

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dior uplifts historic muses in educational vignette

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Christian Dior and one of his muses, Mizza Bricard. Image credit: Dior

By SARAH RAMIREZ

French fashion house Christian Dior is revealing how it is honoring the women who shaped the maison with its fall 2022 collection.

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In a corresponding campaign film, the Dior team touches on the relationships founder Christian Dior had with several women, from family members to employees, and how their personalities are still reflected in the label's contemporary designs. The historical context illuminates and adds gravitas to the newest Dior collection.

"This campaign focuses on the importance of women in the life of Christian Dior," said Thoma Serdari, director of fashion and luxury MBA at NYU Stern and author of *Rethinking Luxury Fashion*, New York.

"However, rather than recounting the designer's famed life story, the campaign exemplifies how these relationships are actually part of the French maison's heritage," she said. "While Dior himself was the exterior of the brand, the women behind the scenes were the true architects of the Dior phenomenon that swept 20th century fashion."

Women of Dior

Dior artistic director Maria Grazia Chiuri opens the vignette with a sit-down interview, revealing the inspiration for the collection came from *Miss Dior: A Story of Courage and Couture*. The 2021 biography by British fashion writer Justine Picardie examines the life and legacy of Catherine Dior, the youngest sister of the house founder.

"Many women in Dior's life played a role in building the brand," Ms. Chiuri says in the film, with sketches from the fall 2022 collection behind her.

The influence of Catherine Dior, Mizza Bricard, Andre Brossin de Mr and others is still felt at Dior

B-roll shows Ms. Picardie in the atelier pouring over materials, while archival footage reveals Mr. Dior at work in his studio, fitting and sketching designs.

Archivists also speak in the film, delicately holding rare photographs and documents that illuminate the life and style of Mr. Dior. For instance, she explains that Mr. Dior's mother, Madeline, liked to wear big hats, and the accessory

became important to the designer.

Mr. Dior and his youngest sister also shared a love for gardening and flowers, which helped inspire the iconic Miss Dior fragrance itself named after Catherine's nickname.

The third highly influential woman discussed is Raymonde Zehnacker, who worked closely with Mr. Dior as a business partner and oversaw his runway shows. Meanwhile, Marguerite Carr served as his "right-hand woman for couture" according to Dior researchers.

"She was the only woman capable of taking the drawings of Monsieur Dior and distributing them correctly to the heads of the ateliers, who themselves were capable of choosing a canvas that capture the full expression of the design," one of the researchers says of Ms. Carr.

Mizza Bricard was another of Mr. Dior's muses, influencing his style and speaking up when a piece did not meet her glamorous standards. The designer dedicated his leopard print gown to Ms. Bricard, and the dress was reimagined for the fall 2022 collection.

Print designer Andre Brossin de Mr also had a close relationship with Mr. Dior, illustrating many of the motifs he envisioned. The collection's blue rose gown was dedicated to the illustrator, honoring her original rose print in red and maroon hues.

"I like to imagine that all these women, with all their differences, could work together in the great Dior community and support each other," Ms. Chiuri says.

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