

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Armani asks powerful women to reflect on life's "crossroads"

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Tong Yao for Giorgio Armani's "Crossroads" series. Image credit: Giorgio Armani

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Italian fashion label Giorgio Armani is exploring universal themes such as freedom, fate and courage in a new interview series featuring women from around the world.

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In "Crossroads," luminaries including American ballet dancer Misty Copeland, French-British climate activist Ins Leonarduzzi, Japanese actress Nanao Arai and Lebanese television journalist Raya Abirached individually sit down with the brand to answer a series of provocative questions. Giorgio Armani is the latest luxury brand to give notable women a platform to share their thoughts on ambition, feminism and similar topics as a way to thoughtfully engage consumers.

Fate and freedom

Chinese actress Tong Yao stars in the inaugural episode of the "Crossroads" series, which was filmed in early March.

"I believe in fate," Ms. Tong says in her native dialect at the beginning of the short. "But I also believe hard work can influence and change fate."

After a brief introduction with Ms. Tong, the vignette shows the Beijing skyline which both sets the scene and echoes the campaign's global perspective.

Tong Yao discusses her passion for acting

Ms. Tong, who has found success in television and film, elaborates on her pivotal decision to pursue acting after starting out as a dancer. Regardless of her professional achievements, she finds fulfillment in the process and plans to continue acting for years to come.

"This profession makes feel I've found my own love for life," Ms. Tong says.

She explains that she pushes herself professionally by playing different and unexpected characters, expressing a desire to experiment in roles that she has not tried before. The vignette alternates footage of the actor in an interview

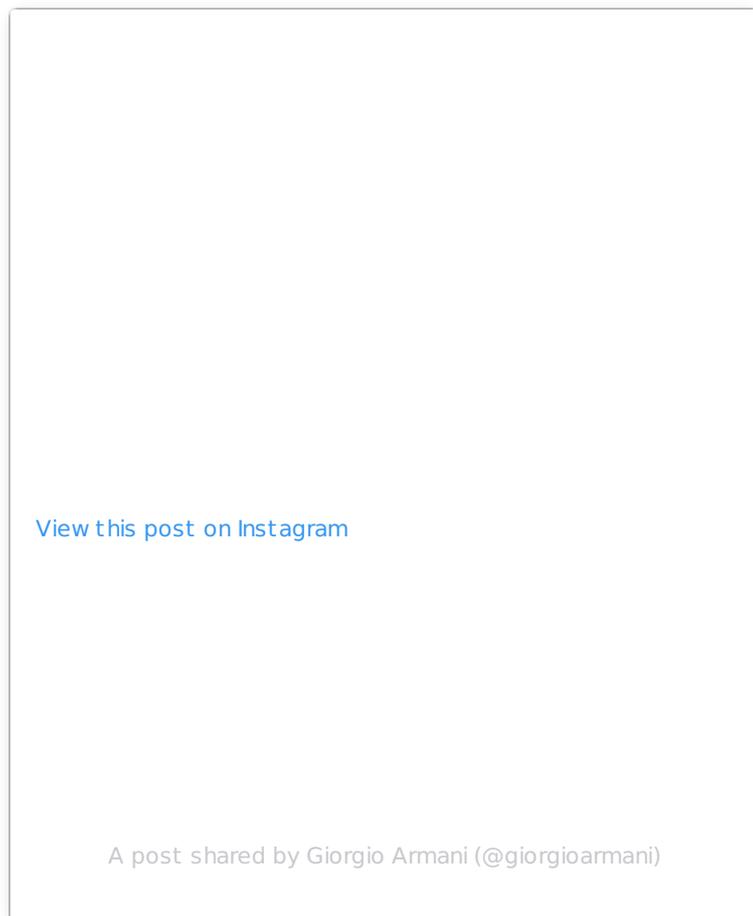
with scenes of her dressed up in a red gown at the cinema.

Ms. Tong also believes she has achieved a strong balance with her work and personal life, prioritizing studying and travel when she is not acting.

"I think freedom means you won't let others' opinions affect you and become your burden," Ms. Tong says. "You will have your own standards about elegance.

"I think it's a state of composure and confidence you exhibit after what you've experienced in your life," she says. "Freedom is also a part of this."

The short ends with Ms. Tong reiterating that modern women can be independent while pursuing beauty in life.



Ins Leonarduzziis the second of 14 women to appear in the series

In total, Crossroads will feature 14 women with each trailblazer appearing in her own episode. The second episode takes viewers to Paris to meet with Ms. Leonarduzzi and a third episode to be revealed on April 14 is set in Berlin with German actress Sibel Kekilli.

Among the women included in the project are Italian author Chiara Barzini, Russian actress Yuliya Snigir and Brazilian model Celina Locks. While the remaining premiere dates have not been announced, the campaign is set to conclude with an episode starring Polish-Italian actress Kasia Smutniak.

Let's talk about it

Giorgio Armani has not shied away from celebrating individuality and femininity in campaign efforts.

Last fall, the brand tapped American actress Adria Arjona stars in an adventurous campaign for the launch of the fragrance My Way. The multichannel effort touched on themes such as memories and cultural exploration ([see story](#)).

Armani also joins other brands that have recently been highlighting insightful conversations, rather than sharing narratives centered around luxury goods.

For a recent series on empowerment, Italian fashion house Versace recruited influential and emerging leaders in fashion and activism.

Models Irina Shayk, Precious Lee and other public figures joined chief creative officer Donatella Versace for

"Medusa Power Talks." In brief videos, each participant shared thoughts on strength and ambition ([see story](#)).

In March, French fashion house Christian Dior continued its celebration of passionate and impactful women around the world with another release of its #DiorChinUp effort, coinciding with Women's History Month.

Dior has historically pursued the idea of femininity, strength and the influence of women on the brand. Inspired by the women of its own history, Dior Parfums has released the second installment of its #DiorStandsWithWomen #DiorChinUp campaign, a series of short video portraits of several women ([see story](#)).

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