



# Marni move bucks a trend

Company is one of the few major brands to appoint a woman to the top design role

BY VANESSA FRIEDMAN

In the latest move in the unprecedented realignment of the fashion world, Meryll Rogge was appointed creative director of Marni on Tuesday. She will be responsible for women's wear, men's wear, accessories, store design and communications, replacing Francesco Risso, who left the Italian brand last month after almost 10 years.

Ms. Rogge is the 17th new designer named to a big brand since mid-2024, but only the fourth woman.

It's a striking imbalance in an industry that is still largely powered by women's wear and accessories, and one that was quick to pay lip service to diversity in recent years but has seemed to retreat from many of its pledges in terms of gender and race.

Ms. Rogge will become the sole female designer in the stable of OTB, the holding company that also owns Maison Margiela, Jil Sander, Diesel and Viktor & Rolf and that reported sales of 1.7 billion euros in 2024, down 4 percent from 2023.

Similarly, Louise Trotter, who will make her debut at Bottega Veneta in September, is the only female designer at Kering, the luxury group that owns

Gucci, Balenciaga and Saint Laurent, among other brands. The other two women who became creative directors of major fashion houses this year are Sarah Burton at Givenchy and Veronica Leoni at Calvin Klein.

In a news release, Stefano Rosso, the Marni chief executive, called Ms. Rogge "an exceptional creative talent and an inspiring woman."

A Belgian designer who started her career at Marc Jacobs before becoming head of women's design at Dries Van Noten and founding a namesake brand in 2020, Ms. Rogge, 40, shares a certain quirky practicality with Marni's founder, Consuelo Castiglioni.

It was Ms. Castiglioni who transformed her husband's family fur company into a runway name beloved of bohemian intellectuals and art gallerists with a messy bent. In 2012, OTB bought a majority stake in the company, acquiring it fully in 2015. The next year, Ms. Castiglioni left and Mr. Risso was named creative director.

Though Mr. Risso's collections could be eye-poppingly imaginative, bristling with three-dimensional metal flowers or

covered in what looked like finger paint, they could also seem self-indulgent — fun to look at but hard to wear.

Ms. Rogge, who is relatively unknown outside the fashion world, became the first woman to be named designer of the year at the Belgian Fashion Awards in 2024 and was the recipient of the Andam Prize earlier this year, one of fashion's most prestigious awards.

In explaining the selection, Guillaume Houzé, the president of Andam, cited Ms. Rogge's ability to turn "ambiguity, hybridity and the unexpected into allies." Like Ms. Castiglioni, she is also adept at marrying the conceptual to the commercial and has an affinity for color and the sort of print combinations that are alluring in their oddity.

In the news release, Ms. Rogge called joining Marni "both humbling and inspiring."

A spokeswoman for Marni did not specify when Ms. Rogge would unveil her first collection. She did say, however, that the designer planned to maintain her own line and split her time between the two brands. Multitasking, as it were.



PASCAL LE SEGRETAIR/GETTY IMAGES

Meryll Rogge, the new creative director at Marni, previously worked at Marc Jacobs and Dries Van Noten. The Belgian designer has been praised for her ability to turn "ambiguity, hybridity and the unexpected into allies."