

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Chanel celebrates diversity with Yara Shahidi's Beauty Talk

July 5, 2018



Actress Yara Shahidi is the latest star in Chanel's Beauty Talks. Image credit: Chanel

By SARAH RAMIREZ

French fashion house Chanel is hoping to capture the attention of a younger, more diverse generation with its latest Beauty Talks interview.

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Chanel's global creative makeup and color designer Lucia Pica sat down with actress and activist Yara Shahidi to highlight a new makeup palette. Ms. Shahidi follows in the steps of other women, including Lily-Rose Depp and Keira Knightley, who have been featured in Beauty Talks.

"Teaming up with Yara is a little bit outside the box for Chanel, but in the best way possible," said Lauren Bates, marketing manager and lead storyteller at [Blue Moon Digital](#), Denver, CO. "It looks like Chanel is trying to expand their reach to a younger, more diverse demographic."

Ms. Bates is not affiliated with Chanel, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Chanel](#) was reached for comment.

Yara and Chanel

The Chanel Beauty Talks episode begins with Ms. Shahidi receiving a new Palette Essentielle as a gift from Ms. Pica. The duo met in a bright, minimalist loft with a makeup chair and mirror. During the video, Ms. Pica gives Ms. Shahidi a tutorial on how to use the palette.

Yara Shahidi stars in the newest Chanel Beauty Talk

Both women emphasize the palette's portability and how it is dynamic enough to help create different beauty looks. It includes a concealer, highlighter and lip and cheek color, and comes in six shades.

"The palette that is featured is Chanel's new Caramel shade," Ms. Bates said. "Arguably, this range of palettes is pretty limiting for women with darker complexions. But, it shows that Chanel is at least aware and attempting to be a part of the [diversity] conversation."

In a more personal moment, Ms. Shahidi says that the palette reminds her of growing up and using makeup as a form of self-expression, instead of as a necessity.



Chanel's palette essentielle comes in a new Caramel shade. Image credit: Chanel

When Ms. Pica asks Ms. Shahidi about her everyday routine, Ms. Shahidi remarks that the one constant is listening to music from socially-engaged artists.

The camera zooms out as Ms. Shahidi continues to speak, and then her interview is playing on a television screen. Ms. Shahidi is shown again, this time dancing to a hip-hop song in a white robe as she gets ready.

Ms. Shahidi wears her hair naturally and applies her own makeup with the palette before changing into a Chanel dress. In a voiceover, she talks about letting go of any preconceived notions she has of herself.

Diversity in beauty

While Chanel's Beauty Talks launched with established stars like Giselle Bündchen and Keira Knightley ([see story](#)), the more recent episodes as well as Chanel's marketing efforts as a whole have been trending towards younger woman.

At only 17 years old, Ms. Depp was selected by Chanel to be the face of N 5 L'Eau, the modern interpretation of the iconic N 5 fragrance ([see story](#)), as well as the beauty ambassador for the new Rouge Coco Gloss lipstick line. Similarly to Ms. Shahidi's short, Ms. Depp's Beauty Talk episode emphasized authenticity ([see story](#)).

"Featuring Yara makes a nod toward activism and being a part of a larger conversation," Ms. Bates said. "Millennials and Gen Z tend to favor experiences and brand values over a recognizable face and a pretty campaign.

"These younger buyers want a brand to stand for something, to be relatable and not so elitist something that the luxury fashion community has had a tough time embracing."

Just as important, featuring Ms. Shahidi gives Chanel the opportunity to highlight its range of shades. Commonly, beauty brands offer foundations in light, medium and dark formulas, but often do not go deep enough for women with dark complexions.

Expanding the range of shades available to become more inclusive for all skin types will open up luxury cosmetics brands to a wider consumer base, who may already be buyers of a brand's apparel and accessories collections ([see story](#)).

"Unlike the other women who have been featured in the Beauty Talks episodes, Yara is not white," said Blue Moon Digital's Ms. Bates. "Yara's mother is African-American and Choctaw and her father is Iranian, so she is a welcome addition to Chanel's traditional choice of models.

"As far as a campaign aimed at creating more inclusivity, it is a step in the right direction," she said.