

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Cher fronts Balmain Blaze' campaign

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The force-of-culture stars in a futuristic campaign spot. Image credit: Balmain

By AMIRAH KEATON

French fashion label Balmain is hoping to elevate a leather goods launch to icon status.

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Of its promotion, creative director Olivier Rousteing is one of few creatives who can cite help from one of the world's most revered entertainers. Built upon the foundation of friendship, Cher harnesses her reach for the brand's Blaze bag.

Balmain x Blaze

Balmain pays homage to the spirit of fearless pioneers using fashion, in a forward-looking campaign.

After tapping the talent for a dynamic fashion week appearance during its September spring/summer 2023 show, the luxury label cements its strategic partnership with singer, actress and entertainer Cher, the force behind the designer's brainchild in bag form.

The brand's leading lady is now back, this time donning a novel accessory in a branded digital video. Its first 30 seconds go without speech.

Deceptive in its tameness, a newspaper falls from the sky to start.

"Breaking News: 8th Wonder Revealed," reads this edition of the brand's fictitious "Balmain Press."

The print's lead photo becomes reality, per the video's next few frames.

Brutalist in nature, light bounces off stark concrete structures as the camera pans across a calm set with anticipatory malaise, before the spot's plot takes a space-aged twist.

Sepia tones and formula-filled screens preface the clip's first Cher appearance. Seated upon a sedimentary throne, the star rises.

At first glance, a full-body suit appears innocuous. Quickly, with a new perspective, viewers realize the garment is supercharged, featuring fonts similar to those on the screens that surround her.

A revelatory perspective exposes a series of wires attached to her head. They disconnect as she sets out on her mission.

Suddenly, the audience is confronted with Cher's sheer presence.



Cher sports a power stance before conjuring visible waves of electric energy. Image credit: Balmain

"Some of us just have more imagination than others," Cher says.

As the star's first and only verbal contribution comes to fruition, so does a Blaze bag, before our very eyes. Like magic, its silhouette is constructed out of lighting-like slivers.

Cher reaches out to touch her new companion as the campaign video comes to a close.

"It" bag equation

With the Blaze, Mr. Rousteing hopes to introduce a new house code to a treasure trove of Balmain archives, as have many a creative director in attempts to strike gold with the creation of luxury's latest "it" bag.

Mr. Rousteing's made-in-Italy calfskin addition features a removable leather strap and gold hardware.

Throughout the clip, Cher wears the line's starting clutch size. Balmain offers one other option just a few inches larger.

Besides black and white colorways in smooth leather or croc-embossing, a metallic option with embroidered satin and pink accents seals the drop. A large house emblem marks its center.

Prices for the trapezoidal crossbody range from \$2,450 to \$3,495.

Balmain brings viewers behind the scenes of the production process for its Blaze bag

The digital portrait paints an interesting picture of the pursuit of a bestseller, a task that comes with increasing pressure for creative directors that fill the ranks of luxury conglomerates.

Italian fashion label Missoni ([see story](#)), Italian fashion label Ferragamo ([see story](#)), Kering-owned Italian fashion house Bottega Veneta ([see story](#)) and Italian fashion house Etro ([see story](#)) are just a few brands that have appointed new talent to the post within this year alone.

Behemoths like LVMH and Kering look to fuel growth with designs that drive what has historically proved itself to be a bestselling category ([see story](#)).