

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Pharrell Williams to bring cultural clout to Louis Vuitton as brand's new menswear designer

February 17, 2023



*Expect more innovation at the French luxury giant as U.S. musician Pharrell Williams takes over responsibility for helming Louis Vuitton's menswear. Image credit: Louis Vuitton's Instagram*

By [Jing Zhang](#)

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After much speculation on who would succeed the late Virgil Abloh, Louis Vuitton officially welcomed [Pharrell Williams](#) as its new menswear creative director on Feb. 14, with his first collection to be unveiled during Paris Men's Fashion Week this June.

The move shook up the fashion world, with social media already in a frenzy and fans lauding the bold move by Louis Vuitton.

"The way in which he breaks boundaries across the various worlds he explores aligns with Louis Vuitton's status as a cultural maison, reinforcing its values of innovation, pioneer spirit and entrepreneurship," [says the maison on its website](#).

The surprise announcement has been deemed as a bold and exciting move by the French luxury house, the crown jewel of LVMH Group, owned by the world's richest man [Bernard Arnault](#).

This will not be the first time that Williams has worked with the brand. Successful collaborations with Louis Vuitton came in 2004 and 2008, when he worked with then-creative director Marc Jacobs on designing sunglasses.

Since the release of his hit single, 2013's *Happy*, and his work with the songwriting duo The Neptunes, Mr. Williams has risen in prominence as a prolific musician, producer and artist in many genres, efforts that have earned him 13 Grammys. He has also carved out his place as an influential modern cultural maven and style icon by working with artists such as Kendrick Lamar and Takashi Murakami, as well as fashion labels including Adidas, Chanel, Moncler and Comme des Garons.

This Louis Vuitton job is not the multi-hyphenated artist's first serious foray into the fashion industry.

Mr. Williams founded labels Ice Cream Clothing and Billionaire Boys Club with Japanese designer and

DJ/streetwear mogul Nigo, who built the cult label BAPE and is now creative director at Kenzo.

As an entrepreneur, Mr. Williams is well-versed in the global business of art and style. Last year he launched [Joopiter](#), a global digital-first auction house selling his enviable collectibles that he amassed over decades.

"His creative vision beyond fashion will undoubtedly lead Louis Vuitton towards a new and very exciting chapter," said [Pietro Beccari](#), Louis Vuitton's new chairman/CEO, in a statement.

Mr. Williams' appointment will be seen as the first major move by Mr. Beccari who joined the world's most famous luxury fashion house earlier this month, coming from Christian Dior.

Since [Abloh's passing at the end of 2021](#), the question of who would fill his boots at Louis Vuitton had hung over the brand.

As the first African-American man to lead a European luxury maison, [Abloh](#) kicked off an invigorating chapter when the luxury fashion world was treated to a perfect storm of raw talent, design hype and menswear innovation, all the while capturing a broader and more inclusive cultural zeitgeist.

A look back at Mr. Williams illustrious career in music and the visual arts paints a unique picture of a very singular talent. It will also likely lead to longstanding collaborative relationships in the world of fashion.

Now that Mr. Williams is responsible for designing all of Louis Vuitton menswear and men's accessories, as well as overseeing new initiatives and special projects for the brand, we can expect more disruption and innovation at the European heritage label.

Louis Vuitton has managed to stay so relevant and on top of its game via unexpected and industry-defining moves, including Abloh's appointment and its [collaboration with Supreme](#).

Bringing his knack for interdisciplinary creativity and unique stylistic sensibilities, Mr. Williams is expected to make a bold statement from the get-go.

Chinese social media went wild for the news.

A poll on Xiaohongshu found that 71 percent of the 1,148 respondents thought Louis Vuitton's choice was risky for tapping a celebrity "non-designer" for the top job.

Globally, reactions were also mixed for similar reasons. Many fans love the link-up and few question Mr. Williams' status as a modern style guru, but does the appointment also usher in a new era of celebrity designers, as in celebrities who become designers rather than designers who become celebrities?

But Mr. Williams is no ordinary celebrity creatively, he has been globally influential across fields including fashion design. Is fashion finally finding its place within the wider cultural landscape, as opposed to siloing itself in an ivory tower?

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