

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Dior admits to Sauvage missteps after campaign controversy

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Actor Johnny Depp appeared in the Dior Parfums' Sauvage campaign. Image credit: Dior Parfums

By STAFF REPORTS

French fashion house Christian Dior has responded to criticism after a social media backlash accused the brand's Sauvage fragrance campaign of cultural appropriation.

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American actor Johnny Depp, a longtime Dior ambassador, appeared in the campaign that was first teased in late August before being pulled. Now, Dior has confirmed that the campaign will not be shared in its entirety despite initial attempts to promote cultural collaboration.

Social stumbles

Dior Parfums' latest Sauvage campaign, "We Are the Land," was shot in Utah's Canyonlands National Park, which is the ancestral home to the Utes, Apaches and Navajo people.

In an attempt to avoid accusations of cultural appropriation of Native American attire and imagery, Dior worked with the organization Americans for Indian Opportunity and experts to portray a respectful and authentic take on Native American heritage. The AIO led decisions about aspects such as casting, and the organization was involved in choices on the costuming and script.

Dior, the film's director Jean-Baptiste Mondino and Mr. Depp set out to film a campaign that was inclusive to Native American culture without venturing into harmful clichés. The three parties contacted experts who are citizens of the Comanche, Isleta and Taos Pueblos people and the Pawnee Nation ([see story](#)).



Dior's latest Sauvage campaign was a collaboration with Native American consultants. Image courtesy of Dior Parfums

Despite these efforts, the consumer reaction to the initial campaign teaser was swift and critical. Instead of sharing the full film, the trailer was pulled within hours.

"The House of Dior has long been committed to promoting diversity and has no tolerance for discrimination in any form," said the House of Dior in a statement. "Recently, a film trailer for the Sauvage fragrance was posted on social media and immediately withdrawn.

"We are deeply sorry for any offense caused by this new advertising campaign, which was meant to be a celebration of the beauty, dignity and grace of the contemporary Native American culture," the brand continued. "As a consequence, we have decided not to release this version of the campaign."

Dior campaigns have previously turned controversial, with the house being unclear in how it worked with cultural groups to be supportive instead of exploitative.

Last fall, Dior elaborated on the Mexican inspiration for its 2019 cruise collection by putting local photographers in front of the camera.

Eight Mexican women photographed the collection in their native country for a feature in the DiorMag, and the brand shared their stories and heritage in an Instagram series. Dior initially received backlash on social media because while the collection is influenced by escaramuzas, highly-skilled Mexican horsewomen, the campaign starred American actress Jennifer Lawrence ([see story](#)).

Dior also delved into its effort to bring authentic cultural appreciation to its cruise 2020 show in Marrakech, Morocco, exploring how it enlisted the work and creativity of local artisans for the event.

Before and after the show, content posted on Dior's social media channels shared more details about artisans' involvement with a wider audience, ensuring that the brand's efforts reach beyond those in attendance. By spotlighting its partnership with Moroccan artisans, Dior sought to circumvent any controversy and instead focus on its designs ([see story](#)).