



The Moment

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Now Screening | Nick Knight's 'Portent'

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The celebrate the introduction of women's wear to Thecorner.com, the virtual store owned by Yoox that has previously sold only cutting-edge designers for men, the photographer and director Nick Knight has created "Portent," a short film featuring the designs of Martin Margiela, Haider Ackermann and Proenza Schouler, among others. The Moment caught up with Knight to talk about his latest project.

Q. Other than obviously staying true to the message of the brand that hires you while making something original, what are the biggest creative challenges you face on a project like this?

A. People expect fashion on the Internet to be fast moving, to be slightly tech-y looking. I wanted to do something that clearly wasn't that, something that was romantic, Italianate and had a slower pace and some sensuality to it. I wanted to do something that didn't look like a kind of superfast communication from the new "digital age."

That aesthetic you're describing seems a bit retro now.

Absolutely. But I think we're still defining the parameters of this medium, and it's been largely defined as access to information but aesthetically it hasn't been defined yet. We're still in its early days. Let's face it, although it was invented a while back it's only really been around for about 10 years. And any medium of this importance was still was pretty clunky 10 years after its invention. Look at television: they were still putting theater on television, and almost to some degree putting radio on when it started. I think we're seeing that a bit with the Internet. People aren't using the medium for the best of its advantages. I still think they are slightly forcing old mediums into it.

What do you think film brings to fashion?

A lot. At Showstudio, fashion film is almost the reason we started — to kind of give it a platform because it's my belief that clothes to some degree have been compromised by being represented solely by the still image.

How so?

When a designer makes a piece of clothing, it is considered and created in movement and made to be seen and used in movement. So however great fashion photography has been — and, of course, there have been some iconic, time-setting images — there's still always a compromise to the designer's vision. Fashion film as a medium is more correct than fashion photography now.

That's a big call from one of the world's leading fashion photographers.

Obviously, I don't think that fashion photography is bad. I just don't think that it's the right medium for the Internet and the Internet now is the medium for expressing fashion. I have three children — all in their teens and all very much into fashion in different stylistic ways — and none of them look at magazines at all.

What of the film's pointed multiracial casting?

I think that was a good move on behalf of Federico Marchetti and Yoox to be supportive of that. Too much mainstream fashion is all-white all the time. That was important, but it's just one of the many components. I think it was also important to have models that could convey grace and elegance. The movement we got from the models and the way they interpreted the clothes and delivered the narrative of the clothes was so delicate and graceful. There's an elegance that all too often is lacking in fashion.