

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Miu Miu explores social inequality through latest Women's Tales film

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Natasha Lyonne is featured in Janicza Bravo's new short film for Miu Miu. Image credit: Miu Miu

By NORA HOWE

Prada-owned fashion house Miu Miu has released the 23rd commission from its Women's Tales series, examining the power dynamics of race, gender and class through cinema.

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Directed by Janicza Bravo and starring Kelsey Lu, Natasha Lyonne, Pedro Pascal, Katherine Waterston and Poorna Jagannathan, "House Comes With A Bird" follows a sequence of encounters, each one depicting various forms of social imbalance. For more than a decade, Miu Miu's Women's Tales project has highlighted women in film, underscoring the brand's values founded on feminism.

"Miu Miu continues to create thought-provoking short films of Women's Tales that are intended for the viewer to think, to consider, to evaluate to extract their reactions and positions on the topics covered," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO of [ARTful Communication](#), New York.

"They invite people to layer their reactions and or points of view onto their stories as expressed through their locations, structures, characters, and conversations spoken, visual and melodic," she said. "Their approach is poetic one must look and listen closely to the messages being expressed."

House Comes With A Bird

The nearly 15-minute short film opens on Ms. Lyonne's character, Penn, inside her mid-century modern-style Los Angeles home.

Wearing a striking beige and gold embellished ensemble, Penn puts on her crystal-studded heels while providing arrogant instructions about the house to a young woman, Jean.

She tells Jean to use intuition to place flower bouquets and to eat outside of the house to avoid lingering smells.

Meanwhile, a colorful macaw paces anxiously inside its cage in the living room. Throughout the film, Ms. Bravo uses the literally caged bird to symbolize how many people are ostensibly caged in life.

"Miu Miu is not asking the audience to accept what they are sharing as the right point of view, rather allowing them to

assess it from perhaps a different perspective one not yet explored," Ms. Miller said. "They resonate well with audiences that desire and seek self-expression in their work, lifestyles, personas and social values."

Jean sits in a sun-drenched corner of the home, playing cello, as she awaits prospective home buyers. Ms. Lu, who plays Jean, made her acting debut with the film, is a trained cellist and singer.

Her first visitor is a young man, portrayed by Mr. Pascal, who makes odd remarks centered on his presumed fragile state of masculinity.

A couple visits the home next, played by Ms. Waterston and Ms. Jagannathan. They are immediately bothered by the walk from the street and comment on the house's odor upon walking through the front door.

The two exude a sense of entitlement or arrogance, especially when speaking to Jean.

The short film ends with Jean at the piano, singing a slow, stripped-down version of Frank Sinatra's "It Had To Be You."

"There is a gallery-like feeling to the overall mood of the short film as if one were seated in a museum quietly watching a film on a special exhibit with a soulful instrument playing in the background a calming supportive dimension. Informing, not posturing," Ms. Miller said.

In addition to the cinematic piece, Miu Miu documented an interview with Ms. Bravo, who shared her approach to Miu Miu's Women's Tales piece, describing it as a confluence of text and clothing.

A New York native based in Los Angeles, Ms. Bravo is a director, producer and screenwriter known for *Gregory Go Boom*, winner of the short-film jury award at Sundance Film Festival, *Lemon* and *Zola*.

Director Janicza Bravo shares her approach to this creative project

"House Comes With a Bird" premiered at Neuhouse in Los Angeles on March 23. As with all of the Women's Tales vignettes, the film showcases a wardrobe of Miu Miu pieces from various collections.

Women in film

As a brand focused on lifting the voices of women and other underrepresented groups, Miu Miu continues to challenge audiences to understand the complexities of femininity, consider their place in society and contemplate how they can change the world for a better future all through the lens of fashion and creativity.

In its 21st commissioned film of the Women's Tales series, Miu Miu illustrated the triumphs of love amid anti-miscegenation laws, with director Isabel Sandoval starring in the film.

"Shangri-La" takes consumers into the past, where Americans are living through the Great Depression and interracial marriage is illegal in California.

The film depicts an interracial couple sharing a pure but forbidden love in a time of racist policies. It opens with a note explaining how, from 1850 to 1948, California held an anti-miscegenation statute that banned interracial marriage ([see story](#)).

The 18th commissioned film in the brand's ongoing series, "Brigitte," featured both conversations with photographer Brigitte Lacombe and footage of her at work capturing shots of subjects she is closely connected to. The documentary-style film was a departure from the typically fictional Women's Tales narratives, taking the series' exploration of vanity and femininity into a different genre ([see story](#)).

"Miu Miu's aesthetic is a juxtaposition of vintage allure expressed through its fashion collections and sensibility to relevant topics," Ms. Miller said. "The brand's values are clearly expressed in the content, execution and continuity of their ongoing series celebrating women in every walk of life mentally, physically and sensitively both internally and externally."