

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Balenciaga, Adidas sport stock market chic for spring

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The capsule, which debuted in a viral runway show hosted at the NYSE in May, is now available for purchase. Image credit: Balenciaga

By AMIRAH KEATON

French fashion house Balenciaga is back with a new campaign, wherein knife boots, office views and Stan Smiths are involved.

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The brand's spring 2023 collection is marked by a collaboration with global sportswear force Adidas. Model Bella Hadid, American boxer Jermell Charlo, French actress Isabelle Hupert, and others featured in new campaign imagery join the pair to showcase the seasonal styles.

"The brand has been all about contrast recently: ultra luxe couture vs. gritty street elements, A-list celebrities vs. avant-garde glamor, and much more," said Scott Shapiro, fashion editor, stylist and editor-in-chief of [Phosphenes](#), New York.

"So it comes as no surprise to see sporty styles in a professional setting in these images," he said. "Whether it's the brand's sense of humor and irony under Demna's direction or the literal expression of the pieces' versatility regardless of setting, the imagery feels spot on for Balenciaga."

Mr. Shapiro is not affiliated with Balenciaga, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

"Balenciaga / adidas"

A new luxury capsule collection melds two sets of iconography with ease, as Adidas' signature three stripes come to life upon modern Balenciaga silhouettes.

Notorious for using one strategic approach to shine a light on each individual drop, upon rollout, the brand saves its social space to promote campaign creative. In typical digital fashion, Balenciaga refreshed its Instagram grid on the morning of Nov. 3., opting for one set of six assets in particular.

Across this band of images, aspirational figures don less-than-affable expressions. This time, its cast wears the spring 2023 "Balenciaga / adidas" collection.



Boxer Jemell Charlo wears the brand's latest in a new campaign. Image credit: Balenciaga

Its debut during Balenciaga's May runway show, staged at the New York Stock Exchange, was the subject of much buzz earlier this year.

"Balenciaga's collaborations have all been quite seamless lately, this one probably the most out of any," Mr. Shapiro said.

"The brand has already mastered some sportier styles in recent collections, so collaborating with a sportswear powerhouse like Adidas makes tons of sense."

Facing the camera deadpan dressed in luxury gear, Ms. Hadid is seen in an oversized red-and-white striped jersey, black-and-white track pants and stiletto heels. In another shot, Ms. Hupert hovers over a chaotic stationary arrangement dressed in a t-shirt from the fused effort.



French actress Isabelle Hupert stars in "Balenciaga / adidas." Image credit: Balenciaga

The serious nature of these models is backed by unconventional scenery.

Known for building out elaborate sets to support his designs, Demna Gvasalia's selection, a corner office in a city high-rise, initially strikes as fairly mundane. Upending the brutalist design pictured through the windows is a nonconventional clothing capsule, it's setting representative of the last place that some believe athleisure to belong.

Placing items in these formal settings directly challenges narratives about the role of casual wear, signaling a blending of professional and personal realms not unlike that of its May show.

"Adding an Adidas logo to Balenciaga signature items is a perfect representation of the high/low' aesthetic Demna has perfected at the house."

Balenciaga branches out

Balenciaga is no stranger to reaching across the aisle.

The brand's ability to meet in the middle stylistically, paired with its keen cultural eye, has yielded many-an-innovative partnership in the past – its most notable present-day collaboration lies with an Italian maison.



The capsule's "Hourglass Handbag" shown in black and white, with a box calfskin materialization. Image credit: Balenciaga

The Hacker Project presented pieces that merged Gucci and Balenciaga House codes and, in so doing, explored and questioned the ideas of authenticity, counterfeiting and appropriation within the fashion industry ([see story](#)).

Neither of the brands referred to these as collaborations or capsule collections, but rather, as a hack of each other's creative visions and brand heritage.

In turn, Gucci creative director Alessandro Michele "hacked" Balenciaga creative director Demna Gvasalia, swiping a selection of his designs for the "Aria" debut, in celebration of Gucci's 100th anniversary ([see story](#)).

With "Balenciaga / adidas" now for sale, Mr. Gvasalia's is sure to move forward to his next mash-up venture, one that will likely boast a high-level appeal inherent to much of Balenciaga's quirky releases in recent years.



Collaborative iconography. Image credit: Balenciaga

"Aside from the general hype surrounding this collection, which is enough for many luxury consumers to jump on board, the collection still maintains the distinct identities of both of these brands," Mr. Shapiro said.

"I think the regular Balenciaga customer would certainly be into these clever updates to the silhouettes and styles they've already grown to love, while the level of fun and irony in the collection's presentation may even attract additional luxury shoppers."