

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Valentino writes homage to love in holiday handbag effort

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Valentino on Love is a poetry project. Image credit: Valentino

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Valentino is celebrating freedom and art in a literary collaboration that embellishes its purses with prose.

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In partnership with author Yrsa Daley-Ward, the brand is launching a limited-edition series of Rockstud bags with lines of the writer's poetry hidden inside. Timed for holiday gifting, the collection and corresponding marketing centers on love, speaking to the feelings of affection that run deep in many as they gather with friends, family and significant others.

"For the poet Yrsa Daley-Ward, Christmas means warmth, giving and love, and in her poem, she is quite literally yelling out the words, 'More love,'" said Taylor Heussner, email solutions specialist at [Blue Moon Digital](#), Denver, CO. "This campaign is central to the time of year.

"With the use of the New York City backdrop, the campaign is encouraging consumers to give more love rather than just gifts," she said. "In contrast, the close-up shots of Ward dressed head to toe in Valentino lets the consumers know it's okay to love yourself, to give yourself that feeling of Christmas, whether it be through a poem or a bag."

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

Fashion meets publishing

Ms. Daley Ward is best known for her poetry anthology "Bone" and memoir "The Terrible." The author has a following of 147,000 on Instagram, who tune in for verses and her take on topics such as writer's block and mental health.

An activist who identifies as LGBTQ and feminist, Ms. Daley-Ward's work also explores her West Indian and West African heritage.

For Valentino on Love, the brand has taken a piece of unpublished poetry from Ms. Daley-Ward's poetry and placed it on the inside flap of red Rockstud handbags. The 400 numbered limited-edition handbags come with a book of 25

previously unpublished poems by Ms. Daley-Ward entitled "Valentino on Love."



Yrsa Daley-Ward with the limited-edition Valentino handbag bearing her words. Image credit: Valentino

In a short film promoting the partnership, the poet is seen around New York. She explains that she associates Christmas with "warmth" and "giving," as well as love.

Ms. Daley-Ward is shown waiting on a subway platform, as her proclamation of "There will be more love" blends with the voice of a robotic announcer.

With her studded Rockstud in tow, the writer continues on a journey through the city, stopping to watch ice skaters and visit a bookstore.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

If I love you, you will know.' The acclaimed author and poet, @YrsaDaleyWard hid one of her verses in a limited edition Valentino Garavani #RockstudSpike. Every bag, numbered 1 to 400, is accompanied by #ValentinoOnLove -an exclusive book featuring 25 of the poet's previously unpublished poems on love. Video directed by @difficult_pictures.

A post shared by Valentino (@maisonvalentino) on Dec 11, 2018 at 12:46am PST

Yrsa Daley-Ward for Valentino

"By partnering with Ward, Valentino wants to communicate that women who wear their brand are confident in who they are because as Ward states, 'If there's an answer, it's you,'" Ms. Heussner said. "Partnered with the close-up shots in a rainy city, I must believe the you is yourself.

"Ward is isolated yet is willing to take on the city by herself," she said. "Women can and should be confident during the holiday season that can often teeter from overwhelming to lonely.

"Lastly, I think Valentino understands that the everyday woman looks and feels more like Ward than if they chose a model to represent this campaign. Ward lets an ordinary day of walking through the city become something stronger with her words and her style."

Valentino will also be featuring the collection in installations at its boutiques.

About the collaboration, Valentino notes that this project shows creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli's desire to "[converse] with non-conventional personalities that place love and freedom at the center of their artistic and intellectual activities, in an overview that allows a constant self-discovery."

Valentino on art

Valentino frequently collaborates with creatives for collections that sit at the intersection of fashion and fine art. In an earlier effort, Valentino wove a mystical backstory for items from its pre-fall 2015 collection with an enchanted storybook-inspired video.

The brand's film highlights the "magical combination" behind its Camugarden array of apparel and accessories developed alongside textile artist Celia Birtwell, who created floral prints that garnish the items from the line. Creating a fantastical video around this collection enabled Valentino to mirror the charmed origins of the pieces ([see story](#)).

Similarly to Valentino, poetry has also inspired other luxury brands. For instance, Givenchy ignited interest in a men's fragrance by proving that a true gentleman always finds the right words.

"The New Gentlemen" is Givenchy's campaign devoted to its Gentleman Givenchy fragrance, launched in 2017. Reinvigorating the campaign in a unique and masculine yet poetic manner, the label is sharing a series of short films featuring men finding the right words ([see story](#)).

"I think by placing an artist at the forefront of the brand, the Valentino brand wants you to know they are aligned with spending money on something more special than a bag—they want you to have a space for love and freedom in what

you do," Ms. Heussner said. "And that's important to women. They will want to engage with brands that care about the same things they do."

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