

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Louis Vuitton's Boyhood campaign continues Virgil Abloh's inclusivity theme

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Louis Vuitton Spring Summer 2019 boyhood campaign. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

French fashion house Louis Vuitton's menswear artistic director Virgil Abloh's true commitment to diversity has allowed his first collection drop to see significant sales numbers, before it even reached the brand's boutiques.

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After creating buzz for Louis Vuitton on the runway, the designer is bringing his unique approach to marketing with a new three-part campaign that focuses on personally important themes that are also present in his designs. The Boyhood series ushers in the menswear collection by showcasing infancy, childhood and adolescence, stages of development in which society's views of race and gender have not yet been imposed and kids dare to dream.

"What makes Virgil Abloh's appointment to Vuitton feel momentous and why it seems to resonate more than others is the aspect of empowerment behind it," said Jian Deleon, editorial director of [Highsnobiety](#). "In some ways, Abloh's been fighting for legitimacy and validation his whole career not just for himself, but the various subcultures and movements he has come to represent.

"Who couldn't see the impact of that narrative?" he said. "His rise is both a triumph and a marker of a paradigm shift."

Mr. Deleon is not affiliated with Louis Vuitton, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Louis Vuitton](#) was reached for comment.

Collaboration and inclusivity

Women's Wear Daily first reported that Mr. Abloh's debut Louis Vuitton menswear designs saw significant sales growth before they reached brand boutiques on Jan. 15. The collection sold 30 percent more in its first 48 hours than Louis Vuitton's previous menswear collaboration with Supreme last year ([see story](#)).

The designer's collections made headlines with unique products such as men's harnesses, bags and even a Jenga game.

Based on a Wizard of Oz motif, Mr. Abloh's designs were first showcased at its spring/summer show in Paris and had a limited release in October via a London pop-up ([see story](#)). After its full rollout this week, the collection is still

seeing significant hype.

Mr. Abloh's mission to be entirely inclusive and diversify the brand has led to success for Louis Vuitton, at a time in which many other brands are taking on new creative talent and completely rebranding themselves.

The Boyhood campaign features men of all ages and backgrounds in the collection.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

The road to realization. Infancy, Childhood and Adolescence. The first chapter of the #LouisVuitton Campaign by @VirgilAbloh for #LVMenSS19, photographed by @InezandVinoodh.

A post shared by Louis Vuitton Official (@louisvuitton) on Jan 22, 2019 at 9:07am PST

Louis Vuitton Instagram

Louis Vuitton has released the first part of the campaign, which shows babies, children and young teenagers in visually stimulating settings. The different shots feature the kids playing with clay, balls, colored pencils and other toys, as a young boy's voice can be heard with a computerized-echo effect.

"Sometimes I have like dj vu, where I see what happens in the dream and then it will happen in real life," the boy's voice says. "Then I'll have it again and again, and it gets annoying.

"I say I'm still a boy, I still have time to grow," he says.

Boyhood film for the SS 19 Men's collection

Two other parts of the campaign are set to release soon.

Virgil and Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton garnered \$2 million in earned media value over five days after naming Mr. Abloh the new head of its menswear collections.

According to data from Tribe Dynamics that looked at the top 10 luxury labels in earned media value this past March, Louis Vuitton's appointment boosted the brand's ranking by one spot as the announcement spurred content creation. In total, Louis Vuitton saw \$29 million in EMV throughout March, coming in fifth in the report ([see story](#)).

Mr. Abloh created more buzz for the label, as the designer's debut show helped to boost the brand's media mentions in June.

Louis Vuitton was the only luxury brand in Tribe Dynamics' earned media value rankings to achieve month-over-month growth, with its organic placement rising 39 percent from May to June. Indicative of interest in Mr. Abloh, the designer's own label Off-White has recently made it into the top 10 list, with the conversations surrounding it more than doubling over the past year ([see story](#)).

"The success of Virgil Abloh's Vuitton campaign and collection is a result of how Virgil has intertwined aspiration with inclusivity," Mr. Deleon said. "It's about not underestimating the power of street culture's audience both its buying power and soft power in controlling the zeitgeist.

"His activations at places like Chrome Hearts create a specific context for the collection while allowing Vuitton flagship stores to maintain a more traditional retail environment no lines, ability to cater to VIP clients and the fact that people who are probably buying from the flagships have most likely preordered their favorite pieces," he said.

"Perhaps the only more important thing than consumers being able to buy his product is to be seen possessing it.

"There were already clients carrying the Prism Keepall and wearing the Millionaire sunglasses to the Chrome Hearts pop-up and a lot of them bought even more stuff."