

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Balmain lets consumers control the action in fall campaign

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Balmain's fall/winter 2019 campaign features Cara Delevingne. Image credit: Balmain

By SARAH JONES

French fashion label Balmain is turning consumers into directors by giving them the choice of how the plot of its latest campaign should develop.

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Balmain creative director Olivier Rousteing is extending the brand's relationship with his friend Cara Delevingne, tapping the model-actress for a handbag collaboration and a series of dramatic films. Rather than creating a static campaign, Balmain developed interactive films that offer consumers the chance to choose the endings of each film, putting them in control to drive up engagement.

"Balmain's choice-centered campaign focusing on three new bag designs provided a rich cinematic canvas for cross-styling and merchandising their upcoming fall/winter 2019 collection," said Daymon Bruck, CCO and partner at [The O Group](#), Seattle.

"The brand was clever to deepen their partnership by co-designing with Cara Delevingne, and her 42 million Instagram followers are sure to widen Balmain's exposure to a younger luxury audience," he said.

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

Pick your adventure

Ms. Delevingne previously appeared in Balmain's spring/summer 2019 campaign alongside Mr. Rousteing ([see story](#)).

Now, Balmain is extending its partnership with the personality.

The label worked with Ms. Delevingne to develop three different handbag styles. Fashioned in quilted black lambskin, these include a flap shoulder bag, a circular style and a conical studded bag.

Paralleling the choice consumers have to make among the three accessories, Balmain has created a trio of films centered on each of the styles.

For the studded Romeo, Ms. Delevingne appears in a white outfit overlaid with a clear studded layer. She stands in a kitchen looking out the window at the rain as she talks on the phone.

After nodding to what she hears, the model goes to the refrigerator and pulls out the Romeo handbag. She unzips the bag and reveals a diamond necklace.

Consumers are then prompted to decide whether she should put it on or put it back. If Ms. Delevingne wears the necklace, she suddenly finds a leather-gloved arm touching her shoulder, whereas putting the necklace in the bag enables her to make an escape to the sound of sirens.

The Balmain Choice

The Twist bag film similarly finds a mysteriously on-the-run protagonist. After the model sheds a wig in a bathroom, consumers are given the choice to have Ms. Delevingne flee or open the door, which determines whether she does a wardrobe change or leaves her statement jacket behind as she climbs out the window.

Balmain's final film is for its Bbag. Ms. Delevingne climbs the stairs of an apartment building and begins to knock on a door. Despite repeated attempts, no one is answering.

If the viewer chooses to persevere rather than giving up on knocking, they will see a cameo from Mr. Rousteing as he finally opens the door.

Changing the narrative

Luxury brands are increasingly swapping out static video for interactive content initiatives.

For instance, Swiss watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen aimed to position itself as a pioneer in luxury marketing by rolling out a unique strategy in regards to virtual reality and digital film.

Actor Bradley Cooper starred in a choose-your-own-adventure storyline that brought users into IWC's setting through VR. From the point of view of a motorcycle driver, viewers could control their own narrative ([see story](#)).

French fashion label Kenzo similarly let consumers try their hand at music production through an interactive experience showcasing its spring/summer handbag styles.

For its "Primary Colors," the brand teamed with the production team behind anime series Culture Sport to create an animation that responded to a track created by the user on a drum machine, with handbags dancing to the rhythm of the customized electronic beats. Involving consumers in the creation of a digital experience helps to further immerse them in the intended message ([see story](#)).

"From a brand development and content standpoint, Balmain's choice-centered campaign adds an emotionally charged fantasy to each of the new bags, allowing potential customers to 'play along' and become much more invested in a new product launch than a single image or video would provide," The O Group's Mr. Bruck said.