

RETAIL

Saks partners with Vogue to portray handbag temptation

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Saks and Vogue's "Bag Check" stars Natasha Lyonne. Image credit: Vogue

By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Saks Fifth Avenue is highlighting this season's handbag releases in a humorous short in collaboration with Cond Nast's *Vogue*.

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In the film, actress Natasha Lyonne stars as a security guard with a penchant for purses, who makes her passion known as she is screening bags. This content alliance follows Saks' flagship overhaul that turned its ground floor into a home for handbags, putting further emphasis on the category.

"The film through the witty Natasha Lyonne and clever use of a conveyor belt does an effective job of communicating Saks' wide array of luxury handbags," said **Jim Gentleman**, independent marketing consultant for lifestyle brands. "The use of humor is refreshing and unexpected in the often overly serious and dramatic fashion world."

Mr. Gentleman is not affiliated with Saks, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Saks** was reached for comment.

Passion for purses

The Vogue-produced film, titled "Bag Check," is set at the National Arts Club in Manhattan.

Attendees dressed in eveningwear arrive for a fictional "charity ball" hosted by Saks and Vogue, and are greeted by Ms. Lyonne's security guard. Wearing a Saks-branded hat, the actress tell the group of women, "Whoa, whoa, whoa ladies, not so fast," and asks them to put their purses on a conveyor belt to be screened.

Along with doing her job of inspecting what is inside the attendees' bags, the security guard takes the opportunity to investigate the purses themselves. As the accessories come through the conveyor belt, she vocalizes her thoughts on the designs and lovingly handles them or tries them on.

As the women roll their eyes and sigh impatiently at the length of time taken for the screening, Ms. Lyonne's character takes great enjoyment in the process, even cracking jokes.

For instance, she asks if an embellished McQueen clutch bag with ring details is "the proposal I never got." She goes on to call the bag "so mysterious and yet so easy, like me in high school."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Now serving a bejeweled knuckle sandwich from @alexandermcqueen, now at Saks. #SaksStyle

A post shared by Saks Fifth Avenue (@saks) on Aug 8, 2019 at 10:12am PDT

Instagram post from Saks

The security guard also tells one woman she can pick her bag up after the weekend, because she has a hot date.

A cream colored Valentino bag pushes the security guard to her breaking point, as she tries to resist temptation. After smelling the bag, she asks the guest to put it through the detector another time.

"I think this was Saks' way of creating cheeky content that highlighted the products, between the bags on the conveyer belt and the passive outfit features," said Dalia Strum, educator at [The Fashion Institute of Technology](#), New York.

"It's always an interesting process to think through creative strategies on how to highlight products," she said.

"Through this clip, they validated their expertise on product knowledge as well as access.

"Most importantly, it didn't feel like a salesy advertisement, which typically occurs with sponsored content. Brand-produced content allows the brand to have a voice and point of view."

New luxury

In February, Saks concluded another phase of its flagship renovation process as it seeks to build what it believes is the New Luxury shopping experience, focusing on product assortment, a new form of heightened service and

exclusive offerings.

Saks started off its new main floor opening with a series of more than 100 exclusives developed with brand partners to celebrate its emphasis on product.

With the opening of its new 53,000-square-foot main floor, Saks has tripled its handbag offering with an additional 14 brands as well as more products from its already established brand partners ([see story](#)).

Saks Fifth Avenue has worked with *Vogue* before on sponsored digital features. Last year, the retailer teamed up with *Vogue* for an interactive advent calendar.

The media group and the retailer have shared a new take on the 12 days of Christmas. On *Vogue's* digital platforms, the two have tapped into their expertise for the interactive gift guide ([see story](#)).

"*Vogue* is synonymous with fashion and reaches the exact audience Saks is targeting for its handbags collection," .

"With its robust digital presence and readership, *Vogue* is an appealing partner for a luxury retailer like Saks.

"Sponsored content provides a sort of third-party credibility and endorsement that brand-produced efforts lack," he said. "In this case, Saks benefits from its association with *Vogue* and its reputation as a fashion authority and icon."

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