ADVERTISING

Marc Jacobs casts Miley Cyrus in moody spring ad campaign

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By SARAH JONES

Fashion brand Marc Jacobs International has unveiled its spring 2014 women's wear advertising campaign starring pop star Miley Cyrus, who has had a relationship with the brand for some time.

Marc Jacobs unveiled its spring campaign on Twitter and with an email to its newsletter subscribers. Marc Jacobs' campaign is the latest in a string of fashion brands opting for a celebrity face rather than a fashion model, and points to a growing trend in the industry.

"It's a great pairing," said Paul Farkas, cofounder and CEO of Accessory2. "Miley is all the rage today with headlines and appearance in gossip daily.

"Being selected the new face is reinforced with authenticity with her prior devotion to the brand, as well as a particular sophistication with truly talented editorial execution," he said.

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

Marc Jacobs International did not respond by press deadline.

Growing partnership

Ms. Cyrus has had a relationship with the brand's eponymous designer for some time. According to , the two met at a party thrown by Mr. Jacobs' business partner Robert Duffy, who has been friends with the star for years.

Mr. Jacobs dressed Ms. Cyrus in the netted dress she wore to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute Gala last May.
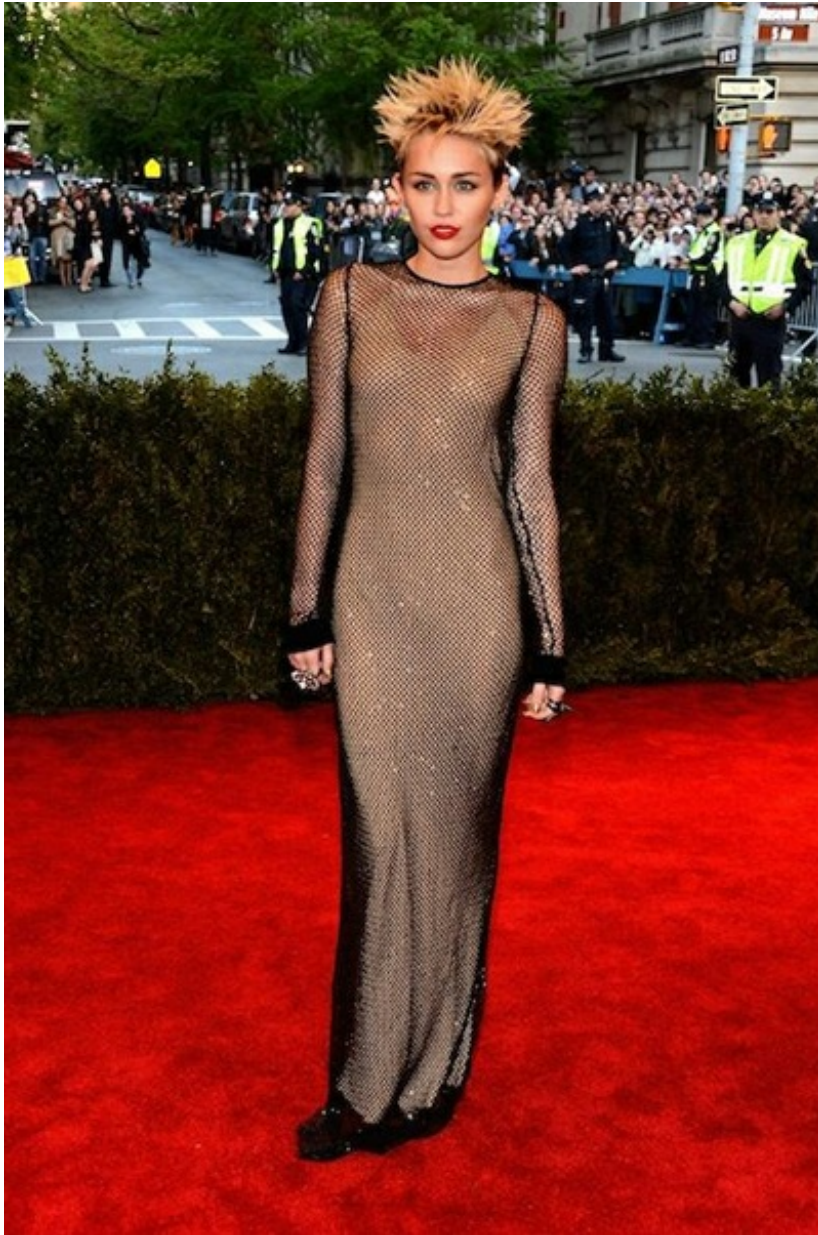
Miley Cyrus in Marc Jacobs

