

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Balenciaga takes alternate approach to fashion advertising with 'It's Different'

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As shown in the November campaign displaying a few of the brand's most distinct designs, the Le Cagole Collector Shoulder Bag retails for \$6,990. Image credit: Balenciaga

By AMIRAH KEATON

French fashion house Balenciaga is making a shift toward minimalism.

A new, text-centric campaign titled "It's Different" plays on the distinct nature of the brand's designs. Launched Nov. 2, the pared-down delivery catalogs creative director Demna Gvasalia's alternative approaches to apparel, arriving as the Georgian designer attempts to carve out Balenciaga's future.

"There are elements of the campaign that remind me of Apple's 'Think Different' [campaign], or brands that have a less-is-more approach that allows you to interpret what you should be seeing and how you feel about them," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder and creative director of *Athleisure Mag*, New York.

Telling someone that there isn't fluff or a need to say more than the obvious is genius, and also, saying that something isn't what you're looking for makes you want it more than you thought that you would," Ms. Smith said. "It's cheeky, but as this is an iconic house, you see that the marketing is not taking itself too seriously."

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

Gvasalia-era creations, clear points of view

Ready-to-wear standouts are pushed to the front of Balenciaga's latest marketing expression, where fall/winter 2023 collection signatures sit side-by-side.



Popular picks like Balenciaga's "Flex BB" Pump with crooked heel join other Gvasalia-era creations with clear points of view. Image credit: Balenciaga

Popular picks, like Balenciaga's "Flex BB" Pump with crooked heel, join other Gvasalia-era creations with clear points of view.

Selects are seen atop plain, white backgrounds, applied to the pages of what appears to be a magazine and paired with unconventional tag lines, which further contextualize the assortment.

"It's different," "No blabla" and "Probably not what you're looking for" frame Balenciaga's high-definition video and large-scale promotional images.

The contemporary sayings contrast silhouettes presented in a manner reminiscent of artifacts identified during archival exercises.

Balenciaga's latest campaign mirrors a page-turning creative treatment used for digital European Heritage Days content

Indeed, the campaign grants items centering "spot-lit snapshots" and "rotating perspectives" a halo effect, similar to antiques shown in museums or sold on the auction stage.

"In many respects, this campaign has an aspect of the "iykyk," [or "if you know, you know,"] concept where those who are already aware of the brand, know what the key pieces of the line are and what is perceived as a coveted piece that you would want in your own assortment," Ms. Smith said.

"It also gives you the space to see what the brand identifies as the core pieces and gives the viewer or purchaser the opportunity to see why it's placed there," she said. "It's on the customer to do their research about the item, others who may enjoy wearing it, and its various iterations."



"It's different," "No blabla" and "Probably not what you're looking for" frame Balenciaga's high-definition video and large-scale promotional images. Image credit: Balenciaga

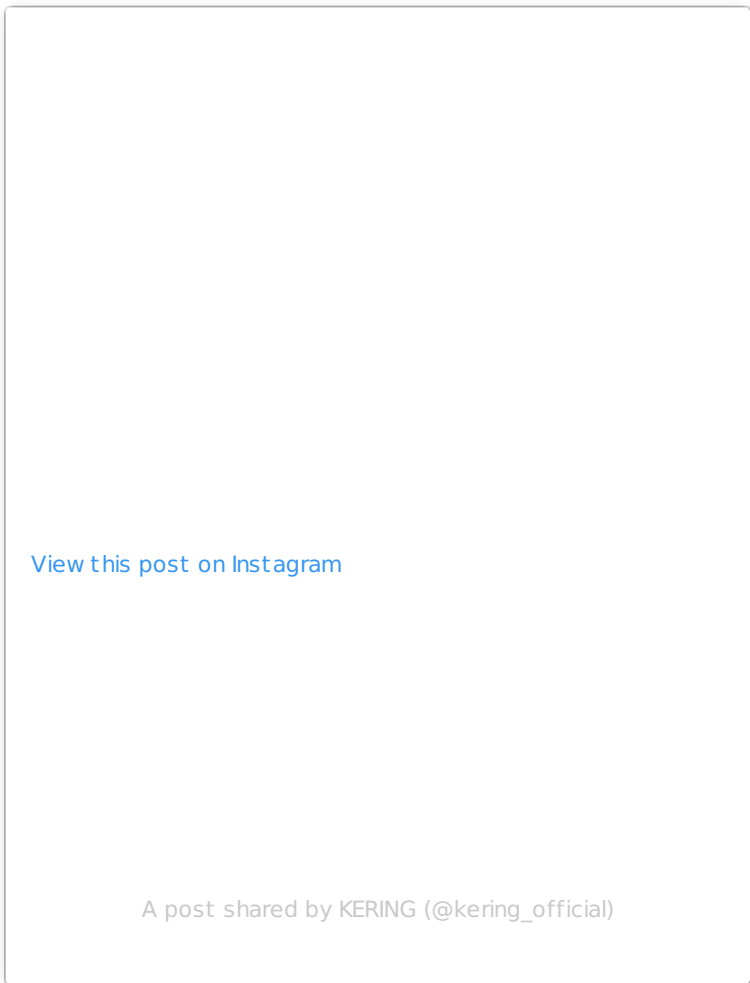
“There’s something about minimal advertising that is also a great way for those with no knowledge of the brand to have a clean slate when it comes to connecting with the brand.”

Clean slate

Handbags such as the Monaco Chain and the Le Cagole, the latter purse popularized by American media personality Kim Kardashian in a separate spring/summer 2022 campaign debuted last year ([see story](#)), are decoupled from their celebrity counterparts for “It’s Different.”

The brand, which has long relied on the power of famous faces, seems to be going back to basics. Interestingly, Balenciaga’s campaign drop is also tied to no season in particular, bucking the bounds of yet another traditional driver of fashion hype.

What is more, the luxury label states that “It’s Different” mirrors its approach to social media ([see story](#)), the platforms upon which Balenciaga remains active such as Instagram ([see story](#)) serving as a conduit of two-way communication.



In embarking on a new direction, conversation starters like these think less “extravagant displays,” and more, “discerning engagement” will prove key to rebuilding a relationship with the core consumer.

“Both can be true: that your product assortment embraces maximalism while your marketing and how you speak about your brand can be that of a minimalist,” Ms. Smith said.

“You have to believe that what you create will have a designated effect where you’re less concerned about how people will fill in the messaging on their end due to the legacy that you have created over time,” she said. “It also allows them to get feedback on how they are perceived so that maybe this will fuel future campaign messaging and to better understand how enthusiasts, consumers, and those that could be consumers see them.”