

## ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

# Versace introduces new art project

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*The project includes the artwork of creatives such as Collier Schorr, Camille Vivier, Steven Meisel, Eileen Myles, Andrea Modica, Olly Elyte and Stef Mitchell. Image courtesy of Versace*

By KIRAN GILL

Italian fashion label Versace is considering its identity through art, poetry, music and film.

"**Versace Embodied**" is the first chapter of an artistic project by creative director Dario Vitale, which reconsiders the artwork of artists and creatives through values close to the brand's heart: "uncompromising strength, rigor and sexuality." The project, inclusive of 8 contributions from artists across various mediums, begins with a photograph of the Medusa emblem on the door of the fashion house's first atelier by French artist Camille Vivier.

"The Versace "not a campaign" art event is an important moment for the brand," said Pamela Danziger, **Unity Marketing** of Denver, Pennsylvania.

"After emerging from the black hole that was Capri Holdings, Versace under Prada ownership is reclaiming its status as a cultural force to be reckoned with," Ms. Danziger said. "Luxury houses have long maintained a connection with the arts.

"This puts Versace back on track to reorient it as an authentic luxury brand with deep cultural ties."

Ms. Danziger is not affiliated with Versace, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

## The house's essence

"Versace Embodied" is "not a campaign," rather, through an arrangement of photographs, poetry, art, music and film, some of which are pulled from Versace's archives, Mr. Vitale is igniting a conversation with the "individuals and collectives that drive culture," with the hope of sparking something new.

The artworks selected for this project are in active dialogue with the house's brand code. After the image of the brand's first Medusa figurehead, a photo series from American photographer and professor Andrea Modica captures black-and-white portraits of young adults in Southern Italy, evoking the brand's Mediterranean roots and relationship to youth culture.

The collection dips into the archives to pull a lookbook image shot by American photographer Steven Meisel, a former friend of the fashion house's founder, Gianni Versace. Australian-born, Paris-based photographer Stef Mitchell's photograph of American model Binx Walton captures the young woman sitting atop a motorcycle in a white and blue underwear set from the brand.

The photographs in the curated project are rounded out by a striking image capturing the public's reaction to the unveiling of two nude sculptures from 460 BC for the first time in 1981 at the historic Palazzo del Quirinale.

American poet and writer Eileen Myles contributed a poem entitled “Put It Back,” which explores themes of closeness and desire. Untitled illustrations from American artist and fashion photographer Collier Schorr further explore the nature of intimacy.



*“Versace Embodied” considers themes of intimacy, desire, and sexuality. Image courtesy of Versace*

The final artwork in the curation is dance videos capturing the organized dance experiences arranged by Australian-British dancer and activist Olly Elyte in Los Angeles and New York.

The range of artworks that consider themes of connection, desire, vitality and sexuality speak to a chapter in the brand’s history under the stewardship of Mr. Vitale, who joined the company earlier this year after Italian fashion designer Donatella Versace decided to step away from her role as chief creative officer to act as the company’s chief brand ambassador ([see story](#)).

### **Artistic license**

Versace’s latest project, which highlights the art of creatives outside the domain of fashion, underscores the relationship between the fashion and art worlds and follows in the wake of a bevy of partnerships between fashion houses and art institutions.



*Dunhill will act as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra’s official luxury clothier. Image courtesy of Dunhill*

For example, British fashion house Burberry announced a multiyear partnership with London’s Victoria and Albert Museum ([see story](#)) and British menswear label Dunhill announced its continued support of Frieze London for the third year in a row ([see story](#)) following its appointment as the official luxury clothier of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra ([see story](#)).