

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Dior explores the art of perfumery in documentary film

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Franois Demachy is a French perfumer who has been with Dior since 2006. Image credit: Dior

By NORA HOWE

French fashion house Christian Dior is examining the world of fragrance creation through a documentary feature film, shedding light on the mysterious craft.

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Directed by Clment Beauvais and Arthur de Kersauson, *Nose* follows Dior perfumer Franois Demachy on his two-year quest through fourteen countries to discover the world's most valuable raw materials. Through the hour-long spotlight, Dior offers insight into the meticulous and creative process of its renowned fragrance composition.

"Dior demonstrates its understanding and respect of its audiences and prospects by sharing what their customers value and respect, earning trust, pride and commitment for the brand," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO at [ARTful Communication](#), New York. "A thriving business is built on strong relationships, and producing transactions without a trusted relationship is unsustainable.

"Many of the best brands have struggled with this particular area, having ignored or lost sight of the value of strong brand relationships and how to manage them they create monologues, not dialogues," she said. "Dior has created a meaningful opportunity for dialogue with this film."

The nose knows

Since 2006, Mr. Demachy has served as Dior's head "nose" and has produced some of the brand's most iconic fragrances, from Miss Dior to Dior Homme to Joy by Dior.

While the essence of perfume is elegant and chic, the film shows that the process of successfully combining ingredients and experimenting with various notes is a laborious and extensive journey.

"Perfume is a language that a lot of people understand, but only few speak," Mr. Demachy says.

Nose Trailer

The film takes viewers on a journey from southern France and Italy to Indonesia and Ireland, serving as more of a travel documentary as it explores various remote communities and regions.

In each place, the film shows Mr. Demachy interacting with local farmers and suppliers, showcasing the human connection necessary to bringing fragrance to life.

"Dior perfumes would not exist in their present state if it weren't for this human network," Mr. Demachy says. "This exchange over raw materials, and these shared gestures, which are a part of perfume making, are emotionally powerful.

"To me, perfume is, in its essence, a human journey," Mr. Demachy says.

Although *Nose* marks its first feature documentary on the subject of perfumery, Dior is no stranger to the world of feature filmmaking.

In 2014, *Dior and I* premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, and offered a behind-the-scenes look at what went on inside the esteemed fashion house. Written and directed by Frdric Tchong, the documentary centers on former creative director Raf Simons' debut season at Dior.

Two years later, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the house, filmmaker Michael Waldman was given exclusive access to go behind the scenes at Dior for six months, ultimately creating *Inside Dior*. Following Mr. Simons' departure as creative director, the two-part series documents the search for his replacement and highlights the transitional period leading up to the appointment of Maria Grazia Chiuri.



The film spotlights the suppliers and local farmers who heavily contribute to the process of creating fragrances at Dior. Image credit: Dior

Having premiered at the 2020 Tribeca Film Festival, *Nose* was one of three Tribeca X Award 2020 Feature Film finalists. It is now available on video-on-demand on Apple TV, Amazon Prime Video, Google Play and Canal VOD.

Filmed fragrance

While Dior has presented the first feature documentary focused on the craft of perfumery, other brands have not kept their creative processes a secret.

French fashion house Louis Vuitton shared the intricate details and precise processes of fragrance through the eyes of one of its brand ambassadors. The 10-minute film followed French actor Stacy Martin as she spends the day with master perfumer Jacques Cavallier Belletrud at the maison's fragrance atelier, Les Fontaines Parfumes, in the south of France.

After exploring the estate's gardens and learning new ways to apply perfume, the actress learned how to create her own custom composition using some of the best natural raw materials ([see story](#)).

French beauty label Guerlain reinvented and reimagined its iconic La Petite Robe Noire perfume in an inspiring and artistic campaign. The brand celebrated the story behind its iconic Parisian character and fragrance by reinterpreting the heart-shaped bottle with a black and pink ombr overlay, featuring the little black dress that originally inspired the fragrance.

In a short film, Guerlain perfumers Thierry Wasser and Delphine Jelk discussed the process of discovering and combining the right scents to create the olfactory experience of La Petite Robe Noire as well as the meaning behind the illustrated muse ([see story](#)).

"Humans are curious creatures by nature," Ms. Miller said. "They desire to have exposure and an understanding of both the fundamentals and nuances of how things are envisioned, designed and produced.

"Like a well-written script, it begins with an idea, a story or an experience captured later in a fragrance, the raw

materials, the interaction of talent, the art and science experientially unfolding allowing access to a world beyond their reach," she said. "One which will linger in their minds each time a scent is purchased or worn."

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