

INTERNET

Ferragamo weaves founder's history into fairy tale film

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By SARAH JONES

Italian footwear and accessories label Salvatore Ferragamo is telling the story of the brand's eponymous founder through a fantastical short film showing the designer as a child.

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"A Ferragamo Fairy Tale: White Shoe" is based on the first shoe that late Mr. Ferragamo created, a white shoe for his sister to wear for her first communion, which he constructed by candlelight. With this 24-minute film, Ferragamo is able to weave a more intricate story and tell its fans a dramatic version of the label's early history.

"Ferragamo's White Shoe is a can't-miss fashion film," said Paul Farkas, cofounder and CEO of [Accessory2](#). "The cinematic short masterfully weaves a fairy tale about the inherent struggle, skill and devotion of high fashion design – inspiration, love, sacrifice to become the best.

"The themes and length are spot-on and it will speak to most demographics due to its whimsical narrative, dynamic production level and overall honesty," he said. "Shoe metaphors and motifs magically weave back and forth to form the foundation for the piece, a real childhood love story of shoes and women, with evil forever rooted to the ground, losing freedom to walk."

Mr. Farkas is not affiliated with Ferragamo, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Ferragamo did not respond by press deadline.

Fairy tale

The story is told without dialogue, allowing it to reach a global audience without a language barrier. The film was written and directed by Mauro Borrelli, who was a conceptual artist for two of the "Pirates of the Caribbean" movies.

The film opens in a dark shoemaker's workshop, where a young Mr. Ferragamo is at work finishing a pair of dress shoes by candlelight. When he is done, he hands them to the shopkeeper, Masto Tomaia, who pats him on the head and places a coin in a piggybank.



Video still

The bell on the door of the shop rings, and Mr. Tomaia pushes Salvatore into a small closet under the stairs. He watches from inside the closet as the shopkeeper assists the man, Don Nero, whose face is made out of burlap with button eyes.

A barefoot girl, Biancarosa, enters and tries to sell Mr. Nero a flower. He pulls out his wallet, but the shopkeeper pushes her out.



Video still

Mr. Nero then unscrolls a drawing of a boot he wants made, and the shoemaker takes his measurements. Once he leaves, the shoemaker pulls a young Mr. Ferragamo out of the closet and shows him the boot, telling him to make it.

When Mr. Ferragamo grumbles, Mr. Tomaia bribes him by placing another coin in the piggybank. The audience can then see the shopkeeper open his hand and look at the coin, which he did not actually place in the jar.

While Mr. Ferragamo sets to work on the boots, he gets distracted by Biancarosa, who sits outside with her flowers. He draws a picture of a shoe for her and tries to show her through the window, but she walks away before noticing.

The young Mr. Ferragamo grabs a shoe mold covered in dust, brushing it off. As he holds it up, it morphs into an ocean liner. He stands on deck, watching as the Statue of Liberty gets closer.

On the ship, Puss in Boots bows to a princess. Biancarosa is on the ship standing beside them, but as Mr. Ferragamo gets closer to her, Mr. Black stands in his way.



Video still

The young Mr. Ferragamo is brought back to reality, and the shoemaker pushes the boot shoe form into his hands.

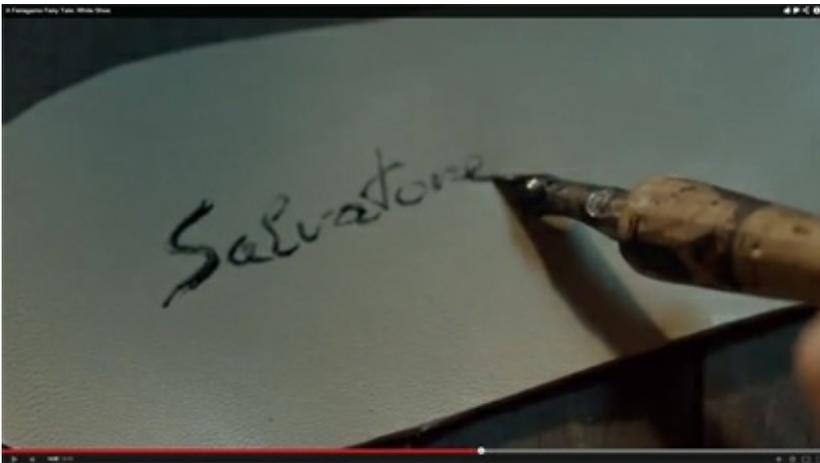
Later into the night, Mr. Ferragamo has another fantasy, where he is on a Western film set, adjusting one of the cowboy's boots. Biancarosa again appears, this time wearing fairy wings.

Biancarosa runs off-screen, and Mr. Ferragamo as a boy follows her through a hallway that leads backstage at a theater. He pokes his head out of the curtain to see a woman accepting an award in a red dress and green shoes with feather accents. As he looks on, a bird flies off of her shoes and circles Biancarosa.



Video still

While the shoemaker sleeps, Mr. Ferragamo abandons the boots and creates the white shoes, finishing them with his signature in the insole.



Video still

A young Mr. Ferragamo climbs the stairs to catch Biancarosa's attention, only to see her packing a suitcase and walking away. He returns to his workbench and places the shoes in a box.

When Mr. Nero returns the next day for his shoes, the shopkeeper hides Mr. Ferragamo and mistakenly gives him the box with the white shoes. Once the shopkeeper watches Mr. Black pick up the white shoes, he is angry, and pounds the workbench with the boot form, sending the piggy bank crashing to the floor.



Video still

The shoe emits a white light, and young Mr. Ferragamo is transported to a street where he is passed by all of the characters of his dreams. Biancarosa joins him and they walk toward a city with buildings that look like shoes.

A Ferragamo Fairy Tale: White Shoe

Long form storytelling

This film is part of a larger exhibit about Mr. Ferragamo's beginnings in the shoe business.

Salvatore Ferragamo flaunted its brand roots through a microsite, branded film and exhibition that engage consumers in the legends of shoemaking.

The brand launched its exhibition The Amazing Shoemaker April 19 at the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum in Florence, Italy. To celebrate the launch, the brand created a microsite and short film that tell the history of the shoemaker's first shoe ([see story](#)).

This past year, luxury brands have pushed the boundaries of length with their fashion videos showcasing their founders' legacies.

For instance, French atelier Chanel debuted a new film focusing on Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel's return to fashion in the 1950s following World War II, directed by the brand's creative director, Karl Lagerfeld.

The film, aptly titled "The Return," is more Hollywood than other typical fashion films, with a run time of 30 minutes and big-budget production. By creating a longer length film, Chanel was able to educate fans on its story on a deeper level ([see story](#)).

In this case, the length might be too long for those who are not avid fans of the brand, according to an industry observer.

"Video is a great medium to build an authentic brand voice," said Ian Foley, a Portola Valley, CA,-based digital marketing strategist. "However, a long-form, fairytale approach is better left to Disney.

"A shorter video with a clearer message illustrating the product quality will have a better chance of YouTube viewership and attract customers," he said.

However, for those consumers who are fans of Ferragamo, this film will delight as well as inform.

"White Shoe demonstrates a luxury brand is more than coveted pieces and collections, but rather how they integrate into the pivotal times in life, be they joyful occasions, growth experiences or key life lessons," Accessory2's Mr. Farkas said. "Mature brand loyalists will socially share, well-associating with the moral cues throughout the piece."

Final Take

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