

INTERNET

Hermès rethinks winter catalogs with narrative video

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By JEN KING

Family-owned leather goods maker Hermès is simulating the anticipation of waiting for a package by creating a narrative for its winter 2013 catalog.

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Luxury Daily

Hermès enthusiasts can follow the story through a link on the brand's Facebook page where a video on the landing page shares a story with a catalog. As the role of traditional print mailers continues to change, brands should look to reinvent how consumers interact with a season's catalog.

"This strategy was a great example of taking static content and using digital strategies combined with storytelling to bring it to life," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#), New York.

"The opportunity was heightened as they repurposed the content and extended its lifetime value as well as viewership reach," she said.

"By leveraging the storytelling aspect, Hermès is able to leverage multi-platform and provide an interactive and engaging opportunity to view their collection, how the items are styled, and even wearable situations."

Ms. Strum is not affiliated with Hermès, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Hermès did not respond by press deadline.

Following along

Brand enthusiasts are invited to follow along with a story on Hermès' Facebook page. The post includes a quote that reads, "They're on their way. Right now they're hidden behind that gigantic cloud" and a black-and-white photograph of a woman looking out a window.

 **Hermès**
December 20 

"They're on their way.
Right now they're hidden behind that gigantic cloud."

Following the story on www.hermes.com/vestiaire_ah13



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Hermès Facebook post

A click-through on the link lands on Hermès' Web site where a video automatically loads. The opening scene of the video shows a large envelope with a Paris address written in the brand's signature orange color.



Hand-addressed catalog envelope, still

The woman holding the envelope takes out Hermès' winter 2013 catalog and begins to thumb through its pages. The first page the woman stops on features the photograph from Hermès' Facebook post.

Next, the woman begins to narrate the catalog using the images found on its pages. The narration is playful and embodies the anticipation associated with receiving a package in the mail.

For example, in one frame the narrator states, "I think I just caught a glimpse. A convoy of messengers bearing orange bags." The narrator incorporates the images of mountain landscapes found in the catalog into her story to amplify her anticipation.



Anxiously waiting, still

Using other images, such as cleared shelves, the narrator claims she cleared all the shelves to make room for her Hermès purchases. She notes the long distance between her home in the mountains and Hermès.

The narrator begins to seem subtly delusional as she notes she may have seen a helicopter off in the distance. She comes to the conclusion that Hermès will tie her packages with silk parachutes and drop them from the helicopter but hopes they will land

near the house so she will not have to climb the rock face.

Also, her inventive delivery methods includes “slip[ping the packages] down the chimney like Santa Claus.” Her daydreams seem to become more manic as the story goes along, as she worries she will miss the delivery man and the long time it has taken for the packages to arrive.

Next the narrator brainstorms how to prepare for the delivery using photos of a Hermès’ catalog model looking pensive in various winter apparel. She suggests making tea for the delivery men but is then seen procrastinating, relaxing in a chair and trying to keep her cool.



Model keeping her cool, still

Each frame shows a different page of the winter catalog interspersed with images of snow-covered mountains. The narrator continues to envision what could be taking the delivery so long as she grows more and more impatient.

The frames change from outerwear to ready-to-wear apparel as the narrator contemplates the best place to stand and wait for her packages. The narration ends before the arrival of the packages to inspire consumers to create their own ending by ordering from the winter catalog.

Enthusiasts can “like” the narrated catalog on Facebook or Google+ and can share it with friends via Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Pinterest, Twitter and email.

The narration video can be viewed [here](#).

Checking the mail

As brands and retailers continue to lean toward digital-only initiatives to share merchandise with consumers, the role of direct mail catalogs has changed but is not dwindling.

The traditional print catalog has evolved to extend to digital replicas and promote in-store experiences alongside the regular fare of lavish designer collections. Although rooted in the past, catalogs still have the ability to grab the attention of consumers on a personal and sustained level that digital still has not attained ([see story](#)).

Especially because it is digitally powered, Hermès' approach to its winter 2013 catalog is engaging and its whimsical narration is likely to interest consumers.

"Another aspect of utilizing outside-of-the-box strategies to increase awareness about Hermès and their recent collection is about showcasing their embrace of social and digital to connect with a younger demographic," Ms. Strum said.

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/ptqNSKS1SCI](http://www.youtube.com/embed/ptqNSKS1SCI)

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