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**For Immediate Release**

### A Rebellious Collegiate Affair

The moment we have all been waiting for has finally arrived. Rihanna's Fenty x Puma Fall 2017 Ready-To-Wear collection will be displayed March 6th, 2017 in the atrium of the Richelieu-Louvois Library at approximately 9 o'clock p.m sharp. This Bibliothèque Nationale de France is newly restored with marble column and gold rococo detailing. An extravagant venue for an equally extravagant event.

Being one of the most successful artist in the world, she has definitely outdone herself. Handpicking local trends from the growing youth, Rihanna continually stays on top featuring garments such as the extremely oversized puffer coats and the mock-neck crop tops. When it comes to style, only she can create the perfect concoction of tomboy, sexy and edgy.

The Back to School collection breaks every strict code imaginable. Rihanna is a rebel at heart and she has taken this event to the next level with her edgy and creatively wild thoughts. She uses this platform to recreate and rewrite the basic standards on collegiate attire. Harmony is displayed with the combination of masculine aesthetics and feminine edge forming together to generate fashion romance.

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## Melissa Battifarano

Melissa Battifarano's career path in fashion certainly had its twists and turns before she landed at where she is today. Currently, she's the Design Director for Rihanna's Fenty x Puma line, but past work experiences have taken Battifarano from New York to Boston and around the world, spanning across menswear, womenswear, activewear and the urban market. Getting to her dream job was a result of patience, tenacity and hard work.

Born and raised in New York, Battifarano attended FIT and studied knitwear. Throughout design school, she interned at Tommy Hilfiger, which eventually led to her first job for the brand's menswear department to work on knits and sweaters. After reading a profile on Marc Eckō, she wrote him a letter to say she was a fan of his brand. A few months later, he hired her as a designer for his fashion line, Eckō Unlimited.

It was at Puma where Battifarano's old boss had reached out and mentioned a new opportunity with Rihanna's Fenty x Puma team. After an interview with the pop star, Battifarano was hired to help build the brand for its debut runway show at New York Fashion Week in February. And the hard work has been paying off since.

## Rihanna

Born Robyn Rihanna Fenty, on February 20, 1988, in Barbados, Rihanna signed with Def Jam records at age 16 and in 2005 released her first album *Music of the Sun*, which sold more than two million copies worldwide. She went on to release more albums and an array of hit songs, including "Unfaithful," "Umbrella," "Disturbia," "Take a Bow," "Diamonds" and "We Found Love." A global pop star with an unrelentingly edgy image, Rihanna has also won multiple industry accolades, including Grammys and MTV awards.

In December 2014, it was confirmed that Rihanna would become the creative director of the fashion sportswear Puma, overseeing the brand's women's line which will include collaborations in apparel and footwear. In the fall of 2015, Rihanna released her first trainer with Puma, and the sneaker sold out online with three hours of its pre-sale launch. Over the next two years, Rihanna released various other footwear in different colorways and styles, which were all met positively by both critics and buyers. 2016 saw Rihanna debut her first clothing line in collaboration with Puma at New York Fashion Week; the collection was met with rave reviews from fashion critics. In the spring of that year, Rihanna debuted her second collection at Paris Fashion Week and was met with critical acclaim. *Vogue* magazine praised the collection and Rihanna, stating "Sometimes when a famous person tries his or her hand at another discipline, the results can be uneven. And yet there are those special cases when making the switch leads to a good surprise. Judging by the collection she showed today, we can add Rihanna to that list." In Autumn 2017, Rihanna x Puma returned to New York, for the debut of their autumn collection, like previous lines the collection was met with positive reviews. *Vogue Magazine* stated "Fenty x Puma has kept one step ahead, so to speak, thanks in part to shoe designs that think outside the box—Rihanna is the first woman to have won *Footwear News's* coveted Shoe of the Year award, after all."

Most likely to break the rules, Rihanna returns as PUMA Creative Director for her third season. The latest FENTY PUMA by Rihanna collection takes classic school uniforms and dismantles them. Varsity jackets are reimaged with exaggerated dimensions. Sneakers meet stiletto heels. Preppy meets provocative. Unexpected cutlines, premium materials, and chenille patches abound.

