

EVENTS/ CAUSES

Kenzo enters long-term partnership with ocean conservation charity

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By SARAH JONES

French fashion house Kenzo is partnering with Britain-based conservation group Blue Marine Foundation to help protect the oceans through fashion.

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Kenzo has launched a Blue takeover of both its London flagship store and its Web site, as well as a capsule collection to benefit the organization designed by the label's creative directors Carol Lim and Humberto Leon. As consumers are more and more interested in ecological causes, seeing a fashion brand take initiative on an issue will have a positive impact.

"Our partnership with Kenzo is based fundamentally on our shared passion of the ocean, being aware of the crisis in our oceans and wanting to do something to solve it," said Chris Gorell Barnes, co-founder and trustee of [Blue Marine Foundation](#), London.

"I believe our partnership with Kenzo has proven how global fashion brands can communicate and really drive positive change," he said.

"Not only are Kenzo supporting Blue with donated funds but they are taking a proactive role in helping spread awareness of overfishing on a global scale. This can only be a positive thing."

Fishy fashion

Kenzo launched its collaboration with Blue during its spring/summer 2014 collection runway show in September, with the unveiling of a t-shirt that bore the slogan “No fish, no nothing.” The creative directors used water as the theme for their entire spring/summer 2014 collection, the presentation of which included a waterfall installation.



Kenzo spring/summer 2014 runway look

Both Ms. Lim and Mr. Leon grew up in California near the ocean, and are sensitive to aquatic issues, such as overfishing, pollution and the suffering of marine life.

In a statement, the designers said they were searching for an ocean-oriented charity to work with and found Blue, which was a “perfect match.”

Blue was founded in 2010 by the creators of the documentary “The End of the Line,” which covers overfishing. Blue's mission is to promote sustainable fishing and create marine reserves.

Before the organization existed, only 1 percent of the oceans around the world were

protected. Blue has more than doubled that figure to 2.8 percent, and has a goal of protecting 10 percent of the world's oceans by 2020.

"Carol and Humberto from Kenzo approached Blue proactively because they were looking for a charity partner that reflected their own beliefs and what we had to say really struck a chord with them," said Mr. Barnes.

"They explained the reason they chose us out of hundreds of other marine conservation charities, was because we were actually doing something about the issue, instead of just talking about it," he said. "Our charity has been partly responsible for a significant rise in the total percentage of global ocean currently protected."

"We were absolutely thrilled. We always wanted to be cutting edge and innovative with the help of inspirational extraordinary brands like Kenzo and our other existing partners Orlebar Brown and Crème de La Mer we are able to get our message across to a wider audience in ways that appeal directly to them."

For the launch of its Blue collaboration, the homepage on Kenzo's Web site features a large slideshow about the Blue partnership, including photos of models wearing the collection and Ms. Lim and Mr. Leon, with a link to the designers' statement.

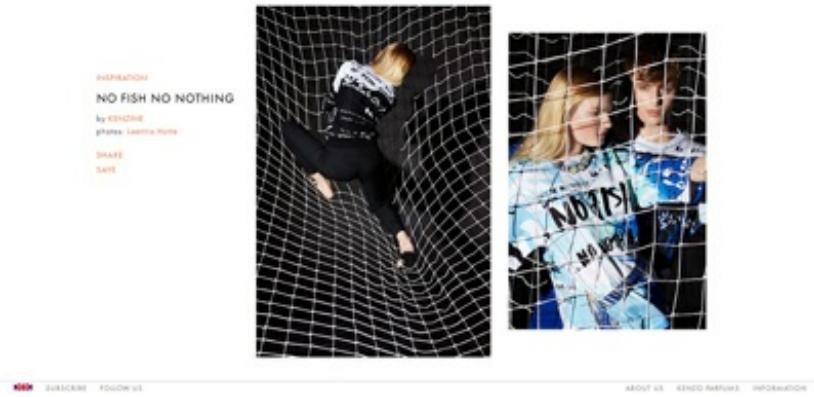
The capsule collection contains clothing and accessories for both men and women, including t-shirts and sweatshirts, dresses and backpacks emblazoned with "No fish, no nothing" or fish motifs.



Kenzo no fish, no nothing capsule items

In addition to being available on Kenzo's ecommerce site, the collection will be carried in the label's stores, as well as in select retailers. Proceeds from the collection will help Blue with its mission to set up reservations.

On the homepage, there is also a link to an editorial of models wearing the capsule collection for Blue while being trapped in nets.



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Kenzo No fish, no nothing editorial

Blue's Web site features the collaboration with Kenzo prominently, as it appears first when a consumer loads the homepage. The organization directs consumers to Kenzo's Web site to purchase the collection.



Blue Marine Foundation Web site

Charitable causes

An increase attention is being put on the ecological practices of fashion brands.

For instance, international environmental organization Greenpeace is putting pressure on eight luxury fashion brands to revise their production processes after finding toxic chemicals in their apparel and accessories.

Greenpeace studied 27 children's clothing and footwear items from luxury brands, finding that 16 of those contained one or more hazardous chemicals. With luxury consumers aware of the environmental impact of their clothing purchases, many luxury fashion houses may reform their practices to stay in good public opinion ([see story](#)).

Philanthropy is very common among luxury brands, especially fashion labels, but they are usually more about awareness than their bottom line.

In between focusing on holiday-gifting campaigns fashion brands promoted their latest charity initiatives to engage consumers around Thanksgiving with nonprofit campaigns.

As retailers and fashion brands were fighting for consumers' eyes and wallets, tying themselves to a good cause seemed like a way to stand out while making a difference. But while they may be genuine, charity campaigns do not always win consumers ([see](#)

[story](#)).

"We are obviously absolutely thrilled to be afforded such a prestigious and high-profile platform by a brand of Kenzo's stature," Mr. Barnes said. "It will bring a whole new audience to our campaign whilst also demonstrating the depth of Carol and Humberto's commitment to environmental issues.

"Blue will of course benefit, as will Kenzo," he said. "But the most important beneficiary will be the ocean."

Final Take

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