

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Gucci releases playful new collection shedding light on counterfeit culture

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Fake/Not Collection. Image credit: Gucci

By NORA HOWE

Italian luxury fashion house Gucci is boldly poking fun at knockoff products and counterfeit culture with its newest ready-to-wear collection.

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Drawing inspiration from a retro appropriation of the logo featuring the green and red stripe, Gucci has embellished the same logo with the motto "Fake/Not" on a collection of shoes, outerwear, scarves and accessories. Rather than taking legal action, the Italian fashion house is beating counterfeiters at their own game by simply becoming an active participant.

"It was in the '80s that Gucci realized people were wearing imitations of the brand as a means to reflect their status even if it was not from the house itself," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder of [Athleisure Mag](#), Atlanta. "The brand's decision to create a collection that speaks to imitation design allows them to have agency over their work to call out what has taken place and to allow others to purchase it."

Counterfeit Couture

The collection features 16 items, including footwear, bags, outerwear and other accessories all with the Gucci logo and reinvented bi-colored stripe and a bright yellow "Fake" and "Not" imposed on each product.

Gucci initially debuted the collection at the autumn/winter 2020-2021 men's fashion show, but now the ironic ready-to-wear collection is available for purchase.

This is not the first time Gucci has played with the motif of imitation. In 2017, the fashion house sent models down the catwalk of its spring/summer show with accessories featuring the word "Guccy," referencing how counterfeit products misspell luxury brand names.



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A post shared by Gucci Official (@gucci) on Oct 6, 2020 at 7:...

"One crowd will be in' on the joke and think Gucci's tongue in cheek approach to dupe goods is edgy, artistic, and carefree in an ironic way," said Chelsea Cawood Trinidad, owner and CEO of [Scout Sales Management](#), Tulsa. "Another crowd will view it as being overly elitist and shamelessly provocative.

"It's a win for Gucci either way because they have started a massive conversation on pieces that are relatively inexpensive to make," she said. "They will make money both from the limited edition products they've manufactured, and the free publicity they've garnered."

Gucci has been victim to counterfeit culture for decades, making it no stranger to the brand, but has managed to create a clever and playful mockery of the issue through the Fake Not collection.

Drawing the line

While Gucci has confidently and strategically spun knockoff culture to their own advantage, many luxury fashion houses have not quite made light of the same situation, pursuing legal action over counterfeit goods.

Italian fashion house Valentino filed a joint lawsuit with ecommerce giant Amazon against a New York-based company for allegedly counterfeiting the label's Valentino Garavani Rockstud shoes. The brand went on to implement a surveillance system aimed to detect counterfeit products on sale in the United States, as well as strengthening customs enforcement in the U.S. ([see story](#)).

A suit commenced by Nike one of the most counterfeited brands in the world in the federal court in Manhattan illustrates some of the changing techniques being employed by counterfeiters, and how Nike in response has adapted its enforcement strategies, stressing the importance of pursuing secondary actors and protecting a brand's design ([see story](#)).

"Knockoffs do not deter true patrons of the prestigious fashion houses from purchasing their products," Ms. Trinidad said. "Gucci's Fake/Not collection is meant to be playful, snarky and fun, and references the confidence and swag that anyone who rocks the line must possess."

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