

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dior sheds light on cultural influences through social media

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Dior's 2019 cruise collection is inspired by the women of Mexico. Image credit: Dior

By SARAH RAMIREZ

French fashion house Christian Dior is elaborating on the Mexican inspiration for its 2019 cruise collection by putting local photographers in front of the camera.

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Eight Mexican women photographed the collection in their native country for a feature in the latest issue of *DiorMag*, and the brand is sharing their stories and heritage in an Instagram series. Dior recently received backlash on social media because while the collection is influenced by escaramuzas, highly-skilled Mexican horsewomen, the campaign stars American actress Jennifer Lawrence.

"A successful brand is one that integrates inclusivity within their imagery, ethos and beyond," said Kimmie Smith, celeb fashion stylist and cofounder, creative and style director of **Athleisure Mag**, New York. "This campaign allows the creatives in this video to tell their stories and to showcase it in the manner in which they choose and juxtaposed against the brand."

"The resonance of the brand allows those to see the brand in a way that is different than is typical in a Dior-oriented campaign," she said. "It presents a level of self-awareness and allowing the brand to be reinterpreted within their eyes and vision."

Ms. Smith is not affiliated with Dior, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Dior** was reached for comment.

Modern-day escaramuzas

Among the Mexican photographers who participated in this project are Tania Franco Klein, Fabiola Zamora, Maya Goded, Paola Vivas and Cristina De Middel. Through a series of Instagram posts, the women share how their culture influences their work.

Each photographer took different approaches to Dior's collection. While Ms. Zamora shot in black-and-white to focus on the clothing's sculptural qualities, Ms. Klein looked to capture the rich colors of the environment.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

@TaniaFrancoKlein is just one of the talented women involved in shooting the #DiorMagazine in Mexico, her contribution portraying one of the key influences behind the #DiorCruise 2019 collection by #MariaGraziaChiuri: this inspiring country itself. Listen as she discusses how she has shaped her career as a Mexican photographer. Baron & Baron and Anchor Light

A post shared by Dior Official (@dior) on Nov 18, 2018 at 12:56pm PST

Instagram post from Dior

The collection features Dior Saddle bags, romantic full skirts, wide-brim hats and embroidered, folk-inspired dresses. Horses appear in many of the photographs, emphasizing the escaramuza influence.

"Those who engage with the brand want to see a reflection of themselves or those different from themselves in order to see the dynamic globalism that is in the world," Ms. Smith said.



Photograph by Maya Goded for Dior Mag

This is not the first time Dior has collaborated with female photographers to this extent. Previously, Dior put a feminine lens on its spring/summer 2017 ready-to-wear collection to mark Maria Grazia Chiuri's debut as the brand's first female artistic director.

#TheWomenBehindTheLens gave nine photographers carte blanche to shoot the season's fashions in their own way. Making their work more personable, the women were captured on film talking about their art for Dior as well as their feminist observations and opinions ([see story](#)).

Cultural controversies

Dior's initial rollout for the cruise collection cited Ms. Chiuri's inspiration, but featured Ms. Lawrence and no women who appeared to be of Mexican, or even Latinx, descent.

Critics were also disappointed when it was revealed that the photographs with Ms. Lawrence were shot in California instead of Mexico. Ms. Lawrence, who is known for her down-to-Earth personality and award-winning film career, is a frequent Dior face and most recently starred in the Joy by Dior fragrance campaign ([see story](#)).

The brand did not directly respond to the controversy, but did remove some of the original social media content.

Dior is far from the only luxury fashion line to face accusations of cultural appropriation on social media.

In 2016, U.S. fashion designer Marc Jacobs responded to allegations of cultural appropriation after sending models down the runway sporting colorful, wool dreadlocks during New York Fashion Week.

The collection, said to be inspired by "Lana Wachowski, the '80s, raver culture, Boy George and Harajuku," angered many who have accused Mr. Jacobs of ripping off black culture. The negative responses to the inclusion of traditionally black hairstyles escalated when hair stylist Guido Palau, when speaking of his inspiration for the hairstyle, did not cite Rastafarian culture as one of his many muses ([see story](#)).

"Currently, cultural appropriation is an issue that many brands are grappling with as there is a fine line between representing a group of people and mimicking people by putting their traits on someone who doesn't embody those aspects naturally," Ms. Smith said. "To be inspired by someone is an amazing aspect of any brand and to maintain the nature of its authenticity, it is essential to incorporate those who are from that culture in order to embrace the identity without disrespecting it."