

AUTOMOTIVE

Audi spotlights sustainability in Super Bowl spot

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Audi's 2020 Super Bowl commercial. Image courtesy of Audi

By SARAH JONES

German automaker Audi is using the Super Bowl as a platform to highlight its sustainable mobility efforts through music.

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The marque's spot for the big game on Feb. 2 features actress Maisie Williams choosing a different, more environmentally friendly path through a city with the help of a popular Disney tune. Infused with celebrity and a touch of surrealism, Audi's ad blends entertainment with an ecological message.

"Audi and all luxury automakers have to focus on sustainability," said David Undercoffler, editor in chief of [Autolist](#), San Francisco. "This is a critical inflection point for luxury brands to pivot away from their histories as builders of gas-guzzlers and towards a greener future."

"These brands need their EVs to be a success, both because of the incredible investments they've poured into the vehicles and also because the success of EVs is crucial to these brands meeting ever-increasing global emissions requirements," he said. "The e-tron is at the core of Audi's future, so it makes sense that it would want to promote it in one of the biggest marketing opportunities in the world."

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

Sustainability song

Ms. Williams is best known for her role as Arya Stark on the hit HBO show "Game of Thrones."

Audi's ad finds the actress playing a more realistic character. Ms. Williams is an advocate for the fight against climate change, making her a fitting spokesmodel for this sustainably-focused ad.

"The biggest night in American football, and one of the last truly live global television events, serves as the perfect moment to share our strategic path toward sustainable premium mobility with a worldwide audience," said Sven Schuwirth, head of brand Audi, digital business and customer experience, in a statement.

"Maisie Williams is the perfect representative of how consumers are increasingly choosing, and advocating for, transportation options that are more sustainable," he said. "As a creative innovator, she perfectly embodies millions of peoples' desires to make the transition to an electric future."

The spot opens on Ms. Williams walking across a street towards an e-tron Sportback, an electric SUV coup that will debut this spring in Europe.

While humming to herself, the actress gets into the car and begins to drive. But she soon finds herself surrounded by vehicles visibly spewing exhaust, one of which has a bumper sticker that reads, "Eat dust."

On the radio, a reporter is heard saying that today's temperature is 8 degrees above normal.

Getting frustrated at the traffic jam, Ms. Williams begins to sing the song "Let It Go" from the Oscar-winning Disney animated film Frozen. She turns her car away from the congestion as she reaches the chorus.

Bringing the song to life, a sign spinner holds an arrow inscribed with the words "let it go." In a whimsical twist, pedestrians and inanimate objects, including a tube man, join in.

Audi leaves viewers with the tagline, "Let's drive to a more sustainable future."

Audi's Super Bowl commercial

"[The Disney musical concept] is a direct play to families," Mr. Undercoffler said. "Doing this makes the e-tron seem more approachable and welcoming to people with kids, who might otherwise write off the e-tron as more of a niche play for empty-nesters."

Audi worked with agency 72andSunny Amsterdam on its campaign. Ms. Williams recorded her version of Let It Go at the iconic Abbey Road Studios in London.

While centered on the e-tron Sportback that Ms. Williams drives, the message in the commercial is broader, pointing to Audi's vision of electric mobility and putting a new spin on its "Lead by Technology" tagline. This Super Bowl appearance ushers in a new global brand campaign for Audi, with the spot being distributed beyond the U.S. via television and social media in markets including the U.K., Germany, Italy, France and Spain.

Additional chapters of the campaign will roll out this year, including segments focused on connectivity and electrification.

Audi aims to have 30 electrified models by 2025, part of a long-term push to be carbon-neutral by 2050.

Green goals

Audi is putting the focus on carbon neutrality through greater efforts surrounding electric cars and ownership alternatives.

The automaker is planning to have its fleet's carbon footprint reduced by 30 percent between 2015 and 2025. Named "Consistently Audi," the strategy aims to make Audi a sustainability leader in the upscale auto market ([see story](#)).

This is Audi's 11th appearance at the Super Bowl. Last year, Audi also used the sporting event to bring awareness to its new electronic endeavor, as the EV category grows.

Taking advantage of the biggest commercial day of the year, Audi showcased its e-tron concepts during the second quarter of the game. In true Super Bowl fashion, the spot, titled "Cashew," focused on comedy to make an announcement to consumers ([see story](#)).

"Sports, and the Super Bowl in particular, are so alluring to brands in terms of marketing because it has the attention of a wide variety of consumers, spanning all age groups, income levels, ethnicities and locations," Mr. Undercoffler said. "So a brand like Audi can quickly and effectively promote a crucial vehicle like the e-tron with a single ad and really juice the conversation around that vehicle."

"This might not translate into direct e-tron sales right now but it serves to take a long view of raising the brand's profile among consumers who may be shopping for one later down the line," he said.