

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Miu Miu weaves female-centric Saudi Arabian tale

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Miu Miu's "The Wedding Singer's Daughter" centers on a banquet hall. Image credit: Miu Miu, photo by Brigitte Lacombe

By SARAH JONES

Prada's Miu Miu is exploring the cultural revolution happening in Saudi Arabia through a film that takes place decades in the past.

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"The Wedding Singer's Daughter" is the 16th installment of Miu Miu's Women's Tales, which shine a spotlight on female film talent through commissioned shorts. Directed by Saudi Arabian filmmaker Haifaa Al-Mansour, this film speaks to the increasing rights of citizens in the strict society, which has recently opened its first movie theaters and given women the right to drive.

"Miu Miu chose to commission its latest Women's Tales film from Haifaa Al-Mansour because it's meant to mirror culture and traditions from Saudi Arabia specifically in the 1980's," said Dalia Strum, educator at [The Fashion Institute of Technology](#), New York. "While this is a platform to feature women filmmakers, it's also an opportunity to storytell and build emotional connections."

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

Female film

Ms. Al-Mansour set her film in Riyadh in the 1980s during a wedding, a celebration that reflects the gender and class divides of Saudi Arabia. At the opening of the short, the focus is on the heel-clad feet of female wedding guests as they exit cars.

As they walk into the venue, the dramatic footwear and handbags are the only visible fashion statements on the abaya-clad women.

Once inside, the women slip off their outer garments, revealing party dresses and hairdos. A young girl watches as a woman reapplies lipstick in a mirror, seemingly captivated by the primping.

This girl is soon revealed to be the daughter of the wedding singer, played by Saudi pop star Rotana Tarabzouni. As

her mother sings, the girl accompanies her unenthusiastically on the tambourine, while women dance freely in the female-only reception.

Despite this sense of freedom, a partygoer shows the stigma facing the performer, saying she and her daughter will go to hell for what they do.

Suddenly, the music stops, and the daughter is spurred to action. She follows the power cord to a back room, looking on as the bride's white dress and veil are covered in black cloth.



Still from Miu Miu's The Wedding Singer's Daughter. Image credit: Miu Miu, photo by Brigitte Lacombe

The daughter continues, running to a tucked away room where a pianist and two young musicians are piping accompaniment to the reception room. With the help of a boy, she continues to follow the power source.

Back in the banquet hall, the tone changes ahead of the entrance of the bride and groom. The wedding singer urges the women to cover up since the men are coming in.

At the end of the film, the titular character saves the day by climbing atop a table to reattach two cords. As her mother sings to welcome the newly wed couple, the girl takes her place behind a spotlight, her previously uncovered curls now adorned with a head scarf.

Miu Miu Women's Tales "The Wedding Singer's Daughter"

About her film, Ms. Al-Mansour says that she feels the little girl resembles the future for Saudi Arabia, since "the future belongs to outsiders."

Ms. Al-Mansour is considered a boundary breaker herself, as the first female Saudi filmmaker. Her film "Wadjda" was the first movie from Saudi Arabia to be nominated for a foreign language Academy Award.

The Wedding Singer's Daughter premiered at the Venice Film Festival on Sept. 2.

Storytelling series

Miu Miu's Women's Tales capture the diversity of the female experience through film.

Most recently, the brand took an artful approach to the common saying "if these walls could talk" in its previous Women's Tales film created by a popular actress.

"Hello Apartment" plays on the emotions of what it is like to strike out on one's own as a young girl. The film, directed by Dakota Fanning, follows the ups and downs of a woman moving into her first apartment and all that goes on within ([see story](#)).

Miu Miu also continued its narrative in support of women's issues with the thirteenth installment of its Women's Tales film series directed by Chlo Sevigny that focuses on comedy.

Stand-up comedienne Carmen Lynch takes the stage in Miu Miu's latest Women's Tales film written in partnership with herself and Ms. Sevigny. The eight-minute film takes a look at Ms. Lynch's day on the road, which is paired with clips from her standup set ([see story](#)).

"The concept of telling stories through [Miu Miu's] own design truly resonates, because you see elements of perseverance and strength as well as overcoming life situations that can be difficult," Ms. Strum said.

"The aspect of strength is something to truly build on, if you believe in something, other's shouldn't dictate your passions," she said. "Whole industries have been created because people supported and currently support each other's interests."

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