within their own storylines, never interacting.

A role to play. [#JoeAlwyn#PradaObservia#PradaFW18#Prada365](#)

See more at <https://t.co/Z2lh1qqFXf>. pic.twitter.com/Lp8FQurlgI

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However, their thoughts can be heard throughout the film, eventually completely overlapping at a disorienting pace. Joe Alwyn, Nick Robinson and Algee Smith are the actors in the short, which is directed by Paul Dano. Prada states that the warehouse in the film is "a space that can be inhabited but is nevertheless a chimera, a mirage." The film begins with one actor walking through the space as the viewer can hear his thoughts. "We are all controlled. We are not our own. We are not our own masters," he says. Another actor is shown walking around the same space, but he is never featured in the same frame as the previous actor. He says, "It was a cold day in March" His thoughts get muffled as another actor appears in the same manner, with his own thoughts heard. The voiceovers then begin to overlap. As the film goes on, the men's thoughts become more frantic, as do their journeys around the space. Eventually the men become so paranoid, they begin to throw things at and cover the security cameras and drones that are following them, to keep from being watched. Prada's short ends with a nod to its beginning, with only one single thought being heard saying, "We are all controlled."

Evasive action. An outbreak of dissent. [#JoeAlwyn#PradaObservia#PradaFW18#Prada365](#)

See more at <https://t.co/Z2Ih1qIgON>. pic.twitter.com/ppfkt44RNF

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Prada strategy

The label also ushered in the summer season through another short film that turns its latest collection into a character.

"Summer Odyssey" follows a group of young friends as they head to classic hangout spots such as a diner and an arcade. Diverting from typical peppy summer scenes, Prada's short sets laid-back scenes with a group of stoic models ([see story](#)).

Prada also weaved a narrative around its signature Nylon textile through a shoppable science fiction series.

Told in four episodes, "Nylon Farm" takes place in a futuristic facility where the fleece from cyborg sheep is sheered to make the synthetic fabric. After introducing the material decades ago, Prada celebrated Nylon through design and storytelling ([see story](#)).

"What's interesting about this particular video is how it straddles the line between straight mystery and arthouse," Mr. Rains said. "There's no unifying narrative, at least not one that we the viewers are aware of at this point, but still manages to build suspense and anticipation for future videos."