

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Burberry the latest to apologize for offensive product

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Burberry's sweatshirt under fire. Image credit: Burberry

By STAFF REPORTS

British fashion label Burberry is the latest fashion brand to apologize after alienating some of its audience, with a nod to nautical gone wrong.

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The label is offering its condolences and apologies for the stress it caused by one of its hoodies in the fall/winter 2019 collection. The product, showcased at London Fashion Week on Sunday, featured a rope-like cord around the neck of a model, initially inspired by the nautical theme, but to viewers, it looked more like a noose.

Another apology

One of Burberry's own models brought attention to the product when she posted her disagreement to it on Instagram. Liz Kennedy took the social application to express her concern, citing creative director Robert Tisci's dedication to "youth culture" for the recent show.

The model explained that the sweatshirt evoked feelings of suicide and hangings, none of which are fashion.

Mr. Tisci, along with Burberry CEO Marco Gobbetti released a statement expressing a sincere apology and pulled the item from the collection.

"While the design was inspired by a nautical theme, I realize that it was insensitive," Mr. Tisci said in the statement. "It was never my intention to upset anyone.

"It does not reflect my values nor Burberry's and we have removed it from the collection."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

@burberry @riccardotisci17 Suicide is not fashion. It is not glamorous nor edgy and since this show is dedicated to the youth expressing their voice, here I go. Riccardo Tisci and everyone at Burberry it is beyond me how you could let a look resembling a noose hanging from a neck out on the runway. How could anyone overlook this and think it would be okay to do this especially in a line dedicated to young girls and youth. The impressionable youth. Not to mention the rising suicide rates world wide. Let's not forget about the horrifying history of lynching either. There are hundreds of ways to tie a rope and they chose to tie it like a noose completely ignoring the fact that it was hanging around a neck. A massive brand like Burberry who is typically considered commercial and classy should not have overlooked such an obvious resemblance. I left my fitting extremely triggered after seeing this look (even though I did not wear it myself). Feeling as though I was right back where I was when I was going through an experience with suicide in my family. Also to add in they briefly hung one from the ceiling (trying to figure out the knot) and were laughing about it in the dressing room. I had asked to speak to someone about it but the only thing I was told to do was to write a letter. I had a brief conversation with someone but all that it entailed was "it's fashion. Nobody cares about what's going on in your personal life so just keep it to yourself" well I'm sorry but this is an issue bigger than myself. The issue is not about me being upset, there is a bigger picture here of what fashion turns a blind eye to or does to gain publicity. A look so ignorantly put together and a situation so poorly handled. I am ashamed to have been apart of the show. #burberry. I did not post this to disrespect the designer or the brand but to simply express an issue I feel very passionate about.

A post shared by (@liz.kennedy_) on Feb 17, 2019 at 9:51am PST

Instagram post from Liz Kennedy

"We are deeply sorry for the distress caused by one of the products ... featured in our A/W 2019 runway collection Tempest," Mr. Gobbetti said. "Though the design was inspired by the marine theme that ran throughout the collection, it was insensitive and we made a mistake."

Italian fashion label Gucci was another luxury brand to be in hot water thanks to accusations of depicting blackface in its designs.

Gucci also quickly pulled a sweater from its inventory in both stores and online, after it received backlash in its likeness to blackface. The black sweater was fitted with a rollup collar with a cutout for the mouth, outlined in red, much like a golliwog doll known to be a symbol of racism ([see story](#)).

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