

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Versace continues Embodied' conversation

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American artist Drake Carr engaged in a practice of live-drawings with his six models before beginning his work on the larger canvas. Image courtesy of Versace

By KIRAN GILL

Italian fashion label Versace is continuing its exploration of identity through art.

Earlier this month, the brand unveiled the second chapter of “Versace Embodied,” an initiative that engages in a conversation between the house’s values and cultural pioneers. While the debut of “**Versace Embodied**” mixed the artwork of eight artists, the sophomore iteration of this project spotlighted five artists.

Artistic frontiers

“Versace Embodied” was spearheaded by Italian fashion designer Dario Vitale, the brand’s creative director for just nine months ([see story](#)). The second iteration of the initiative utilizes similar language; as such, this project is “not a campaign, but an evolving conversation.”

The initial project, first released in September, included artwork by French artist Camille Vivier, American photographer and professor Andrea Modica, American photographer Steven Meisel, Australian-born, Paris-based photographer Stef Mitchell, American poet and writer Eileen Myles, American artist and fashion photographer Collier Schorr and Australian-British dancer and activist Olly Elyte ([see story](#)).

For this chapter, the works do not span as wide a range of media. Rather, the mix of drawing, dance and photographs, taken as a whole, evokes strong feelings in which age, gender and sensuality are questioned.



American artist Drake Carr's completed artwork considers the forms of six unique individuals who, as a group, present a strong sartorial image. Image courtesy of Versace

The project begins with Japanese photographer Momo Okabe's technicolor portraits of individuals and lovers. The images capture striking shots of individuals who stare the camera down and tender, intimate shots of romantic partners locked in embrace.

Ms. Okabe's photograph is followed by a drawing from American artist Drake Carr in which six self-possessed figures cluster around a couch, their bodies contorted to reveal the details of their garments: sleeveless white tees and tank tops, black leather pants, bottle green jeans and striped bottoms. The piece was a study considering the nature of live drawing and dance.

The brand pulled from the archives to include stills from American photographer Doug Ordway. The assembled images, which fuse glamour, sensuality and strength, were captured in the 1990s.

The final addition to the set is a series of images from an evening at the opera captured in 2025 by American photojournalist Jeff Mermelstein.

Artworld credentials

While the fashion industry will often collaborate with artist to create limited edition products as seen in the examples of French fashion house Louis Vuitton's decades-long collaboration with Japanese visual artist Takashi Murakami ([see story](#)) and the Dior Lady Art project from French fashion house Dior ([see story](#)), the "Verasce Embodied" initiative allows the art from the selected artists to stand on its own. The move allows Versace to position itself as an arbiter of taste and culture.



For the 10th iteration of the Dior Lady Art project, French fashion house Dior tapped 10 global artists to execute their vision on the silhouette. Image credit: Dior

Versace is not the only fashion brand to engage outside of the scope of co-branded art releases. Last year, British fashion house Burberry signed a comprehensive partnership with London's Victoria and Albert Museum ([see story](#)), and British menswear label Dunhill announced its new title as the official luxury clothier of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra ([see story](#)).