Ms. Cyrus posed nude for Marc Jacobs' skin cancer awareness T-shirts, with the slogan "Protect the skin you're in."

The current ad is set on an ominous beach, with the water and a fence barely visible in the dark lighting. Ms. Cyrus sits casually in the foreground, looking to the side.

Marc Jacobs spring 2014 ad campaign image

Models Natalie Westling and Esmerelda Seay Reynolds flank Ms. Cyrus, one lying next to her on the sand, the other standing almost out of sight in the background.

The ad was shot by photographer David Sims, and styled by Katie Grand.

Realizing that news had leaked of the ad campaign's star, Marc Jacobs posted the campaign image on its Twitter.

Tweet from Marc Jacobs Intl

Ms. Cyrus also flaunted the campaign, retweeting Marc Jacobs' post and sharing a different photo with her Twitter followers, which shows her in sunglasses. The actress-singer also changed her profile picture to a thumbnail version of the same photo.

Tweet from Miley Cyrus

Marc Jacobs has a large following on Twitter, with 1,400,000 fans, but Ms. Cyrus can give the brand an even larger audience with her 16,000,000 fans as of press time. Her tweet about the campaign gathered 13,500 retweets and 26,000 favorites by press time.

In case his followers missed the social media posts about the campaign, Marc Jacobs sent out a dedicated email blast with the subject line "Miley for Marc: See the SS14 Campaign."

The email is simple, just showing a large version of the campaign image, with a quote from Mr. Jacobs about the idea for the "broody" campaign.

Celebrities as models

There is a growing number of fashion brands choosing actresses or singers to front their print ad campaigns over the typically preferred fashion models.

For instance, Italian fashion house Versace has officially confirmed Stefani Germanotta, better known as Lady Gaga, as the face of its spring 2014 campaign, a departure for the brand that usually uses models rather than celebrities in print ads.

This campaign marks the first time Lady Gaga has appeared in any fashion advertising, giving Versace a unique edge. By using a famous face in its advertising, Versace is able to capture consumer attention, but advertisers need to be careful which stars they pick to represent their brand (see story).

Also, French fashion house Chanel has tapped actress Kristen Stewart to star in its advertising campaign for its Métiers d'Art Paris-Dallas collection to further showcasing the U.S. inspiration behind the collection.

Chanel announced its latest face at the collection presentation in Dallas on Dec. 10, part of a trip that commemorates the brand's relationship with the U.S. Chanel typically uses fashion models rather than celebrities in its apparel ads, so this campaign will shake things up at the couturier and give the brand attention from a new, younger audience that relates to Ms. Stewart (see story).

Ms. Cyrus' fan base is similar to Ms. Stewarts, and will likely have the same effect of bringing the brand to a younger, aspirational audience.

French fashion house Balmain released images of its spring 2014 print ad campaign featuring pop star Rihanna to generate buzz for the label among both brand enthusiasts and fans of the singer.

Balmain posted five campaign shots across its Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, and Rihanna, full name Robyn Rihanna Fenty, did the same, leveraging her own network of 30 million followers. By teaming up with a celebrity who has a massive fan base, Balmain is able to introduce itself to new potential consumers (see story).

When choosing a celebrity as a model for a campaign, it helps for the celebrity to have an existing relationship with the brand, which all of these partnerships, including Marc Jacobs, have in common. This helps to make the star's endorsement through modeling appear more genuine and convincing.

"The stream of rockstar, actor and indie pop artist models reflects a nod toward music and pop culture influence," Mr. Farkas said. "Music has never been more loved and embraced and there is such a diversity of talented and appealing opportunities for creative campaigns and included social media and placement pop value."

Final Take
Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York