

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Kenzo creative director steps behind the camera in powerful short

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Kenzo's fall/winter 2018 campaign. Image courtesy of Kenzo

By SARAH JONES

French fashion label Kenzo is mixing after-school specials and superpowers in a cinematic fall campaign.

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For the first time, Kenzo's co-creative director Humberto Leon turned filmmaker, writing and directing a 30-minute short that follows a family filled with teenagers possessing quirky special abilities. Infused with personal touches, the film serves as not only a marketing effort but a look into Mr. Leon's formative years.

"It isn't surprising really, that Kenzo went in the direction of choosing Humberto Leon to both write and direct," said Lauren Bates, marketing manager and lead storyteller at [Blue Moon Digital](#), Denver, CO.

"Well, it is in the sense that they looked to their creative director to control all aspects of the short," she said. "Creative directors are typically just designers, that is their job and most fashion houses don't really deviate from that. And that's just it, Humberto Leon and Carol Lim aren't your traditional designers."

"By Humberto writing and directing, it really allows him to tell a unique story with this collection. Perhaps it is a glimpse into what he was thinking or what he was inspired by at that moment in time when the collection was created. The short has an opportunity to translate the designer's unique vision into something more, something that more people might relate to."

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

Teen drama

Kenzo's "The Everything" centers on a family led by matriarch Georgie, played by Milla Jovovich. It opens as the family sits vigil around their mother.

One of the teens, Rose, cannot take being in the room anymore and takes off down the street, visibly upset. As she runs, a match cut finds her sprinting gleefully on a different day towards a store to buy sought-after sneakers.

After queuing up, Rose is disappointed when her size sells out right before she gets her turn to buy the shoes. She

follows the woman who bought the last pair out of the store, and gets her hands on the shoes in an unconventional way.



Milla Jovovich for Kenzo's fall/winter 2018 campaign. Image courtesy of Kenzo

Rose reveals her superpower, which can swap articles of clothing with a snap of her fingers.

Back home, more of her siblings' special abilities are unveiled. One of the teens, Shelly, can change her fingernails to any shape, while another can change other people's voices.

In an after-school special-style conversation, Bobby tells his mother's boyfriend that "it's finally happening." Rather than puberty, it is the arrival of his power, which allows him to change his hairstyle with his mind.

Along with classic sibling rivalry and parent-child struggles through the teenage years, the film reaches its climax at the quintessential homecoming dance.

Here, Shelly is up for homecoming queen, but is more interested in exploring her budding romantic interest in a friend.

During the dance, Bobby is picked on, and the brood's seemingly useless superpowers come into play. Rose swaps out the bully's shoes to heels, causing him to trip, while Shelly forges the tormentor's nails together.

Bobby also goes into self-defense mode, giving the bully a shaggy hair makeover that covers his eyes.

Trailer for Kenzo's The Everything

Seeing the havoc that her children have wreaked, Georgie feels compelled to use her own ability. She stomps on the floor and the entire gym of people keels over, removing their memories of the altercation.

However, doing so also causes Georgie to faint, leading to the opening scene. With her family around her, she finally wakes up, quelling Rose's worries that she caused everything to happen.

The film was shot in Mr. Leon's hometown of Rosemead, CA, with appearances by many of his relatives and friends, adding a personal touch.

Film meets fashion

Kenzo previously focused on the relationship between artist and muse in a project that brought together fashion, film and music.

Centered on its spring/summer 2018 collection, Kenzo's "Yo! My Saint" is an artistic collaboration that includes an original song by Karen O, best known as the lead singer of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. While acting as a marketing effort for this season's designs, Kenzo's project puts entertainment ahead of overt product promotion ([see story](#)).

Kenzo also took on the role of Hollywood producer in a film starring familiar faces.

Introducing the fashion house's fall/winter 2017 collection, "Cabiria, Charity, Chastity" starred former "Saturday Night Live" cast member Maya Rudolph ([see story](#)).

"Obviously, Kenzo isn't the only luxury house to create shorts," Ms. Bates said. "However, there is a striking difference here. Traditionally, luxury brands don't create a narrative. At least, not with a script.

"The narrative that is traditionally used is one that revolves around the choice of soundtrack, models, location and styling," she said. "Often, this is to allow the viewer to focus solely on the clothes and how the film or video made them feel by leveraging sound and visuals to create emotion.

"Humberto Leon understands that in this present moment, fashion brands need to connect with their customers, that the old status quo isn't going to cut it, that in order to have a successful brand it needs to be about something more than just the clothes or the model that is wearing them.

"While the content is not what you would traditionally see and the fact that it has some 'Stranger Things' vibes, it creates the opportunity for a conversation. All the pieces are there, the characters are relatable, the styling isn't pretentious, and the short ends without the viewer knowing what comes next."