

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Valentino takes trip with textiles for 'Escape 2023' collection

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Valentino's primary asset, a polished campaign video, takes a distinctly cinematic approach. Image credit: Valentino

By AMIRAH KEATON

Italian fashion label Valentino is embarking on a journey through the archives for summer.

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For the "Escape 2023" collection, the brand's "Animalier," "Panther" and "Loop" prints are applied to new warm-weather apparel and accessories a quirky campaign video centers the effort. At a time when many houses are paring down on maximalist expressions, the maison leans into logomania, as Valentino's creative director continues to cement his legacy through the use of distinct textiles.

"The Loop Print is such a nod to the 1970s and is a print that is just as relevant today as it was when it was introduced," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder and creative director of *Athleisure Mag*, New York.

"There is a modern take to it that still retains this element of vintage and shows that [Valentino creative director] Pierpaolo Piccioli is able to design in a way that can continue to reintroduce these prints where it makes sense within the assortments that are presented each season."

Ms. Smith is not affiliated with Valentino, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Thawing out

The bright, airy designs of a reinterpreted ready-to-wear line consisting of bikinis, cover-ups, mini skirts and more call audiences to immediately indulge in both leisure and luxury.

Valentino Garavani **Escape 2023** accessories follow suit. Patterns are borrowed from the manifestations of Mr. Piccioli's creative predecessors.

Taking inspiration from a 1971 Viva Valentino campaign, the brand's Loop print showcases a seemingly infinite rotation of its name. The "groovy" influences of said era are present today.



The brand's "Animalier," "Panther" and "Loop" prints the latter is shown here are applied to new warm-weather apparel and accessories as part of a new capsule collection. Image courtesy of Saks Fifth Avenue

While Animalier takes after a leopard in appearance, Panther references the creature in its figure, yielding black-and-white swirled iconography with pops of turquoise positioned throughout.

Per the inclusion of a definitive plot and accompanying characters, Valentino's primary asset, a campaign video, takes a distinctly cinematic approach.

Appearing at the start of a film selection, the words "horses don't move in straight lines" foreshadow the dynamic game of chess to ensue shortly thereafter the phrase acts as a double entendre of sorts.



Valentino's Panther print references the creature's figure, yielding black-and-white swirled iconography with pops of turquoise positioned throughout. Image credit: Valentino

In fact, the manner in which Valentino's players navigate the board's pieces in an anti-linear fashion directly mirrors the vintage graphics superimposed upon the collection at hand.

"I love the concept of a cinematic campaign that incorporated classic tropes that one would see in film and to even have elements of drama, cliffhangers, etc. that are punctuated and accented by accessories of the brand and iconic prints," Ms. Smith said.

"Each character amplifies their patterns and shows them in movement," she said. "I can see this as being a pre-roll ahead of an event taking place at Cannes for the film festival."

Indeed, a quirky, Wes Anderson-esque soundtrack backs its protagonists' moves.

Valentino's "Escape 2023" campaign video takes a distinctly cinematic approach

Models Gibril Igale and Martina Biondino play the tabletop game from a distance, dictating moves to a mediator, who physically controls the chess board.

The remaining seconds of the Marie Schuller-directed excerpt see its participants facing the camera dead on as a set of saturated Valentino fabrics flow in the seaside winds.

"The video has a simplicity and complexity at the same time and funnels the tension through playing chess with the male character being a passive character that physically moves the pieces," Ms. Smith said.

"There is a humor in the film while still showcasing the Valentino aesthetic that is as much of a character as the pieces that are worn in the scenes."

Merchandising mania

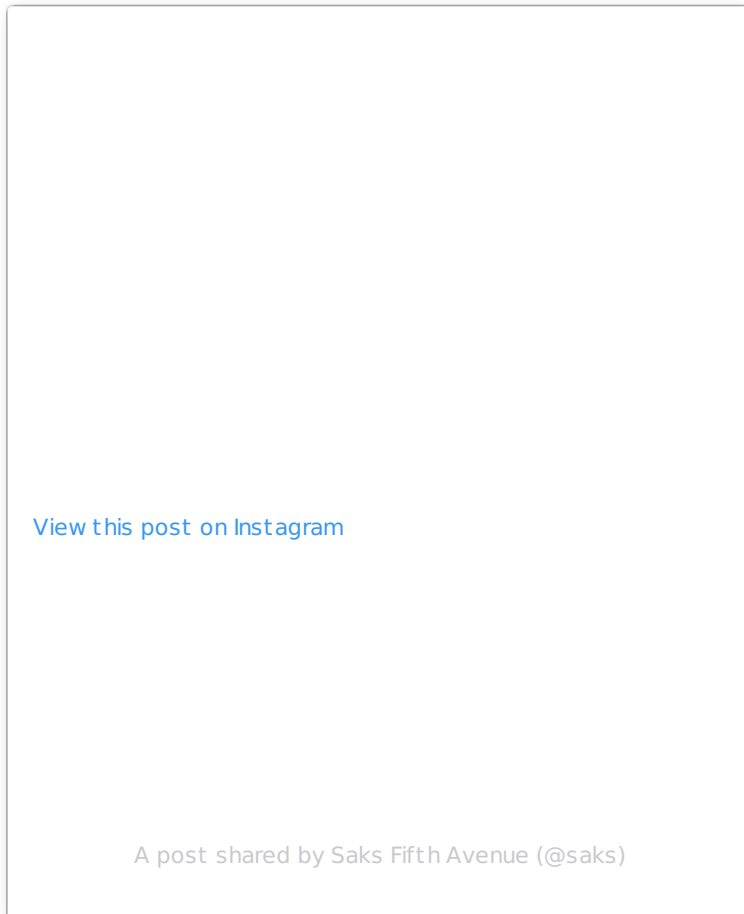
All-in-all, the house's "Toile Iconographe" print, plus novel shades such as "Pink PP," appear to be working quite well at Valentino.

A comprehensive merchandising strategy pushes exclusivity, factoring into the equation.

To start, the Escape 2023 collection is available online at Valentino's site and in-store at select locations, of which boutiques based in [Capri](#), [Montecarlo](#), [Mykonos](#), [Palm Beach](#), [St. Tropez](#) and [Sao Paulo](#) and other resort destinations are included.

One individual piece, in particular, requires additional chasing, as the collection's standout print graces a [Loop Jersey T-shirt](#) that is solely available via the brand's online commerce channel.

U.S. retailer Saks Fifth Avenue is also slotting in as an exclusive retail partner for the capsule's launch ([see story](#)).



As luxury houses partner with retailers to bring the beach indoors ([see story](#)), Valentino's dedicated campaign furthers the reach of the collection and accompanying in-store activation, one featuring styles exclusive to the luxury department store.

"When you have houses that have decades of heritage to pull from, there is a need to ensure that you bring it back into new assortments whether it's in its original form or it is presented as a twist," Ms. Smith said.

"There is something to be said for logomania being used wisely," she said. "For some houses, they bring it in and out depending on who is at the helm as the creative director.

"Other houses continue to have it as part of their DNA."