

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Saint Laurent communicates creativity through music alliance

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Saint Laurent has produced the music video for SebastiAn's "Sober." Image credit: Saint Laurent

By SARAH JONES

French fashion label Saint Laurent is continuing to align itself with parallel creative fields through a new music partnership.

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Saint Laurent has produced the music video for producer SebastiAn's track "Sober," heightening its existing partnership with the electronic musician. This latest endeavor follows a similar collaboration between Saint Laurent and Travis Scott, as the Kering-owned label looks to connect with consumers over more than fashion.

"It's very hard to deny the impact music has on culture today," said Romey Louangvilay, communications director at **ELMNTL**, New York. "From the fashion trends that emerge from the streets to high-end luxury houses, you can always see the impact music had on the designer.

"Music is a crucial element of everyday life. There is research that indicates how music can have considerable effects on behavior," he said. "It also indicates that people use music to serve various functions, from emotion regulation to self-expression to social bonding.

"Saint Laurent is being really strategic here by remaining relevant to their audiences while tapping into newer, younger audiences through music."

Mr. Louangvilay is not affiliated with Saint Laurent, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Saint Laurent** was reached for comment.

Style soundtrack

For years, Saint Laurent creative director Anthony Vaccarello has been working with SebastiAn on soundtracks for the brand's shows.

Sober, which features vocals from British singer Bakar, was released in October. The track is part of the artist's album "Thirst," which became available on Nov. 7.

In honor of the record release, Saint Laurent hosted an exclusive appearance by SebastiAn at its Rive Droite store in

Paris. Opened this past spring, the Saint Laurent Rive Droite concept store in Paris is situated in the space previously occupied by Colette and retails an eclectic mix of merchandise.

The Sober music video, which was directed by Nathalie Canguilhem, opens on an aerial shot of a sea of white towers. Transitioning to the ground, the video shows a procession of women dressed in conservative white and black attire, complete with hoods.

Actor Felix Maritaud is shown walking in the opposite direction of the women. Shifting the perspective, the protagonist is shown in a dimly lit cell-like space beneath the seemingly never ending line of women.

The lead character faces a number of challenges, including fighting his double, coming face to face with a tarantula and climbing through a series of doors that gets progressively smaller.

As Bakar sings about temptation, the film's imagery brings in religious imagery with rows of crosses on a beach. Mr. Maritaud appears seated atop one of the crosses, before the film switches to show him walking through a group of women as they dance on the posts.

The actor later wades into the water up to his waist.

A further encounter finds Mr. Maritaud strolling through a room filled with beds. Couples in wedding attire are seated on the mattresses, watching the actor.

In the final shot, Mr. Maritaud stands on the top of a building overlooking the city.

Saint Laurent produced the video for SebastiAn's "Sober"

"This is definitely a risk for Saint Laurent," Mr. Louangvilay said. "The brand has been synonymous with a specific customer, therefore the collaborations should work with brands and celebrities that fit the brand's look.

"It's one thing to work with a celebrity just for the sake of them being a celebrity, and it's another when you work with a celebrity that really fits your brand naturally," he said. "The music and artist choice could alienate some customers who wouldn't normally associate Saint Laurent that a specific type of music, however, it's a risk the brand will have to see if it pays off in the end."

Making music

Earlier this year, Saint Laurent teamed up with rapper Travis Scott to put its brand in front of millions of consumers and modernize its image.

Saint Laurent produced and designed the wardrobe for the musician's "Can't Say" music video, earning the label prime placement on YouTube as the film was released on Feb. 5. Saint Laurent's partnership is indicative of the increasing convergence of streetwear and luxury fashion, allowing the brand to reach out to the next generation of buyers through pop culture ([see story](#)).

Even before Mr. Vaccarello joined Saint Laurent in 2016, music had become a key part of the label's positioning.

For instance, Saint Laurent furthered its rock 'n' roll vibe with a series of portraits with singer Joni Mitchell.

Then creative director Hedi Slimane photographed the musician on multiple occasions, resulting in a set of black-and-white images. These photographs were part of the Saint Laurent Music Project, which painted an intimate, slightly branded portrait of performers ([see story](#)).

"The music collaborations from Saint Laurent communicate how this brand should be part of your life beyond the clothes you wear," Mr. Louangvilay said. "The brand is already a namesake in fashion, accessories and beauty, and venturing into music collaborations is another way for the brand to be part of their audience's culture.

"It also shows that the brand is open to progressing instead of being stuck in their old ways and fading away," he said.