

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Giorgio Armani explores self-love, freedom in Crossroads' season two

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Since 2021, Armani's "Crossroads" series serves as a platform for women. Image credit: Giorgio Armani

By NORA HOWE

Italian fashion house Giorgio Armani has launched the second season of its Crossroads project spotlighting women who continue to carve a path for diversity in fashion.

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The brand debuted "Crossroads" last year as a way to offer notable women a platform to share their thoughts on ambition and feminism ([see story](#)). The second season of the series explores the tenacity it takes to defy social conventions, featuring 12 women who share the inspiration, challenges and decisions behind their personal and professional growth.

"Fashion is and always will be at the epicenter of motivating change," said Dalia Strum, founder of Rethink Connect and professor at The Fashion Institute of Technology, New York. "Culture, diversity and a strong view of the world have always had an influence within the industry.

"Brands understand the importance of addressing change in order to maintain a strong alignment with their consumer base."

Beyond the crossroads

For this season's first interview, the brand met Brazilian model Valentina Sampaio for coffee at Milan's iconic Bar Basso where she revealed moments of vulnerability throughout her modeling career.

Ms. Sampaio was the first transgender person on the cover of *Vogue* a milestone for the LGBTQ+ community.

When she first started in the fashion industry, agents told her that she would likely never work with top brands the irony of which is palpable as she sits with a famed Italian house.

Ms. Sampaio had not initially entered the fashion world with the intention of modeling, but posed for her peers at school and fell in love with the work. It was not until her first paid modeling experience that she realized the obstacles she would face.

"My first paid job as a model was a really traumatic experience," she says in the film. "I was on set, full hair and

makeup and the clients suddenly fired me because I was a trans person."

Ms. Sampaio shares the challenges of being a trans person in fashion

Her major crossroads moment was when she legally changed her name, and people recognized her as Valentina a woman.

"The fashion business can be quite tough," she admits. "You have to stay strong, stand up for yourself and be the first to love and respect yourself with all your heart."

The second episode of "Crossroads" spotlights Italian actress Matilda De Angelis, who won the Nastro d'Argento Biraghi, or Silver Ribbon Award, for her role in the film *Italian Race*. Last year, she took home the David di Donatello prize as best supporting actress in *Rose Island*.

In 2020, she landed her first international role in HBO's successful miniseries "The Undoing" performing alongside Nicole Kidman and Hugh Grant.

Giorgio Armani spoke with her about freedom and overcoming one's fears, as well as her relationship with her dog, Mir.

Her career in entertainment did begin on the stage, but she did not plan for one in acting. Her first audition was for music, which successfully landed her a spot touring with a band.

"Freedom is much about courage," she says. "One always thinks the opposite of love is hate, but it is fear."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Giorgio Armani (@giorgioarmani)

Ms. De Angelis relies on her dog, Mir, to keep her grounded

In a business with endless ebbs and flows, her dog has always remained a constant for her an anchor. She describes her relationship with Mir as healing.

The brand will release 10 more episodes from season two through mid-June featuring Gugu Mbatha Raw, Yasmine Baker, Vicky Lau, Kristina Lunz, Ayaka Miyoshi, Kim Young-Shin, Aurlie Dupont, Mai Zi and Maria Taylor.

Women in focus

Brands continue using cinematic channels and reflective storytelling to highlight women.

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

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 ([see story](#)).

Last month, French luxury conglomerate Kering announced photographer, filmmaker, artist and author Babette Mangolte as the recipient of the 2022 "Women In Motion" Award for Photography.

Since launching at the Cannes Film Festival in 2015, "Women in Motion" has highlighted the creativity and uniqueness of women around the world in the fields of arts and culture. On July 5 at the Thtre Antique d'Arles, Kering and the Rencontres d'Arles will present the award to Ms. Mangolte, who will present her work and share with an audience her thoughts on women in photography ([see story](#)).

"More designers are starting to understand the value of inclusivity from body types, sizes, styles and are exploring opportunities to become more inclusive," Ms. Strum said. "There's movement in this process daily."

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