# **Puma Explains Its New Creative Director: Rihanna**

By Vanessa Friedman

On Tuesday, Puma, the German sportswear company owned by the Kering group, announced that it was appointing a new creative director for its women's collections: the pop star and "fashion icon" Rihanna. She was also named "global ambassador." It was something of a surprising decision. Rihanna, after all, while known for her athletic performances, is not exactly an elite athlete in the mold of, say, the sprinter Usain Bolt, perhaps Puma's most famous "ambassador." And the last time Puma had a name creative director, it was Hussein Chalayan (2008-12), who was known more for his intellectual fashion cred than his mass culture resonance. Plus, ambassadors and creative directors are generally considered different roles: the one being a public facing celebrity endorsement, the latter being an in-the-studio, hands-on direction. They require somewhat different skill sets.

In any case, coming as it did on the back of market rumors reported by Bloomberg that Kering was exploring a sale of Puma, which has been in the midst of a restructuring and struggles behind much larger rivals Nike and Adidas, the appointment could look, as Luca Solca, luxury analyst at Exane BNP Paribas, told me in an email, "like a pure marketing ploy." Certainly Twitter had a bit of a freakout, which ranged from great excitement to dismay.

To try and understand exactly what the brand was thinking, I called Adam Petrick, its global brand and marketing director. Here's what he said. One the design job was Rihanna's idea. "It really came from her," Mr. Petrick said. "Though we originally started talking about it in terms of advertising, she wanted to express herself in this way. They said to us, 'We can change the face of the brand from a product perspective.' " She did not just want to be a "face." Though Puma did not demand full exclusivity in terms of Rihanna's performance or red carpet wardrobe, "she will wear Puma exclusively for sportswear and streetwear." And sneakers, of course.

Two, the woman's athletic space is very fractured, and it's hard to find one name that resonates globally. "We were looking for someone who draws women the world over, and that is hard to find in sports," Mr. Petrick said. "Women's basketball is big in one country but not another, for example. But in terms of body confidence, bravery and determination — all qualities associated with Puma — it was clear Rihanna met the criteria. She's a game-changer." Pun absolutely intended, I would expect.

Also, it is true, Mr. Petrick said, that many internationally known female athletes were already locked up by Puma's rivals. (Though Puma does work with professional athletes like the Brazilian soccer player Marta, the golfer Lexi Thompson and the Jamaican hurdler Ristananna Tracey.)

Three, they were not worried that she lacked an official design or, say, Olympic, experience. "Rihanna will bring creative direction, which is not necessarily about the intricacies of design — we have that with our design team, as well as the production know-how — but more about the concept, ideas, overall direction," Mr. Petrick said. As for the sports question: "We are about being the best you, not just the best in the world," he said. Of course, she does have stadium experience. And there was that three-collection stint designing for the British brand River Island last year, though that was met with mixed reviews. The Daily Beast called the debut a "horror show," though New York magazine said, "While it didn't disappoint, it also didn't prove quite as exciting as it could have been."

Four, they were not worried about potential controversy. Or, say, a "naked" athletic outfit like the sheer dress Rihanna wore to the Council of Fashion Designers of America awards. "Rihanna has a fantastically consistent track record," Mr. Petrick said. "She has been at the top of her game a long time. And I can say from personal experience she has a desire to improve and that is what we are about." Besides, he said: "We want to push limits. We are going to have some really unique pieces in the line."

Five, Puma is committed to this space. The deal with Rihanna is a multiyear contract. "We're very bullish about the women's training business, and investing heavily in the area," said Mr. Petrick, who nevertheless could not specify the division of sales between men's wear and women's wear. "It's not 50/50, but it's not 80/20 either," he said. "It's somewhere in between. The problem is, many people buy pieces on a unisex basis." In any case, Rihanna is going to work across categories from women's training to "athleisure." The price points will be varied, and begin at the accessible end. The idea is to get mass. How big do they think this can be for Puma? "Huge."

Six, those for-sale rumors. "We do not comment on market rumors."

## **Fenty x Puma by Rihanna: ethnically diverse and exuberant**

The pop star is making inroads in fashion with an impressive show combining motocross stunts and colourful surf aesthetics



Rihanna making her exit from the Fenty x Puma show on the back of a motorbike.

