

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Balmain glimpses into the future with cutting-edge sneaker design

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Creative director Olivier Rousteing has brought his own futuristic spin to the chunky sneaker trend, with the launch of the Balmain Unicorn. Image credit: Balmain

By AMIRAH KEATON

French fashion label Balmain is exploring what lies ahead with a new modern shoe design, backed by a strategic editorial partnership.

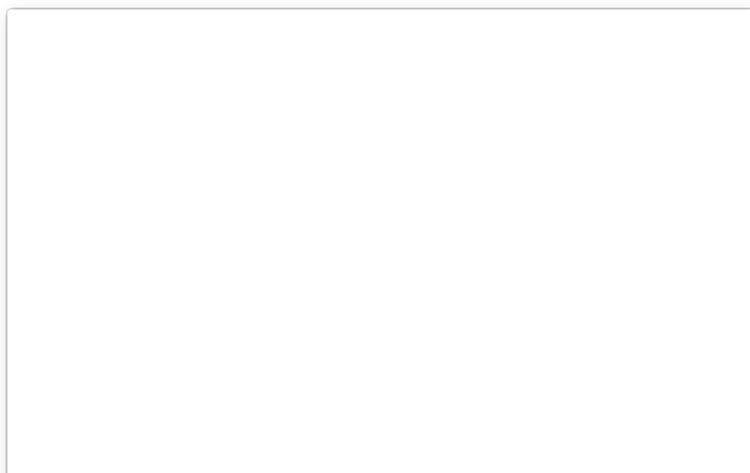
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Creative director Olivier Rousteing has brought his own futuristic spin to the chunky sneaker trend, with the launch of the Balmain Unicorn. The brand is celebrating the style with #BalmainArmy inductees who can be found wearing the athleisure accessory in the latest edition of Wonderland China.

Intergalactic Army

Balmain is back with both a cutting-edge menswear offering and out-of-this-world visuals to match.

Wonderland China, a regional subsidiary of the independently published global title, presents #BalmainUnicorn using space-age imagery that melds digital and physical realms. The campaign features international singers, rappers and Extreme Sports stars, complete with avatars fit for the metaverse.



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Campaign images shot by Momochen exude the imaginative mystery of science fiction, as celestial terrain backs its subjects. Creatives Cuicui and Henry Sankho are responsible for styling the collaboration and selecting pieces that compliment the low-top Unicorn's specific silhouette.

The two-minute spot combines a dramatic storyline with an innovative virtual and real-life roster, as advanced graphics make it difficult to tell between the two.

The video begins by tracking its animated protagonist down a busy city street, which halts to a standstill before launching viewers into the ether, bringing a Balmain-branded spaceship into view.

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Aboard the aircraft, a transient cyber-being is first to sport the sneakers before the clip pans to a group shot of stars overlooking this new world, all wearing Balmain Unicorn shoes.

Arguably, most notable is the launch's reliance on a bevy of A-list talent, distinct in vocation and striking in the degree of varied interests.

Japanese-American singer and model Mika Hashizume, Chinese idol Bo Yuan and Thai-German actor and singer Patrick Nattawat Finkler make up the luxury brand's most recent #BalmainArmy roster.

The bulk of the video's action involves an intergalactic tour of sorts a ship carries the cast's main character to other non-Earthly domains, the commonality between these realms rooted in the presence of Mr. Rousteing's unique design.

A snow-laden surface below the traveling ship features two figures trekking in their footwear. An oasis of flowing water and mountainous land shows space citizens rocking the Unicorn shoe.

Multiple foreign fields are frequented before the lens makes its cyclical Earthy return to the same city streets from the video's start.

Forward-looking fashion

Balmain stands out as one of the only heritage brands readily embracing metaverse and Web3 technologies.

France's Balmain was among the first luxury label to embrace Non-fungible tokens (NFTs), and as discussed during [Vogue Business and eBay's Technology Forum](#) "Fashion's Web3 Future" on May 26, the brand has found immense success with NFTs because of its methodical approach. Txampi Diz, chief marketing officer of [Balmain](#), explained that NFTs must reflect brand ethos and initiatives and offer connecting digital and physical experiences in order to truly make a mark ([see story](#)).

The label also collaborated with Mattel and Barbie for the toy manufacturer's first venture into the digital art world, releasing three one-of-a-kind Barbie x Balmain NFTs which were sold at auction through Mattel Creations, as well as a ready-to-wear line. A bespoke set of Barbie x Balmain looks was tied to each NFT ([see story](#)).

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