

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Louis Vuitton platforms pop culture with 'Archlight 2.0' campaign

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Chinese soccer player Sam Li stars among a group of Gen Z celebrities tapped for the Archlight 2.0 campaign. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

French fashion house **Louis Vuitton** is celebrating the pop-culture movement that swept the 2000s, releasing a second rendition of the LV Archlight sneakers.

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References to the fashion and cultural state of the decade are plentiful in the LV Archlight 2.0 collection, from oversized athletic cuts to metallics. Featuring three distinct aesthetics, the brand called on Chinese soccer player Sam Li, and American actors Jaden Smith and Chlo Grace Moretz to be the campaign's talent trifecta, all of which are notably young.

"The interesting thing about having a younger ambassador is that you're not only reaching the age that they naturally are embraced by, but Ms. Moretz, for example, was in *The Peripheral* and there is an audience that would recognize her for that," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder and creative director of **Athleisure Mag**, New York.

"People like seeing items on those that may not be in their exact demographic on paper, but are instead the age that you feel," Ms. Smith said. "There is something to be said to the consumer that is wearing a piece that the campaign has assigned to someone in their 20s.

"But if you carry it off, you will continue to keep an eye out for that brand as well as those ambassadors."

The sneakers can be bought exclusively **online**.

Young and free

The accented sneaker plays up the avant-garde nature of the luxury brand, fusing together heritage craftsmanship with relevance.

For decades the maison has stood at the center of the fashion world, both shaping iconic trends and reinventing them. As athleisure is becoming more popular by the year, including within luxury, Louis Vuitton's participation in the trend speaks to this relevance a point only further driven home by the fact that two Gen Z celebrities and one millennial were chosen to be the faces of the campaign.

The new LV Archlight 2.0

The popular figures make this effort specific to young people, supplemented by the 2000s aesthetic of their youth and the very fact that the drop is an athleisure one a style made popular by the demographic.

The campaign visuals are contemporary as well, centering movement as the camera spins and the figures walk and are constantly on the move. The liveliness of this creative choice points to both playfulness and the mere fact that this is an athletic drop.

"It's a shoe that can be seen wearing core athletic pieces while also being able to be paired with edgy or whimsical elements," Ms. Smith said.

"The sports category is one that really allows you to bring in a number of looks by being true to itself as well as picking up other style genres."



Each varying style shares the chunky platform that dominated fashion scenes in the early 2000s. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

The three celebrities of the campaign showcase three aesthetics LV Mansion, LV Stage and LV Cottage, each of which playing up a different subset of youthful fashion crazes.

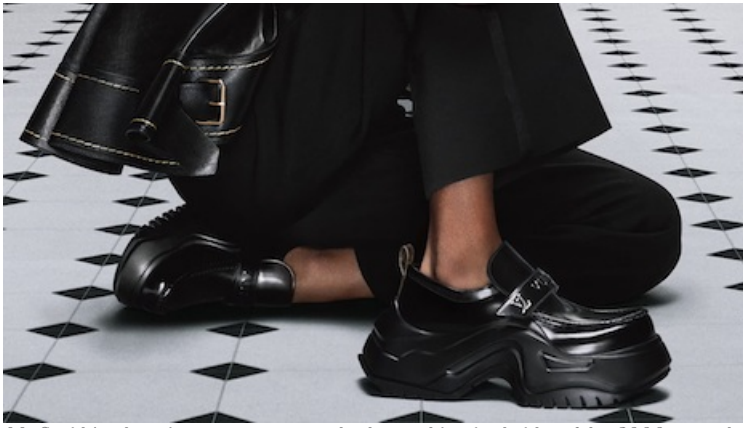
Mr. Li wears the LV Stage, donning futuristic wares and silver hues. As the name suggests, the shoe's silhouette is highly dramatic, featuring the metallic trend that has gained especially firm traction since the early 2000s.



With a metallic trench coat and chunky sneakers, Mr. Li represents the coming together of the past and future. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

Metallics are also a key element in what Gen Z consumers are calling the "y2k aesthetic" a fashion style that pays homage to the highly colorful, whimsical and sparkling looks that were mainly found on the red carpet and popular TV during the beginning of the century. While being a dramatic take on the fashion of the 2000s, it offers a sense of nostalgia for Gen Z and millennials.

Mr. Smith engages in quite a different nod to the era, wearing the LV Mansion a more practical shoe. The ebony leather shoe evokes images of the gothic trends of the 1990s and early 2000s, while also being a sensible silhouette similar to that of loafers (but with a chunky platform, making it more of a stand-out than a work shoe).



Mr. Smith's shoe encompasses the less whimsical side of the 2000s trends, playing into the work culture and gothic movement instead. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

Out of all of the silhouettes, the LV Cottage is by far the most contemporary.

While elements of what Gen Z and millennials call the "cottage-core aesthetic" were popular in the early 2000s (such as peasant blouses and lace), it gained peak popularity during the pandemic in 2020, spurring conversations about societal traditions and work culture.

The fashion trend is essentially an homage to a slower way of living, featuring fairytale cuts such as puffed sleeves and lace-up shirts. With its rise came a new kind of rebellion movement, with young people pushing for purchases, legislation and style choices that would support a more mindful lifestyle (such as four-day work weeks and foraging baskets).



The cottage-core shoe is an original take on a popular trend. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

While athleisure is not typically the vehicle that has been used for the aesthetic, Louis Vuitton is playing up all of the usual cottage-core classics in its visuals from Rococo art to light colors. If anything, the athletic angle plays up the free-spirited appeal that is such an essential part of not only the aesthetic, but the lifestyle that it promotes.

[#ChloeGraceMoretz](#) for [#LVArchlight](#) 2.0. In soft, dreamy hues, the LV Cottage line by [#LouisVuitton](#) combines the iconic structured sole of the original model with contrasting materials and unique textures. Explore the collection at <https://t.co/IINNqpOiBS>
[pic.twitter.com/gRicNV3Mj7](https://t.co/IINNqpOiBS)

Louis Vuitton (@LouisVuitton) [March 19, 2023](#)

Ms. Moretz stands in as the face of the silhouette, sporting the renditions with a lacy dress and romantically-styled hair, surrounded by pastoral paintings.

"I can definitely see a cottage-core dress from Hill House being paired with these sneakers, and it will meet a segment of the market that is looking for a diverse sneaker, or someone who is obsessed with cottage-core but wants to add a bit of edge to it as well," Ms. Smith said.

"It's another way for Louis Vuitton to showcase how they can stay in the forefront of the conversation and to add to their assortment in diverse ways."

Flex appeal

From the choice in models to the trends explored, the campaign is clearly made specifically for young people.

This push seems to be overtaking the luxury industry, as young people not only accumulate enough resources to participate in it, but shape pop-culture with even more force thanks to the power of social media ([see story](#)). They are at the center of society more prominently than they have ever been before, having more of a voice today than in years past.



Louis Vuitton is among the first to combine two strong Gen Z trends—athleisure and cottage-core. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

Swiss watchmaker Audemars Piguet recently veered marketing efforts towards the demographic, releasing a spirited campaign grounded in a sense of wonder and possibilities ([see story](#)). Swiss jeweler Chopard has also hopped on the trend, tapping into the rainbow ([see story](#)).

Louis Vuitton's status as a high-luxury brand and its inclusion of various trends specific to young people place it in an especially strong spot, even among fellow luxury labels.

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