

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Versace examines strength, self-worth in new series

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From left to right: Precious Lee, Lucka Ngo and Nialah Edari for Medusa Power Talks. Image credit: Versace

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Italian fashion house Versace has recruited influential and emerging leaders in fashion and activism for a new series on empowerment.

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Models Irina Shayk, Precious Lee and other public figures are joining chief creative officer Donatella Versace for "Medusa Power Talks." As luxury brands look to introduce more engaging digital content for consumers, Versace is the latest fashion label to tap ambassadors for more in-depth conversations.

"This is a great initiative that both reinforces the brand's ethos and contemporizes Versace as a brand that is well tapped into issues of cultural importance today," said Thoma Serdari, director of fashion and luxury MBA and professor at [NYU Stern](#), New York. "Each protagonist focuses on different aspects of women's journey in the society through personal and professional circumstances."

### Medusa musings

The video series is named after the Greek mythological figure whose head serves as the Versace logo.

"Traditionally, Medusa's head has been a symbol against evil, a narrative that has survived through Ancient Greek mythology, with Perseus's beheading the evil Medusa," Ms. Serdari said. "It has been the trademark symbol of Versace, linking the brand to the Classical tradition of the Mediterranean that has remained a source of inspiration for the brand's creative evolution and a staple symbol of status in the market.

"The series capitalizes on the idea of Medusa's talking head' to publish new content that relates to the journey of women both in fashion industry and in the world, in general," she said.

### *A compilation video for Medusa Power Talks*

Short videos featuring insights from select participants debuted on Versace's social media, including YouTube, on March 30 and 31. Each includes brief thoughts about empowerment and different definitions of strength.

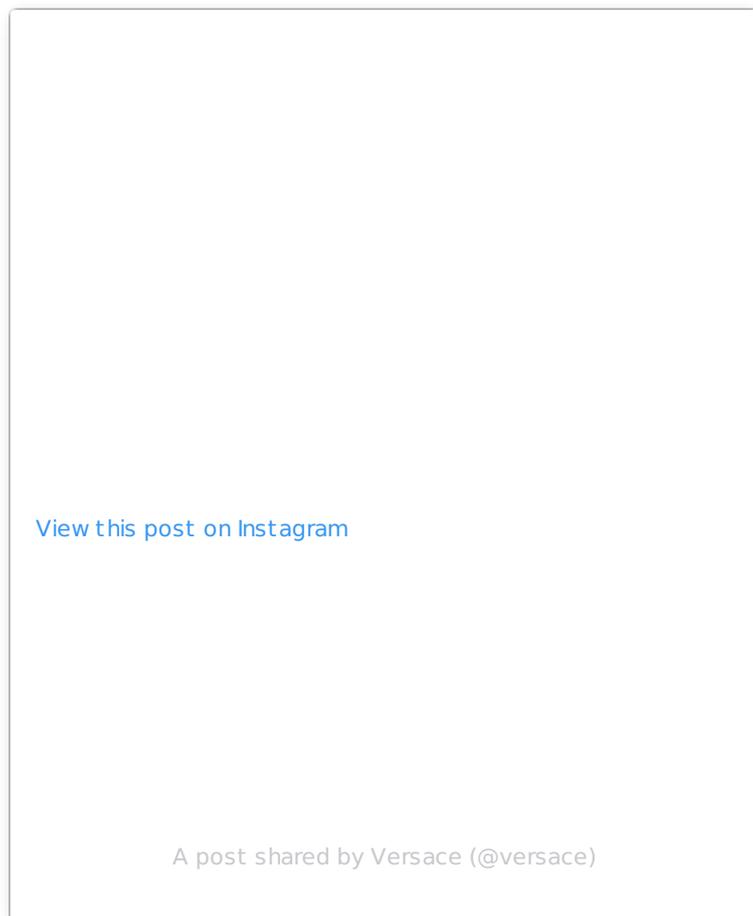
While some including Ms. Versace, Ms. Shayk and photographer Lucka Ngo see power tied to ambition, others have

their own interpretations.

"When you try to be powerful in the world that has a history of taking your power away, there is always retaliation somewhere in the dark waiting to come out and it's your power that protects you," says actor Indya Moore, who identifies as nonbinary. "When I'm able to learn from my mistakes, when I'm able to be an example of my own lessons that makes me feel powerful."

Some also see power as a unifying force.

"There's power in community building, there's power in friendship, there's power in organizing," says Nialah Edari, an activist who works alongside fellow campaign participant Chelsea Miller. The two women are cofounders of Freedom March NYC, a youth civil rights organization.



### *Donatella Versace shares her thoughts on power*

For the second part of the campaign, a panel discussion will be held on the audio app Clubhouse. No date has been announced, but consumers can sign up for email alerts about the event.

Unlike other apps that provide commenting and direct messaging functions, the only way to communicate on Clubhouse is by voice. Launched last year, the app has attracted already the likes of Louis Vuitton creative director Virgil Abloh, actor Jared Leto and rapper Drake, among other high-profile figures ([see story](#)).

"Clubhouse is an audio platform and has been growing rapidly on a global scale," Ms. Sedari said. "As such, it is the perfect avenue to allow this discussion to grow larger and stronger and to empower as many women as possible all over the world by focusing on substance rather than artificial notions of beauty, wealth or exclusivity."

### Powerful conversations

This season, other luxury brands have also been focusing on female empowerment in their own interview series.

In March, U.S. footwear label Stuart Weitzman launched "The Shine Series," which features conversations with inspirational figures and leaders about how they let their strength shine through their personal and professional lives. For its inaugural episode, the brand's chief marketing officer Behnaz Ghahramani catches up with the footwear's global spokeswoman and esteemed athlete Serena Williams ([see story](#)).

In another conversational effort, several Chanel ambassadors appeared in a roundtable discussion moderated by Caroline de Maigret after the French label's spring haute couture show ([see story](#)).

This is also not the first time in recent memory that Ms. Versace has appeared alongside friends of the house for a content series.

In "DV TV: Date with Donatella," the creative director "checks in with old friends and makes some new ones" as she curates outfits for a string of celebrities. Featured guests have included model Vittoria Ceretti and mega-influencer Chiara Ferragni ([see story](#)).

Medusa Power Talks, however, is different as it emphasizes more insightful discourse with a diverse group of participants opting for provocative discussion rather than playing up Versace's more playful side.

"The best part of the series is that it is inclusive as it breaks away from any kind of preconceived ideal woman," Ms. Sedari said. "On the contrary, the conversation has already shifted to women of all sizes, colors and beliefs.

"Each one of them is expressing their voice and views via Versace's Medusa Power Talks," she said.

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