

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Kenzo drives new creative direction in latest campaign

August 9, 2022



"Urban Uniforms", Kenzo's aptly titled fall/winter 2022 campaign, reflects a warm embrace of the Japanese and French house's own detailed history.

By AMIRAH KEATON

French fashion label Kenzo is signaling a renewed artistic vision with its latest campaign and collection, marking a new day at the maison.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 [Save \\$246 ▶](#)

An extensive brand history rooted in dual regions provides the foundation of inspiration informing new creative director Nigo's proposals for Kenzo, the luxury label of which he has found himself at the helm. The LVMH-backed brand's latest release introduces Nigo's novel "Real-to-Wear" collection, his first subsequent the passing of founder Kenzo Takada and the departure of former artistic lead Felipe Oliveira Baptista, cluing the fashion world in on how the iconic brand plans to raise its relevance.

"Kenzo has become known for their bold prints and playfulness," said Caitlin Burke, stylist and creative at [Caitlin Burke](#), New York.

"Infusing the authoritarian feel of uniform dressing and military influence feels like a fresh contrast, which Nigo has managed to pull off while still staying true to the Kenzo DNA."

Ms. Burke is not affiliated with Kenzo, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

New beginnings

Kenzo's aptly titled fall/winter 2022 campaign reflects a warm embrace of the house's own detailed history.

Fronting the Eastern and Western-fused approach to tailoring featured during a star-studded January presentation at Galerie Vivenne, "Urban Uniforms" is led by strong themes of travel and tourism. In a campaign video set at the base of the Eiffel Tower, the brand's Parisian heritage can hardly be ignored.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by KENZO (@kenzo)

In a starting shot, ethereal piano tones frame a diverse set of models stagnantly surrounding a taxi cab. Donning layered looks, the models are each main characters in their own right, per individual videography which capture their confident, light gaits and level expressions.

Throughout this collection, nostalgic references overlay military-style garb, as reclaimed classics like a bomber jacket with French monuments etched into the back as well as a beret with "1976" embroidered in a nod to Kenzo's founding region and year make their way down city streets.

The designer puts carefully considered updates to work, defining a contemporary narrative in complimentary campaign imagery.

Once cameos culminate, the clip ends in a clustered jog from the global group, the collection's bright hues popping against public walls of neutral tones, leaving one to wonder whether the juxtaposition is intentional or serendipitous in nature.

Available in khaki, rouge and blue varieties, the brand has found particular resonance in a collection sub-category it calls "Jungle Camo," a distinctive set of self-referential prints which meld camouflage and Kenzo's own Jungle-inspired 1976 iconography.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by KENZO (@kenzo)

In a fashion similar to the aforementioned video, a visual nestled upon one of Kenzo's social feeds centers a male model against a blank background, illuminating standout collection pieces and using contrast to do so.

"You'll find Kenzo where Japan meets Paris," reads its caption.

Tumult to triumph

While the level of refreshed relevance that Kenzo seems to seek with this new strategy remains to be seen, the company's future appears bright.

The departure of the brand's former artistic lead in July of last year after a decidedly short stint as creative director delivered a unique set of challenges ([see story](#)). After a particularly tumultuous period though, the decision to move forward with Nigo was well received.

The brand prioritized both its Japanese heritage and contemporary streetwear sensibilities by opting for the designer, born Tomoaki Nagao. In assuming the role, he became the first Japanese designer to serve as the label's artistic director since its founder ([see story](#)).

Notably, as part of his debut collection, Nigo created a new motif for the brand using Mr. Takada's original sketches. The archival reference, a perfect blend of past and present, can be observed across various collection accessories.

"Pinterest has made massive improvements to their algorithm and it's helping to drive the research and discovery for vintage references," Ms. Burke said.

"With trends being so vast and cyclical these days, I think designers are looking for something that feels more grounded and rooted in history, and there's an intense thirst for nostalgia."

© 2022 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.