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## Fashion's autumn ad campaigns

By David Hayes

The new season's campaigns are here – but what are they saying?

It's August, and this being fashion, that means September – September issues, that is, all hitting the coffee table with a reassuringly weighty thud. These glossy fashion magazines traditionally herald the new season's major trends, complete with a bumper crop of advertising. Indeed, the advertising campaigns outweigh the editorial, both literally (the September US Vogue has 665 pages of ads v 237 editorial) and, in some cases, visually.

Advertising matters not only as a sign of the economic health of the fashion and luxury industry but also as a tone-setting exercise for the whole season. These images – be they good, bad or just plain bonkers – is how fashion should look, straight from the designer's eye, so take note.

Of course, fashion advertising is not just about print; Oscar de la Renta premiered his new autumn/winter campaign not in the pages of Vogue but on Instagram. With that in mind, we have not only rounded up the latest campaigns from the major labels but the accompanying online content too, to assess just what the designers are saying this season and why.

### BALENCIAGA



**Who:** Kristen McMenamy, photographed by Steven Klein.

**Where:** held hostage in a very chic Parisian salon. Don't worry, the police are on their way.

**What:** the only decadent touch here comes from hiring one of the most iconic supermodels of the 1990s and focusing on her knees. The rest is an exercise in pure restraint.

**Why:** new boy Alex Wang is not sure he wants to give us a heads-up about just who the new Balenciaga woman is, yet. Don't expect a cosmetics line anytime soon. Just focus on the bag, OK?

**Online:** no video but a rather nice archive – from 1930s to present day – to browse through.

[www.balenciaga.com](http://www.balenciaga.com)

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### CHRISTIAN DIOR

**Who:** Mariacarla Boscono, photographed by Willy Vanderperre.

**Where:** “Meet me in the lobby; I have something important to tell you.” OK, it is just a whitewashed brick wall but this is a very cinematic whitewashed brick wall with Hitchcockian undertones, I’ll have you know.

**What:** titled “An Aura of Mystery”, Raf Simons’s latest outing for Dior channels a 1940s feel that adds a film noir edge to his pared-down classicism. Mariacarla sports a coolly elegant tie-neck red coat and is carrying one of the Andy Warhol shoe-print clutches – which is, doubtless, stuffed to the gills with international secrets and incriminating photographs.

**Why:** this is only Simons’s second ready-to-wear collection for the French fashion house but the strong-yet-simple approach shows a man of quiet confidence.

**Online:** it’s all going on in the Dior online universe: campaign images, haute couture videos, backstage shots, archive and much more.

[www.dior.com](http://www.dior.com)

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## GIORGIO ARMANI



**Who:** model Mariacarla Boscono, photographed by Mert and Marcus.

**Where:** backed into a very tight corner.

**What:** a peek at Mr Armani’s softer side: a draped swing-back jacket, gently flaring crêpe trousers and a frizz of curls atop elfin beauty Mariacarla. The only hard edges are on the alligator trim doctor’s bag.

**Why:** the man who made the “women-mean-business” beige suit his own in the 1980s is in touch with his feminine side these days. Unless he is dressing Jodie Foster in the film *Elysium*, that is.

**Online:** the focus was “end of season sale” at time of writing – ah, but look closer and there’s a small preview box on new season accessories.

[www.giorgioarmani.com](http://www.giorgioarmani.com)

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## GIVENCHY

**Who:** Carine Roitfeld and daughter Julia Restoin Roitfeld, photographed by Mert and Marcus.

**Where:** nowhere, aka the safety of a photographic studio with a plain backdrop, and in black and white to boot.

**What:** two generations of fashion royalty zipped into Riccardo Tisci’s latest grunge/biker floral aesthetic. Carine, 59, is the ex-French Vogue editor-in-chief turned CR Fashion Book magazine founder; Julia, 32, is a former child model turned It girl and new-mummy blogger. Julia has got a handle on looking straight in to the lens. Mum, on the other hand, seems to be giving the evils to the hairdresser somewhere off to her right.

**Why:** er, fabulous at any age?

**Online:** no bells and whistles – or a video for that matter – just more of the campaign.

[www.givenchy.com](http://www.givenchy.com)

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## GUCCI



**Who:** Abbey Lee Kershaw, photographed by Mert and Marcus.

**Where:** somewhere in the depths of a Milanese World of Leather sofa showroom.

**What:** yes, it's all about skin this season for Gucci creative director Frida Giannini – any animal's skin; from the leather "Lady Lock" cane-handle bag with rhodium hardware to shiny python backless dress – yours for a breathtaking £4,910 – and the "Kim" leather lace-up booties. Sofa not included.

**Why:** the leathery look underscores the Italian house's equestrian heritage – established in Florence in 1921 by Guccio Gucci – but with Giannini's subversive, sexy spin.

