

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Stella McCartney stages summer collection at animal sanctuary

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The brand is out with a campaign celebrating the creatures at The Gentle Barn animal sanctuary, deepening its sustainability commitments. Image credit: Stella McCartney

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

British fashion house **Stella McCartney** is deepening house ties to environmental causes per the latest campaign slot accompanying the brand's most environmentally-friendly collection.

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The luxury brand highlighted the animal rights advocacy of The Gentle Barn animal sanctuary, featuring the rescued animals in the campaign alongside American actor Madelyn Cline star of Netflix's *Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery* movie and the show *Outer Banks*. With the direction of American photographer Theo Wenner, the visuals of the summer 2023 collection were created on-site at the sanctuary in Santa Clarita, California, showcasing the sustainable pieces and eco-innovations of the line-up.

"Just because we have always done something a certain way, does not mean that we should continue doing it," said Ellie Laks, founder of **The Gentle Barn**, Santa Clarita.

"There have been huge advancements in the industry, however our advancements have also caused enormous suffering to animals and destruction to our environment," Ms. Laks said. "By creating man-made pieces, Stella McCartney not only brings gorgeous fashion for all of us to enjoy, but she harms no one, and illustrates kindness and compassion to all."

The collection is now available for purchase **online** and at various Stella McCartney boutiques worldwide.

Animal style

Starring the more than 170 rescued animals on the six-acre sanctuary, the summer campaign is an extension of Stella McCartney's animal rights activism.

The brand has been a long-time provider of vegan and cruelty-free alternatives to traditional animal products in fashion, pushing boundaries before it hit the mainstream. This ahead-of-the-curve identity on the part of Stella McCartney is why the campaign's slogan is that of Japanese punk artist and three-time brand collaborator Yoshitomo Nara *Change the History*.



The slogan encapsulates the youth's push to create a better world than the one they inherited. Image credit: Stella McCartney

Between this call to action and the inclusion of the 25-year-old actor, the collection's imagery is shaped around the mobilization of the youth, and productive rebellion.

"What is more punk than upending the entire food and fashion industrial complex by removing animal products from the equation?" said Stella McCartney in a statement.

"My mantra right now is: We are what we eat, we are what we wear'," Ms. McCartney said. "Our choices have an interconnected impact and if we want to change the history and protect Mother Earth for future generations, we must take action from stopping eating meat, to ending the needless deaths of animal for fashion."

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A post shared by Stella McCartney (@stellamccartney)

Veganism is especially gaining traction as a movement, with more than 600,000 vegans in the United Kingdom alone the result of vegan people quadrupling in the last ten years, demonstrating how rapidly it is catching on.

Many people are wanting to not only avoid eating animals and animal products, but are doing their best to avoid purchasing them in any form in a push for the complete adoption of antispeciesism, or treating all creatures with a high level of respect, rather than basing treatment on what species they are.



Many around the world are tuning to veganism, with the brand's home country of Britain especially embracing the lifestyle. Image credit: Stella McCartney

This campaign brings in the fashion-facing side to this fight, connecting the fact that 92 billion land animals are annually slaughtered for food to the fact that leather comes from this system. Animal products in fashion, almost always come from animals being slaughtered for their meat in the agriculture industry, with the exception of exotic animals.

The brand also highlights the even deeper issues with the system, as it not only results in the mass killing of animals, but it pollutes waterways, destroys ecosystems, hurts agricultural workers and desecrates indigenous land.



Ms. Cline embodies the youth's shift towards ethical eating and living. Image credit: Stella McCartney

Sanctuaries like The Gentle Barn offers alternatives to these agricultural practices, just as Stella McCartney offers alternatives to the use of those byproducts in fashion, with the collection being free of fur, leather, feathers and any exotic skins as always.

"Animal sanctuaries like The Gentle Barn are vital to the future of animals, our own health, and the wellbeing of our planet, as we serve as an example of how we can love, support, connect with, and have empathy for all living beings," Ms. Laks said.

"Saving animals from the darkest places on earth, and then allowing people to visit them, hear their stories of resilience and see first hand their intelligence, affection, and magic, enables guests to open their hearts to animals and become their protectors," she said. "Once we connect and start protecting animals through our food choices

and purchases, less animals will have to suffer, and in turn the environment will benefit."

This connection between the nonprofit and luxury fashion label helps bring forth an image of what the future of fashion could look like one that does not sacrifice the well-being of living creatures or the planet for the sake of aesthetics, but instead is shaped around an appreciation of them.

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A post shared by Stella McCartney (@stellamccartney)

"Instead of exploiting animals for materials, simply use man made products," Ms. Laks said.

"It is easy, affordable, just as comfortable and stylish, and people can feel good about their purchases."

To spread this message and honor the animals who graced the images in the campaign, Stella McCartney will be highlighting the various cows, horses, pigs, sheep, chickens, llamas, emus, cats, dogs and birds that live at the sanctuary on social media, calling them by name and telling their stories in order to spread a message of love for all beings.

Into the wild

Stella McCartney is deeply invested in the wild a fact that is reflected by the collection's materials and the brand's commitments, as well as the venue choice for the shoot.



The brand's telling of the animals' stories on social media channels spread awareness about animal cruelty, and the need for vegan-friendly brands like Stella McCartney. Image credit: Stella McCartney

The spring 2023 collection was also greatly informed by this value of nature, being framed after the environmental concept of "rewilding" and conservation efforts ([see story](#)). The brand invited rewilding experts to talk at gatherings,

and turned to social media to provide education on the topic to consumers.

This move to educate consumers has been especially prevalent in recent campaigns from Stella McCartney, as collections and social media posts have been increasingly featuring climate facts, eco-tips and the words of environmental figures such as Jane Goodall ([see story](#)).



The collection is highly innovative, moving luxury fashion a little closer to a sustainable future. Image credit: Stella McCartney

As this collection alone is made up of 91 percent responsible materials (including the very first regenerative cotton luxury garment, lead-free crystals and forest-friendly viscose), the brand's ethos is communicated more loudly than ever before with this campaign ([see story](#)). Combining cuts and styles of the late 1990s and early 2000s with modern innovations in sustainable fashion, the collection speaks especially loudly to millennials and young people who are the face of both the original looks and the future ahead.

"More and more companies are committing to creating luxury without harming animals or the environment," Ms. Laks said.

"More and more customers are making informed ethical and environmental choices," she said. "The demand and the need is here, companies need only follow the demand from their customers.

"Stella McCartney is leading the way!"