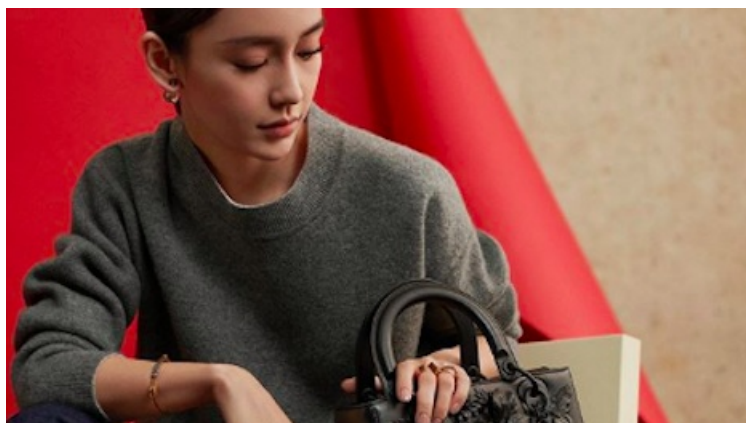


APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Dior deconstructs the idea of "ladylike" in handbag push

November 13, 2019



Angelababy for Lady Dior. Image credit: Dior

By SARAH JONES

French fashion label Christian Dior is creating a conversation around what it means to be a contemporary woman by collecting the personal perspectives of international personalities.

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In Dior's "What's Ladylike?" video series, eight figures ranging from models and actors to royalty share their opinions and what comes to mind when they think of the term "ladylike." Conceptualized as a promotion for the Lady Dior handbag, the campaign also reflects Dior's broader feminist approach towards women's wear under creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri.

"Dior is known for their 'ladylike' aesthetic, which has evolved over time and has truly taken on new meanings," said Dalia Strum, educator at [The Fashion Institute of Technology](#), New York.

"Ladylike can be such a subjective term that it's valuable to hear other perspectives on what ladylike truly means," she said.

Ms. Strum is not affiliated with Dior, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Dior](#) was reached for comment.

### Feminine feelings

Dior's social video series features each woman in a dedicated interview film. The set for the films is pared back, putting the focus on the women and the Lady Dior handbag they picked out as their costar.

Model Ruth Bell, who has been a face of Dior for years, shares her thoughts on Ms. Chiuri and the designer's uniform of white shirts and baggy jeans. The model, who tends towards androgynous styles in her personal life, says Ms. Chiuri "challenges" her by putting her in big gowns.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Friends of the House including @RuthNotMay and @NagyEvelinn appear with their favorite version of #LadyDior bag by @MariaGraziaChiuri in portraits shot by @Joan\_Braun, and share 'ladylike' expressions of the iconic bag in a video tribute to pluralistic femininity, now on Dior's youtube channel (link in bio). @Joan\_Braun

A post shared by Dior Official (@dior) on Nov 9, 2019 at 9:11am PST

### *Instagram post from Dior*

Chinese model and actress Angelababy says she believes the perfect model of a lady is Audrey Hepburn.

For model Adesuwa, examples of quintessential ladies are Mary Poppins, Jessica Rabbit and former First Lady Michelle Obama.

Former dancer Kat Graham, who is a Dior muse, jokingly says that she is least ladylike when she is "cussing."

American actress Adria Arjona tells the story of how her mom taught her not to put her pinky up while having play tea parties as a child.

Dominican model Lineisy Montero answers in Spanish that being ladylike is "not just what you have, it's also your attitude."

### *Dior's What's Ladylike series*

Princess Maria Olympia of Greece, who is a friend of the house, shares her personal memory of her 21st birthday, which was a moment where she felt like a lady because of how she was dressed.

Model Sarah Grace Wallerstedt also equates being a lady with fashion, as she discusses getting dressed up for piano recitals as a child. Hailing from Texas, she also weighs in on stereotypical Southern lady style.

Feminism meets fashion

Since arriving at Christian Dior in 2016, Ms. Chiuri has celebrated feminism and empowerment through designs and

marketing, such as a shirt reading "We should all be feminists" ([see story](#)).

For its fall line, Ms. Chiuri took inspiration from the Teddy Girls, a 1950s subculture group in working-class Britain that rebelled in the post-war period through androgynous yet Edwardian dressing ([see story](#)).

While these efforts are feminist, the designer said during a conversation at the Cond Nast International Luxury conference in 2018 that these they evolved from translating Dior's femininity to today ([see story](#)).

Earlier this year, Dior took a feminine approach to its recurring Lady Dior Art campaign, choosing only to collaborate with women artists this time around.

In each iteration, Dior asks creatives to conceive their own versions of the iconic Lady Dior top-handle handbag. In a move emphasizing Ms. Chiuri's commitment to bringing feminism to fashion, the label enlisted solely women artists for this campaign ([see story](#)).

Dior's latest campaign also looks to portray the diversity of the female experience.

"The most meaningful part of this deconstruction is aligning the concept of ladylike with the Dior brand and how the consumer emotionally connects to that association," Ms. Strum said.

"The women they featured all embrace a similar concept that ladylike is about lifestyle but also attitude," she said.

"Their stories typically have a nostalgic association from growing up that they associate towards being 'ladylike' or even unladylike.

"This campaign truly embraced diversity and how each person looks at ladylike through a different lens, so that someone watching could embrace similar sentiments - that 'yes, that's what ladylike means to me.' There's a true association that when you emotionally connect with someone, you align with similar mindsets and their view of the world. That definitely applies towards this mini-series; I even found myself nodding along."