

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Valentino, Thebe Magugu stretch imaginations with collaborative reinterpretation

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Valentino and Thebe Magugu swap visions in "2 Designers Transform Each Other's Work." Image Credit: Vogue

By AMIRAH KEATON

Italian fashion label Valentino and South African fashion brand Thebe Magugu are reaching across the aisle, in a new collaborative collection reimagining executed in partnership with *Vogue*.

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In the film "2 Designers Transform Each Other's Work," Valentino creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli and designer Thebe Magugu swap visions, each reworking a garment from the other's label. The couture undertaking of grand proportion represents a melding of the minds, showcasing the best luxury can offer when two creatives come together in the name of color.

A vision in pink

The designer duo rises to *Vogue's* latest occasion by producing two pieces in their own distinct styles in a new video published by the legacy outlet.

The multifaceted clip begins with reflections from Mr. Magugu, who expresses gratitude for the partnership at hand.

"I think the concept of reworking and reinterpreting another designer's work is very exciting," Mr. Magugu says amid his sketches and studio.

Mr. Piccioli and Mr. Magugu join Vogue for a designer swap

Mr. Piccioli expresses a similar sentiment, viewing the opportunity as a perfect moment between separate identities and cultures. Individual interviews from the designers are interspersed between footage of workshop shots and model fittings.

The 13-minute digital tribute transitions first to Johannesburg, where Mr. Magugu receives the Valentino garment he will be tasked with flipping. He expresses hesitation, presumably for the breadth of the assignment, before stating definitively that the garment appears to be his favorite color, as a bright fuschia shines through quickly unearthed packaging.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Thebe Magugu (@thebemagugu)

An emotional scene ensues, as its primary character reveals that the garment selection was hidden, even from him. Its properties were revealed upon arrival the piece, pulled from Valentino's fall/winter 2018 haute couture collection, and originally worn by actress Tracee Ellis Ross, takes the form of an off-shoulder silk-taffeta plisse-waist dress.

Taffeta and tulle are torn apart as the designer comments on the level of craftsmanship involved with the piece. The dress involves many layers of fine fabric, supported by layers of structure.

Mr. Magugu leads his team through his tactile process while speaking to the inspiration for a collaboration of this nature. Rooted in a push to address overproduction, the project proposes that in lieu of making new things, designers look for things that can be made anew instead.

The video moves to its next location in Rome, where Valentino's artistic lead is shown investigating the piece from his peer: a pea-green pantsuit with curved white graphics.

"The look that Thebe sent me was [a] very classic, contemporary suit, done with the blankets from his history, his heritage," muses Mr. Piccioli, as he manipulates pen on paper, crafting the garment's next iteration.

His quiet creativity follows, on display aside a team of couturiers, masked and robbed. They prick, prod and pull, thread and needle atop inches of fabric.

The creative director also reveals that his fellow designer sent a letter with his pick. Without going into extensive detail, Mr. Piccioli lays out his goal of infusing Mr. Magugu's background with his own Roman roots.

Overtones of self-expression and staying true to self dominate *Vogue's* clip, as each creative is shown hard at work on the designer swap, in scenes mimicking the infamous challenges of popular "Project Runway" programming. The video progresses to offer an in-depth behind-the-scenes look at the development of the upcycled wear at hand.

The final result? For Mr. Magugu's recreation, the Valentino gown is transformed into an elevated trench coat with puffed sleeves.

Garment tulle was hand-dyed into Valentino's classic PP Pink and molded into a sheer flared pant and frill-neck top. The crown, emblematic of crowns worn in Mr. Magugu's culture, carries the house's iconic "V" in pink, constructed from a supporting corset transferred over from the original dress.

From one empowering silhouette to another, Mr. Piccioli shapeshifts his partner's work into an elaborate cape, fastened with a silver button and placed upon a pink collared top and tailored slacks of the same pastel green variety

as its royal adornment.

The clip wraps with a video call in conversation form between the two collaborators, each offering their admiration and future hopes stemming from the partnership, before the designer's models present each piece, in the studio and in front of the city skyline, respectively.

Upcycled undertakings

Valentino and Thebe Magugu's sustainable approach to design stands out, amid an industry struggling to save the planet.

Brands like Italian fashion label Max Mara are following suit, doing its part to foster the future of fashion through its The Cube with Cameluxe collection, where it used excess camelhair fabric from Max Mara coats to create additional products ([see story](#)).

Even *Vogue's* parent company recognizes the urgent need for change. Cond Nast announced that moving forward, the publisher will only accept advertisements from energy companies that promote renewable energy products and technologies or support the transition to renewable energy and environmentally-friendly solutions ([see story](#)).

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