

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Balmain enlists virtual faces as brand spokesmodels

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Balmain's CGI Army. Image credit: Balmain

By STAFF REPORTS

French fashion house Balmain is the latest luxury brand to cast computer-generated models in its marketing, pointing to a growing trend of virtual ambassadors.

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Taking inspiration from the diverse members of the "Balmain Army," the label tapped photographer Cameron-James Wilson to create a series of images featuring a trio of 3D models. While an unexpected move for traditional luxury houses, more are turning to virtual models to take advantage of their striking looks and extensive followers.

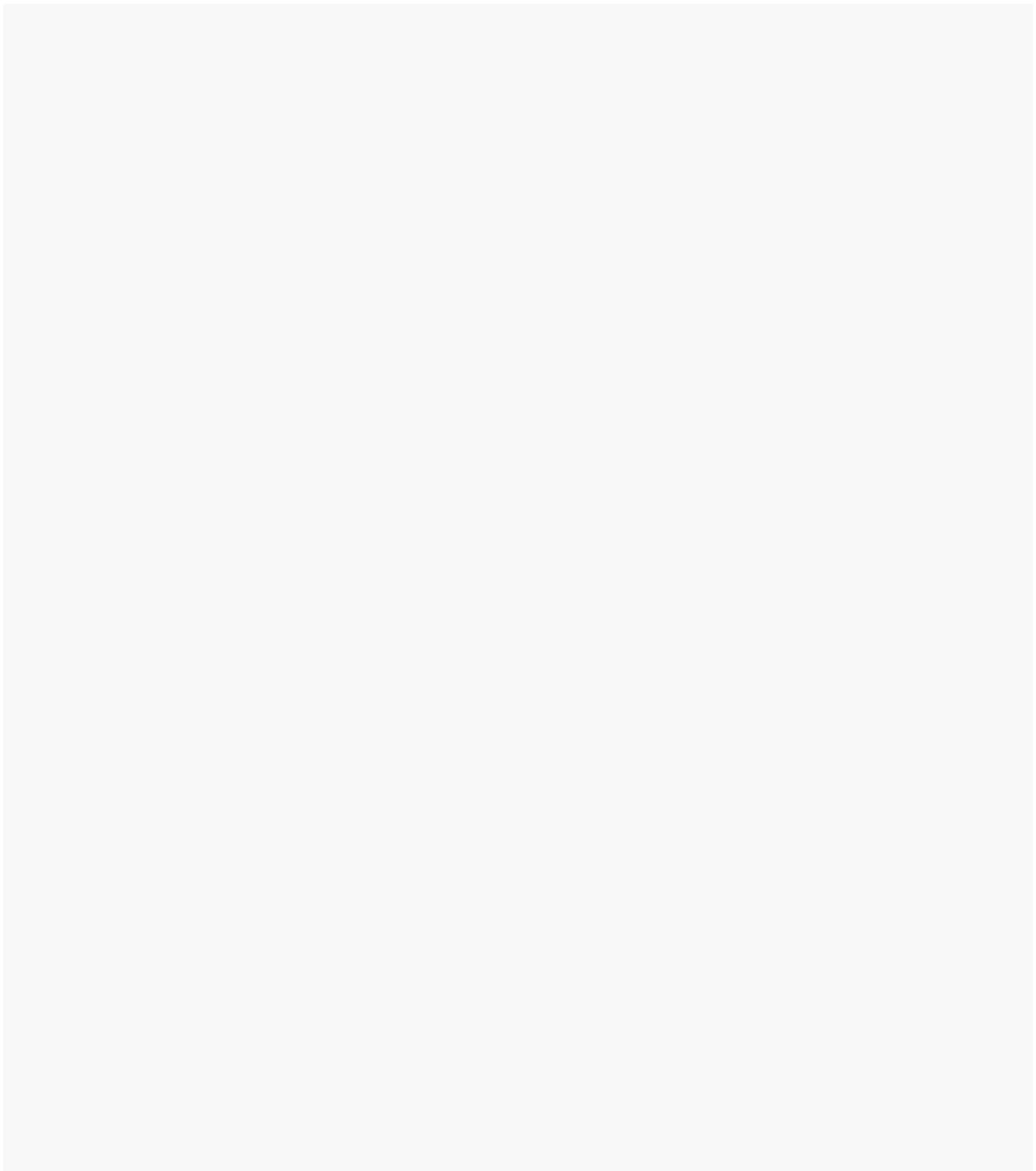
CGI cast

Balmain's creative director Olivier Rousteing explained in a statement that his CGI collaboration stemmed from wanting to continue championing diversity.

"There's one quality that immediately stands out when you look at the growing Balmain Army: a unfettered celebration of inclusion," Mr. Rousteing said. "Anyone and everyone is always welcome to join its growing ranks they need only share our bold spirit of adventure."

"Balmain's runways and campaigns, of course, are also known for an insistence on reflecting today's beautifully diverse world," he said. "So, it should come as no surprise that when my team and I saw the first generation of CGI models, we told ourselves that if this was the way the world was going, we wanted to ensure that diversity plays a strong part in that future."

The three newest members of Balmain's army are Margot, Shudu and Zhi.



MARGOT + ZHI The new virtual troops reflect the same beautiful diverse mix, strong confidence and eagerness to explore new worlds. Anyone and everyone is always welcome to join the #BALMAINARMY. Discover more through the link in bio. In collaboration with #CameronJamesWilson @shudu.gram 3D garments by @itsclo3d #BALMAINPF18 #BALMAINBBOX

A post shared by BALMAIN (@balmain) on Aug 30, 2018 at 5:12am PDT

Instagram post from Balmain

Created in 2017 by Mr. Wilson, Shudu has rocketed to Instagram fame, with 140,000 followers as of press time. She is billed as "the world's first digital supermodel."

In the images for Balmain, the models hold handbags from the brand's BBox line. The virtual models are also posed in scenes that reflect iconic music imagery.

Italian jeweler Buccellati similarly enlisted a popular influencer to showcase the brand's signature honeycomb

pattern in a campaign that speaks to the social media generation.

With more than 77,000 Instagram followers, computed-generated avatar Noonoouri has a large audience that a number of luxury brands have been interested in reaching. This virtual personality is an unexpected choice of partner for Buccellati, since the more traditional house is tapping into an emerging marketing tactic ([see story](#)).

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