

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Japanese streetwear pioneer Nigo to lead Kenzo

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Streetwear designer Nigo is the new artistic director at Kenzo. Image credit: LVMH

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

French fashion label Kenzo is embracing its Japanese heritage and contemporary streetwear sensibilities with the appointment of a new artistic director, Nigo.

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The designer, born Tomoaki Nagao, will take the helm at the LVMH-owned label on Sept. 20. He becomes the first Japanese designer to serve as the label's artistic director since its founder, Kenzo Takada.

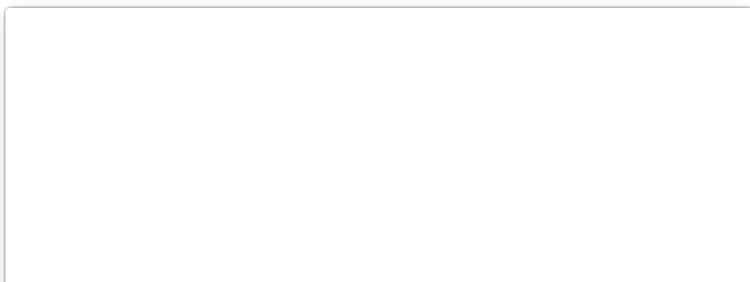
"I am very happy to welcome Nigo as the artistic director of the Maison Kenzo," said Sidney Toledano, chairman and CEO of the **LVMH** Fashion Group and member of the LVMH Executive Committee, in a statement.

"The arrival of an extremely talented Japanese designer will allow us to write a new page in the history of the house that Takada Kenzo founded," he said. "I am convinced that the creativity and innovation of Nigo as well as his attachment to the history of the house will fully express all the potential of Kenzo."

Fashionable connections

Nigo was born in 1970, the same year Mr. Takada opened his first modest store in Paris. Both men also graduated from the same school, Tokyo's Bunka Fashion College.

By 1993, Kenzo was joining the LVMH Group while Nigo was starting his first independent clothing label, A Bathing Ape, in Tokyo. Known colloquially as Bape, the brand went on to establish Nigo as one of the most influential voices in global street culture and design.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by (@nigo)

Nigo collaborated with Louis Vuitton in 2020

"Kenzo san's approach to creating originality was through his understanding of many different cultures," Nigo said in a statement. "It is also the essence of my own philosophy of creativity."

Ultimately, Mr. Takada retired from his label in 1999 and maintained close relationships with his successors while pursuing other creative endeavors. He passed away in October 2020 from COVID-19 complications ([see story](#)).

At [Kenzo](#), Nigo is succeeding Felipe Oliveira Baptista, who departed the label after two years as creative director ([see story](#)).

Before joining LVMH and Kenzo, Nigo who is known for his fashion and musical collaborations worked with Louis Vuitton's Virgil Abloh to create a capsule collection in 2020.

"Inheriting the spirit of Kenzo san's craftsmanship to create a new Kenzo is the greatest challenge of my 30-year career, which I intend to achieve together with the team," Nigo said. "Finally, I would like to thank Bernard Arnault and Sidney Toledano for giving me this wonderful opportunity."

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