

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Latest '95.22' Dior Lady launch gets boost from feminist author

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Ms. Adichie poses with 95.22, the latest edition of the Lady Dior bag. Image credit: Dior

By MARYBETH CONNAUGHTON

French fashion house Dior has elected Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie to lead its global campaign around the latest edition of its Lady Dior bag.

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To promote the 95.22, a contemporary reinterpretation of the classic purse, the brand's creative director Maria Grazia Chiuri has called upon a number of familiar female faces. The themes of feminism and justice that have made Ms. Adichie's works some of the most celebrated in contemporary literature make her a fitting choice to lead this the female-focused campaign.

Calling all ladies

Born in Enugu, Nigeria in 1977, Ms. Adichie is best known for her debut novel, 2003's *Purple Hibiscus* and its follow-up, *Half a Yellow Sun*, which she cites as her favorite. These and other works have earned her a number of literary awards including the MacArthur Genius Grant in 2008.

It was her essay and subsequent TED Talk called "We Should All Be Feminists" that inspired Ms. Chiuri to design a T-shirt of the same name and include it in her first collection for Dior in 2016.

The author sports that very T-shirt under a suit for her appearance in the Lady Dior campaign's black-and-white print and video spots, both shot by French photographer Brigitte Lacombe.

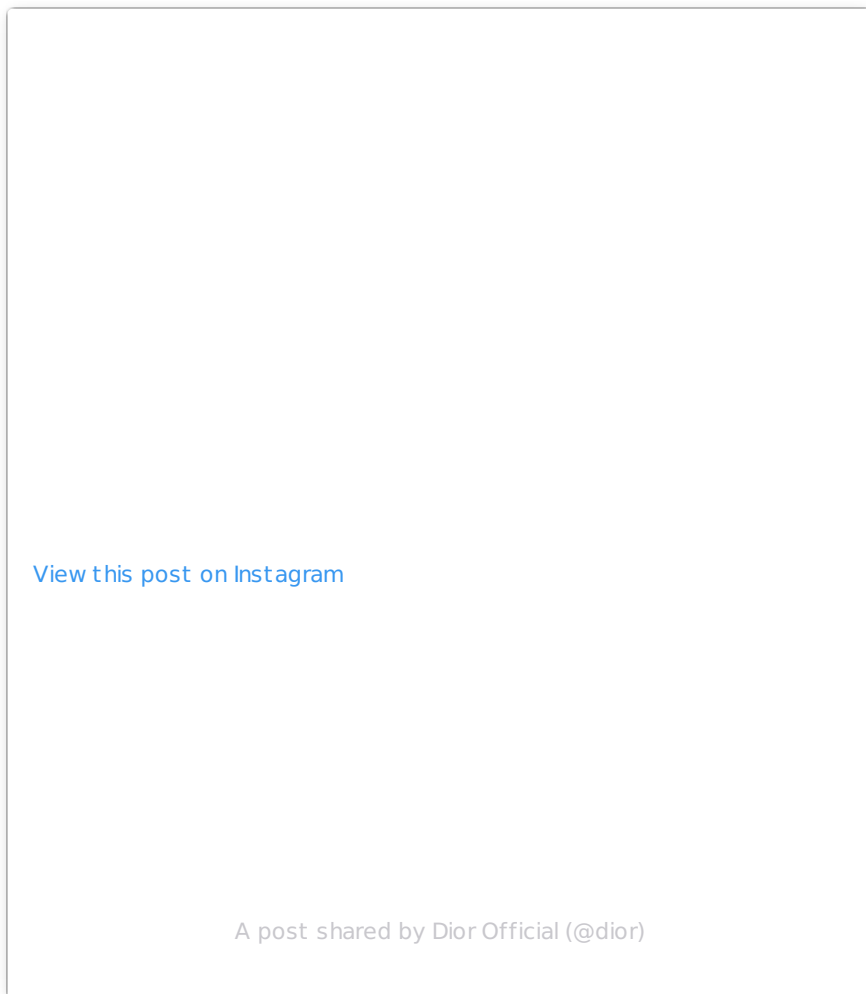
Another author, quintessential American essayist Joan Didion, appears in similarly-styled photos throughout Ms. Lacombe's body of work. She contributed several of them to a group exhibition titled *Joan Didion: What She Means*, which concludes its run at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles next month.

In one promotional video for the campaign, Ms. Adichie counters a pervading myth that women must embody male characteristics in order to be taken seriously.

"Femininity and feminism actually do complement each other. Women should be allowed to have a broad range of what they can be, of who they can be, of how they present themselves. So, I think femininity is one of those options."

When describing how she would style herself around the 95.22 bag, she reiterates that seemingly disparate things can and do co-exist harmoniously.

"There's something timeless about the bag, and I think it would be interesting to juxtapose that with a less timeless outfit. A lot of color, a lot of clashing, a lot of maximalism. And then the bag."



The bag features Dior's signature *cannage* raised quilted pattern and spells the brand's name out in leather detailing on the front.

It is named both for the year it was issued and for the year in which it was revived. The bag was a favorite of Princess Diana's who—once considered the most photographed woman in the world—is given credit for first making the public aware of it and sending its popularity into the stratosphere.

It was reintroduced last fall at the **Dior** women's ready-to-wear show.

Queens of all kinds

Joining Ms. Adichie in this first phase of the campaign is a royal of sorts—Italian journalist, model and fashion influencer Beatrice Borromeo. Descended from Italian nobility, upon marrying her husband Pierre Casiraghi, Ms. Borromeo became tied to the Monegasque royal family. Her husband's uncle is Prince Albert II of Monaco, and his grandmother was actress Grace Kelly.

She, her husband and her sister-in-law Charlotte Casiraghi, have all acted as ambassadors to the brand.

Also expected to appear in the campaign, which will unfold throughout the year, is British actress and fellow Dior ambassador Anya Taylor-Joy, who recently took a noteworthy turn in the Netflix miniseries *The Queen's Gambit*. The actress was most recently seen as the face of Dior's limited-edition beauty collection "Mitzah," which was named for Mr. Dior's muse and house milliner, Mitzah Bricard ([see story](#)).