Photograph: Brian Ach/Getty Images for Fenty X Puma By Rihanna

It takes a lot to get the fashion crowd properly revved up at a catwalk show, but Rihanna pulled it off at her Fenty x Puma show in New York on Sunday night. It wasn't the clothes that had the style press on the edge of their seats as much as the preamble, during which a team of motocross stunt performers vroomed up ramps and were propelled into the air to perform somersaults, flips and other seemingly impossible tricks. The striking set, which comprised towering spot-lit dunes of glittering pink sand, added to the drama.

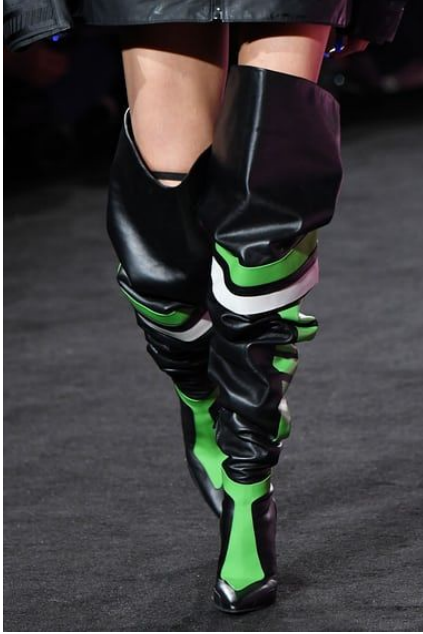


The collection featured an abundance of swimming suits.

Photograph: Randy Brooke/Getty Images for Fenty X Puma By Rihanna

Death-defying stunts are a tough act to follow, but the models kept the energy high when they strode onto the runway. The cast included the gap-toothed, shaven-headed Slick Woods, who demonstrated the kind of personality that is all too often discouraged in models by dancing and waving her arm around as she stomped to the booming music.

There were cycling shorts and wader-like overalls, bum bags, zip-up tops, wetsuits, high-heeled Puma-branded flip-flops and thigh-high boots which looked somewhere between *Pretty Woman* and a pair of galoshes.



The catwalk included extravagant thigh-high boots.  
Photograph: Rodin Banica//WWD/REX/Shutterstock

There was a preponderance of swimming suits confirming one of the oddest microtrends from New York fashion week so far: that of wearing swimsuits with very high-cut legs beneath shorts and skirts, with a few inches of bare skin left visible at the hip. Logos ran down arms and across chests, many of them saying “since 1988” which as might be guessed is the year Rihanna was born.

The pop star said in a statement the clothes were “a mix between two worlds: motocross and surf. It was a challenge to bring them together but it ended up being the perfect combination.”

Rihanna is one of a handful of celebrities with huge social media followings making inroads in fashion (see also Beyoncé, Kanye West and Justin Bieber) while traditional entertainment industry revenues decline. Whatever you think about that shift, in terms of representation, Rihanna is certainly a force for good. Not only were the models at the show ethnically diverse and exuberant but, on the preceding Friday, she launched her own beauty line, which, with 40 shades of foundation, is one of the most inclusive beauty ranges ever.

Rihanna also knows how to make an exit. At the end of the show, rather than the customary bow, she appeared, resplendent in retina-searing green, and did a lap of honour on the back of a motorbike.



## Rihanna Jumps on the No Pants Trend for Fenty x Puma

By Cristina Gibson October 9, 2017



Pants are overrated — just ask Rihanna, the latest celebrity to rock the no pants trend that *Stylish* also spotted Beyonce wearing last week.

The 29-year-old singer and designer shared a series of photos on her Instagram on Sunday, October 8, as she posed in a black and yellow oversized sweatshirt from her Fenty x Puma line and white sneakers and ankle socks. Since Rihanna is never one to play by the fashion rules, we weren't surprised to find that the crew neck pullover is actually from the Fenty Men's collection and retails for \$160. The Grammy winner's latest collaboration with Puma features shoes, dresses, bodysuits, hats, chokers and even bras. After being named a creative director of Puma in December 2014, she went on to make history as being the first woman to win Footwear News's coveted Shoe of the Year award.

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