**Online:** a shoppable video of Gucci's pre-fall collection. Just hover over the double "G" icon and click to buy.

[www.gucci.com](http://www.gucci.com)

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## JIMMY CHOO



**Who:** Nicole Kidman, photographed by Mikael Jansson.

**Where:** a sleek forest retreat with floor-to-ceiling windows – and no blinds, apparently. Has the woman no shame?

**What:** "I'm a dancer. I love to dance!" Er, sorry wrong ad (oh, come on, surely you remember the 2004 Chanel No 5 film?). Nicole reprises her role as campaign superstar, this time to show off creative director Sandra Choi's latest line of shoes and bags.

**Why:** since the company was bought out by Swiss company Labelux in May 2011 there have been a lot of changes. The star power of Nicole's appearance is no doubt meant to up the ante.

**Online:** yes, there's Academy Award-winning actress Nicole looking frankly amazing in a moody video, also shot by Jansson.

[www.jimmychoo.com](http://www.jimmychoo.com)

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## LOUIS VUITTON



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**Who:** models Gisele Bündchen, Karen Elson, Carolyn Murphy and Isabeli Fontana, photographed by Steven Meisel.

**Where:** the super-deluxe suite of a grand European hotel, possibly sometime last century between the two world wars – complete with a housemaid in an apron clearing away the tea things.



**What:** barely-there slips of lingerie peeking from underneath artfully open fur coats and a few bags. Oh and badly cut bobbed wigs. Who are these women of mystery? Search me. It takes a keen eye to recognise the squillion-dollar-a-day supers under those rugs.

**Why:** I'm an enigma – buy me.

**Online:** the site features a selection of videos, from fashion editor Kim Hersov discussing the new collection to various talking heads extolling the virtues of the Monogram bag.

[www.louisvuitton.com](http://www.louisvuitton.com)

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## MICHAEL KORS

**Who:** Karmen Pedaru and Simon Nessman, photographed by Mario Testino.

**Where:** touchdown at the heliport on the rooftop of Fantasy Towers, Dream On City, Richville USA.

**What:** living the American dream as only Mr Kors and Mr Testino know how – youth, sex, money, fur stoles, great bags, great hair and legs that go on forever ... all in one ultra-glossy package. The campaign is entitled “24-Hour Jet Set” – of course it is.

**Why:** Kors knows his customer base; they don't want mystery, they don't want art, they don't want cool. They just want to look a billion dollars.

**Online:** [www.destinationkors.com](http://www.destinationkors.com) – the sister site to the main site – has Kors TV, all the video content you could possibly want and more.

[www.michaelkors.com](http://www.michaelkors.com)

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## PRADA



**Who:** Freya Beha and Amanda Murphy, photographed by Steven Meisel.

**Where:** a grey plaster-walled industrial set with dark-stained wooden floors and scuffed mid-century furniture; all suggestive of a down-at-heel haute bourgeois sensibility, no doubt.

**What:** once you get over the icky oil-slicked hair trailing dangerously close to the itchy-looking knits, it's all about an almost insolent insouciance and undone womanly glamour. So insouciant, in fact, that the models have to sit down. In every shot.

**Why:** sitting down is all the better to show off Freya's zip-front gold quilt heels and Amanda's crocodile update of the classic 2000 bowling bag.

**Online:** a moody video attributed to “DJA” featuring the model cast “acting”, complete with scripts, menacing lighting, industrial lifts, that icky wet hair and plenty of sitting down – all to the soundtrack of “Shallow then Halo” by the Cocteau Twins.

[www.prada.com](http://www.prada.com)

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## STELLA MCCARTNEY



**Who:** Suvi Koponen and Chiharu Okunugi, photographed by Mert and Marcus.

**Where:** on the school run or thigh deep in an outdoor swimming pool somewhere in the Hollywood hills.

**What:** Suvi got the easy option, posing with a group of pre-teens in school uniform brandishing a “Stella McCartney” placard, and looks rather pleased with herself. Chiharu on the other hand? She had to wade into the shallows of what is possibly one of McCartney’s celebrity friends’ pools in heavy plaid wool. Not happy at all.

**Why:** the coat is this season’s big statement, so how better to show the versatility of an investment piece by placing it in those, er, everyday situations that working mums just like Stella find themselves in.

**Online:** click on the main homepage image and you are straight through to the online store. Clever.

[www.stellamccartney.com](http://www.stellamccartney.com)

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## VERSACE

**Who:** Kate Moss, photographed by Mert and Marcus.

**Where:** against the grey fog of a Colorama backdrop, some studio, somewhere.

**What:** when you’ve bagged Kate Moss as your star act why bother with superfluous extras? Or clothes even. Trooper Kate manages to make a trio of quilted totes from Versace’s Vanitas accessories line look like a plausible statement. Note: don’t try this look at home.

**Why:** the label is reportedly looking to go public or find a business partner to fund growth. Nothing says “investment-worthy” more than a big push on lucrative accessories.

**Online:** a buzzy backstage video gives you an insider peek: see the models in dress rehearsals, hear Donatella talk, see her point at the running order line-up, get the beauty lowdown from make-up artist Pat McGrath.

[www.versace.com](http://www.versace.com)



VERSACE

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