

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Louis Vuitton playfully blurs lines between femininity, masculinity

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Jaden Smith in the Louis Vuitton women's SS21 campaign. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

By NORA HOWE

French fashion house Louis Vuitton has enlisted the help of some familiar faces for its women's spring/summer 2021 campaign, directed and photographed by creative director Nicolas Ghesquire.

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Through a playful portrait series featuring a notable cast of celebrities and brand ambassadors, Louis Vuitton aims to capture the essence of the handbags that accompany the stylistic project. The campaign aims to blur the lines between femininity and masculinity through representing creative investment in the collection.

"Brands are like people, and the best brands in the world use their underlying values and beliefs as a magnet to attract customers who are aligned with those," said Deb Gabor, CEO and founder of [Sol Marketing](#) and author of *Irrational Loyalty: Building a Brand That Thrives in Turbulent Times*. "This campaign thoughtfully honors [Louis Vuitton's] legacy of innovating in the context of culture.

"The campaign is of the moment' and certainly foreshadows how a brand that's been around since the mid 1800s can consistently remain relevant to its ideal customers."

Familiar faces

Shot in Los Angeles, the imagery features celebrity friends, models, artists and athletes who personally inspire Mr. Ghesquire, including Jennifer Connelly, Naomi Osaka, Emily Miller, Laura Harrier, Emma Stone, Sophie Turner, Liu Yifei, Carolyn Murphy, Cody Fern, Kris DeGirolo, Sarah Brown, Halle Bailey, Chle Bailey, Angelica Ross and Jaden Smith.

"Using celebrities in brand campaigns can humanize a brand by leveraging what we know about the values and beliefs of people who are familiar, in mass, as a shortcut for telling a brand's values story in a succinct and scalable way," Ms. Gabor said. "Consumers love celebrities because they represent an archetype' with whom everyday people identify."

Behind the scenes of Louis Vuitton's SS21 campaign

Louis Vuitton announced tennis champion Ms. Osaka as a brand ambassador in mid-January ([see story](#)), marking

this campaign her official debut with the French label. However, many of the individuals who have come together for this campaign have recently starred in their own Louis Vuitton campaigns.

In February, the house conveyed modernity and sophistication with Chinese-American actress and brand ambassador Ms. Liu featuring the Capucines handbags ([see story](#)). In January, it let its hair down in a free-spirited ad campaign for its Twist bags featuring Ms. Harrier, an American actress and civil rights activist ([see story](#)).

The spring/summer 2021 campaign highlights the latest iterations of the Coussin and Rendez-Vous bags, which pre-launched in February and are inspired by elegance, simplicity and stylistic freedom ([see story](#)).

By positioning the bags in a multitude of ways and with individuals from Ms. Stone to Mr. Smith, Mr. Ghesquire is attempting to disregard gender norms through versatility.

"The theme of blurring the lines between femininity and masculinity seems timely and relevant, given a market-level conversation going on among many younger consumers," Ms. Gabor said. "It's definitely on-brand' with Louis Vuitton's legacy of placing fashion in the context of culture bringing unique designs to the world, combining innovation with style and uncompromising quality."



Emma Stone in the Louis Vuitton women's SS21 campaign. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

Pieces from the SS21 collection, including Coussin and Rendez-Vous bags, are now available for purchase on the Louis Vuitton ecommerce site and at select boutique stores worldwide.

Reaching the young consumer

Young affluent consumers are increasingly demanding transparency, and aim to connect with brands that match their values. Louis Vuitton's parent organization LVMH has made conscious efforts toward social and environmental change, topics valued heavily by Gen Z and millennial consumers.

In celebration of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on Nov. 25, 2020, the company pledged to fight for the elimination of violence against women. Since the majority of LVMH's 163,000 employees are women and women serve as the primary target for most of its products, the company is especially committed to gender equality, diversity and equal opportunities ([see story](#)).

During the opening ceremony of the company's first Climate Week in December, executives shared the framework for its Life 360 sustainability strategy, which addresses its environmental approach from manufacturing through in-store experiences ([see story](#)).

"Younger consumers increasingly demand that brands show them everything they do," Ms. Gabor said. "From manufacturing, to marketing, to hiring, to where and from whom they seek investment."