

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Balenciaga leans into “normcore” with no-frills film

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Oversized hoodies and colorful sweaters dominate Balenciaga's winter collection. Image credit: Balenciaga

By SARAH RAMIREZ

French fashion house Balenciaga is turning to a lo-fi technique to give its latest campaign film an aura of authenticity.

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Mimicking user-generated content and social media videos, the film captures the everyday wearability of the brand's winter 2018 collection. To attract younger affluents, many luxury labels are choosing to emphasize relatability rather than exclusivity in their marketing.

"Luxury brands generally reflect where they will take you," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami, FL. "This video reflects where many prospects have been: raw authenticity."

Laid-back luxury

Directed by artist Diamond Stingily, the four-minute long video has no cohesive narrative and instead is compilation of various scenes and people wearing Balenciaga.

Unsteady and out-of-focus footage create the illusion that it was filmed by everyday people rather than professional photographers. Long stretches of video have no audio, which again differentiates Balenciaga from other fashion labels that turn to high production values for their campaign films.

Balenciaga's winter 2018 film eschews high-production values for authenticity

The scenes are set in many "ordinary" locations, including basketball courts, a beauty salon and inside people's homes. Some snippets are filmed in a vertical manner, similar to most smartphone videos, adding another layer of perceived authenticity.

Most of the people featured in the film are black, and the women who wear makeup are wearing casual cosmetics instead of more stylized beauty looks. In general, everyone resembles everyday people in ordinary neighborhoods.



Balenciaga apparel as seen in the brand's new film. Image credit: Balenciaga

Balenciaga's winter collection, as seen in the film, includes patterned blouses, oversized hoodies, colorful sweaters, windbreakers and the brand's iconic Triple S sneakers.

"The film reflects Balenciaga's urban initiatives," Mr. Ramey said.

Balenciaga boost

Creative director Demna Gvasalia's knack for streetwear style has infused Balenciaga with a new energy.

The brand's growth has been balanced across categories, with a quarter of revenues coming from ready-to-wear.

While Balenciaga did not set out to specifically target millennials, these consumers have embraced its style. This generation accounts for 60 percent of Balenciaga's total sales ([see story](#)).

Balenciaga recently waded into partisan discourse and charitable fashion with runway collections inspired by Bernie Sanders and the World Food Programme.

The fashion label feels it has a responsibility to use its position and popularity as a platform for causes it cares about, according to the label's CEO ([see story](#)). Some of the WFP merchandise, such as baseball caps and hoodies, appears in the campaign.

"It's no longer hot to be hoity-toity," Mr. Ramey said. "Matching values with best prospects is essential for luxury brands."

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