

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Miu Miu honors female revolutionary of color photography

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1930s styles define the 2024 Bag Campaign visuals. Image credit: Miu Miu

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Italian fashion house Miu Miu is turning to a modern celebrity to honor a historic icon.

For its 2024 Bag Campaign, American model Gigi Hadid shows off the Arcadie and Wander purses. Through color usage, props and styles included in the visuals, the label is dedicating the slot to the late British photographer and suffragette known simply as Yevonde. In so doing, Miu Miu places itself among the slew of other luxury names turning to feminists of the past as advertising inspiration.

"Miu Miu is the sister label to Prada, and a more youthful, playful, and affordable line," said Veronica H. Speck, founder and CEO of [VHS Ventures](#), New York.

"This new campaign celebrating its signature matelassé is an ode to color, femininity and fashion, photographed by Steven Meisel and starring Gigi Hadid as a modern reflection of the Miu Miu persona," Ms. Speck said. "In a continuing championing of historic female creatives channeled through Miu Miu campaigns, inspiration is drawn from the stylized work of the pioneering British interwar photographer Yevonde.

"Yevonde's work of the 1930s was ground-breaking for its use of delicately nuanced and considered color, and in the new Miu Miu campaign, we find a similar composure in crafting the image, the same saturated hues set against porcelain-delicate d'grad pastel, yet with the spontaneous spirit of now."

Ms. Speck is not affiliated with Miu Miu, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Life in color

In a nearly minute-long video directed by American photographer Steven Meisel, Ms. Hadid engages with the signature matelassé while donning 1930s-esque looks.



Ms. Hadid's look is inspired by popular styles during the age in which Yevonde lived. Image credit: Miu Miu

With styling by Russian creative Lotta Volkova, the model's halter-top dresses, retro bob, cardigans, long socks, utility jackets, loafers, collars and timeless colors splashed throughout have a vintage feel. Posing in front of a gradual pastel background in what looks like an old-fashioned studio, she transitions between poses on camera in a manner similar to what was seen in the fall/winter "live release" last year ([see story](#)).

Though the scenes are heavily curated, made vibrant by baskets of fruit and drum sets, Ms. Hadid's in-real-time movements grant the campaign an air of authenticity.

Modern, spacey music scores the engagement, reminding viewers that although the aesthetics are decidedly 20th-century, this is for the modern consumer. Ms. Hadid herself has become a highly recognizable face in contemporary pop culture, making her involvement another way that Miu Miu is infusing the vintage imagery with relevance.

The American celebrity is lauded by the label as being a "modern reflection" of its persona. According to the house, she is a conduit for a revival of past lives and a tribute to absolute beauty.

Ms. Hadid is a favorite tap for Miu Miu, often appearing in advertisements and across its social channels. She is specifically a regular face in bag campaigns ([see story](#)), making her casting here arguably unsurprising.



Practical outfits and timeless makeup adds to the time capsule effect. Image credit: Miu Miu

However, this marketing endeavor is supposedly not about her.

The brand is celebrating the aforementioned interwar photographer Yevonde. Though her full name was Yevonde Philone Middleton, she chose to go simply by one name or Madame Yevonde in her 60-year-long professional career.

She was a trailblazer in her own right, championing women's liberation and legal rights, as well as her own personal independence.

The suffragette opened her own studio at 21 years old. Despite the fact that professions for women were highly limited at the time, she signed all of her work with her first name and asserted authorship without hiding her gender.

Yevonde is still known today as a revolutionary of color photography.

In the 1930s, she developed new methods for capturing vibrant hues. Experimenting with Vivex color processes, solarization was something she often utilized during this decade.



Both the glamorous and more everyday side of 1930s fashion is celebrated. Image credit: Miu Miu

Leaning into the surreal, her images often include arrangements of elite figures and models posing within utopian settings that featured drapery, foliage and props, much like the scenes set by Miu Miu.

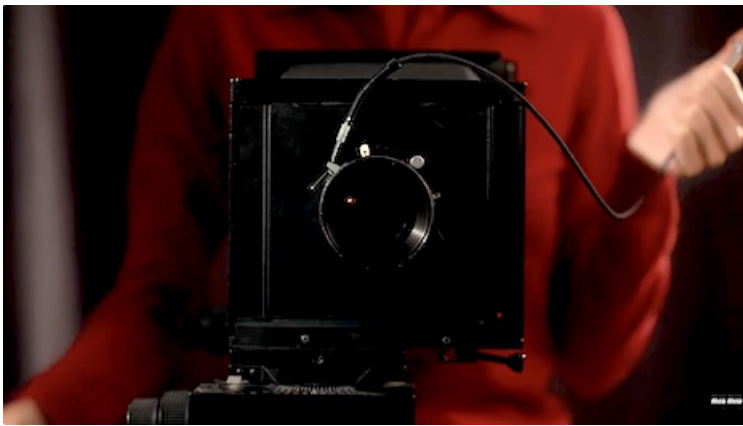
In her day, color photography was not considered to be a serious venture, according to the [National Portrait Gallery](#) in London. Yevonde's innovations helped to change this, her work going on to become quite significant in the larger picture of British portrait photography.

She pushed the rest of the industry to get on board, once chastising the Royal Photographic Society for its "wishy-washy hand-tinted effects."

"If we are going to have color photographs, for heaven's sake let's have a riot of color," she said in her address in 1932.

This attitude extends into Miu Miu's homage to her.

The new colorways of the pictured Arcadie and Wander bags lean into the contrasts that her work was so renowned for. Instinctive Cognac and Caramel are now joined by Bright Orange and Soleil.



In an homage to Yevonde, a faceless woman is shown taking shots on a vintage camera. Image credit: Miu Miu

Aside from Ms. Hadid's "contemplative poise" that is said to reflect Yevonde's "bygone age," the creative director of the campaign, Edward Quarumby, made sure the nods to the pioneer photographer did not stop there.

About halfway through the video, a woman appears, only her torso, arms and hands being visible. Donning a scarlet sweater and neutral nails, she operates a 1930s camera to capture the portrait, silently guiding the session to completion with an expert touch.

Leading ladies

Miu Miu has frequently centered women from history in its campaigns and initiatives.

The house is currently gearing up to have its first literary club meeting. Next week, participants will discuss the work of two late female authors who, like Yevonde, were revolutionaries in their field ([see story](#)).

Others in the sector are following suit, with this spring seeing a slew of historic women honored in various advertisements.

Miu Miu unveils its 2024 Bag Campaign

Luxury resale platform Vestiaire Collective took to social media last week with artificial intelligence-generated pictures of famous female portraits wearing items from its sites. From the “Mona Lisa” to Marie Antoinette, the leading ladies were all either real-life or art-world icons ([see story](#)).

French fashion house Dior’s spring/summer 2024 campaign likewise looked back, nodding to vintage styles just like Miu Miu. Furthering the similarities, the visuals revolved around a historic figure who touted rebellion and pride in the female experience: Virginia Woolf ([see story](#)).

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