



EXCLUSIVE

# Bruno Pavlovsky Readies Chanel For Matthieu Blazy's Debut

● The executive shared how the house is preparing for its new creative "spark" by restructuring its teams and naming new brand ambassadors.

BY JOELLE DIDERICH

**PARIS** – Matthieu Blazy's first show for Chanel is one of the most eagerly awaited events in a year chock-full of designer debuts, fueling the sort of speculation usually associated with the release of a Taylor Swift album.

Observers searched for clues in the red carpet looks worn at the Venice Film Festival. (Chanel on Sunday named Ayo Edebiri, who attended the premiere of "After the Hunt" in a red strapless evening gown, as its new brand ambassador and said she would sit front row.)

Images of old Chanel collections circulated on Instagram, masquerading as an "exclusive preview" of Blazy's spring 2026 collection.

In the run-up to the show at the Grand Palais on Monday, the brand began drip-feeding teaser images shot by veteran photographer David Bailey – the back of a model's bobbed hair, and a white shirt with a garment cover – hinting at a minimalist new direction for the brand.

Ten days earlier, Bruno Pavlovsky, president of fashion and president of Chanel SAS, sat down with WWD in his Paris office to talk about the brand's new chapter under Blazy, who succeeds Virginie Viard, the former right-hand of longtime creative director Karl Lagerfeld.

"The energy here is off the charts," Pavlovsky beamed.

He addressed why the brand has spent more than a year showing collections designed by a studio team, how Blazy's arrival is reshaping its organization, and why he hopes the new collection will prove the right kind of creative "spark."

**WWD: This has been an unusually protracted handover period, especially when you consider that some other houses have staged presentations within months of naming a new creative director. Why was that?**

**Bruno Pavlovsky:** I really admire anyone who can join a house and put out a full collection in a matter of days or weeks. We take a longer-term approach. The most important thing was giving Matthieu time to truly settle into the brand. That's also what sets us apart, so I believe we made the right decision and chose the right pace.

First, we wanted to give him the time he needed to really get to know Chanel. Not that he was unfamiliar with it – he is very cultured and has a deep knowledge of the history of fashion, whether at Chanel or elsewhere, so even before his arrival, I believe he spent a great deal of time on his own doing research and really figuring out what Chanel stands for. On top of that, we have adapted our set-up to make sure we can continue producing our 10 collections a year under the best possible conditions.

We've structured the workflow with Matthieu in a way that allows us to manage multiple collections simultaneously, giving him the space to step back and see the broader picture. In many ways, he's like the conductor – orchestrating everything, ensuring that each element aligns, and that kind of process takes time.

His first haute couture collection is coming in January, and that will also mark



the beginning of a new chapter. It will be the first collection with a team that is new to haute couture, which makes it especially interesting.

Then there are collections like Coco Beach and Coco Neige – more tactical in nature, but also offering space for distinct forms of expression.

Coco Beach is ready, and you will see a new narrative both in terms of product and imagery. This is Matthieu's take on the Coco Beach concept, and it's really fascinating. Of course, some people will love it, others may feel it leans too far in one direction or another. But for me, that's not the point. What matters is that it's a fresh start.

**WWD: Your fall campaign also marks a departure, with full-page photos of shoes and bags featured as "hero" products.**

**B.P.:** With this campaign, the intention was to put the focus back on the product and that's something we intend to continue doing.

**WWD: Did he have any input in this campaign?**

**B.P.:** Of course, he was already here, and from the moment he arrived, we've run everything past him. But this campaign doesn't represent his influence directly. Officially and practically, Matthieu's imprint begins with the collection on Oct. 6.

**WWD: His arrival comes against the backdrop of a generational handover on the management side, with the arrival in 2022 of Leena Nair as global chief executive officer of the brand.**

**Why did you think the time was right for a new creative direction?**

**B.P.:** For me, there are two interconnected but distinct aspects at play. First: the generational change in Chanel's leadership, which was not only planned, but absolutely essential. It was necessary

for us to lay the foundations for the next 20 years, and I believe we're off to a strong start on that front.

Virginie did an extraordinary job handling the transition after Karl's passing. She helped the brand evolve by bringing a greater sense of ease to the collections. It worked really well, but we also knew that, at some point, we would need to introduce a new creative eye to begin a new cycle and regain momentum.

I'm not sure that, in 15 years' time, there will be many creative directors with the longevity of someone like Giorgio Armani, Ralph Lauren or Karl Lagerfeld. They are truly exceptional. Will this new generation of designers have the same staying power? One can only hope so, but inevitably, the questions of succession and creative renewal arise, and it just so happens that it's happening everywhere all at once.

For us, this wasn't the product of some strategic directive. Rather, it was about meeting the moment and it became clear at a certain point that a shift was needed. We're genuinely thrilled to have Matthieu onboard. I have complete confidence in his vision and ability to take the house to the next level.

**WWD: For almost four decades, the final fittings before the show were a sacred ritual, when Chanel welcomed chosen editors to preview the collection. For the first time this season, it won't take place. How are the teams adapting to this new way of working?**

**B.P.:** We no longer have those final fittings because everything is ready much earlier.

Karl had established a certain way of working – he taught us to pull it all together in just two afternoons. With Matthieu, it's happening over eight days.

For the teams, I think it's been a welcome change. In the past, there was often a bottleneck of information while

we waited for those final two days and then everything had to come together very quickly. But now, with things being decided earlier and unfolding more gradually, the teams have had time to adapt.

We're still fine-tuning things. Matthieu, his new team and our existing teams are working it out together. Some days, it all runs very smoothly, others, less so, but that's entirely natural. I believe that in six months to a year, with two or three collections under our belt, we will have completely switched to this new way of working.

At the end of the day, what we care about is that Matthieu has everything he needs to deliver a collection and a show that truly reflect his vision. And there's a dedicated team around him, working to ensure just that.

**WWD: Has there been a lot of turnover in the design studio?**

**B.P.:** There hasn't been a huge amount of turnover, but we have significantly reinforced the teams.

We have assigned certain people to specific collections, while others work across all of them. This shift has required us to hire more people.

We've had to expand and adapt our development and technical teams too. They are now collaborating with the studio much earlier in the process, and that's a win-win situation. In many cases, we've promoted people from within. Right now, we're in a phase of ongoing discovery, learning and adaptation.

Witnessing this transformation has been absolutely fascinating from my perspective. And I want to be clear: this is not a critique of what came before. At that time, we were doing exactly what was needed. But this new approach will likely improve the speed of development, collaboration with suppliers and overall production timelines, because we're starting earlier. Ultimately, I hope this leads to more reliable deliveries of certain collections in our boutiques.

**WWD: Some houses undergoing a creative transition are also using that moment to introduce new muses and brand ambassadors. Are you?**

**B.P.:** Yes, you will definitely see some new faces at this show, but you'll also see ambassadors who have been with us for a long time.

Of course, Matthieu brings his own set of creative affinities, which are new and incredibly enriching, but not at the expense of existing relationships. On the contrary, it's about adding depth and diversity to the panel of women who represent the brand. What matters to us is representing a broad spectrum of identities: different women, different cultures, different nationalities. It's entirely legitimate that Matthieu should gravitate to a new set of people. He's also very comfortable, I think, with our existing ambassadors. They've gotten to know each other and there's a lot of goodwill.

That's precisely why it was important to allow for a longer transition period: to preserve the identity of the house, even as we open up new horizons. We absolutely want Matthieu to put his stamp on the brand – to bring his energy, inspiration and personal vision. Naturally, that means change.

I hope the collection surprises people.

**WWD: Even if that involves taking a risk?**

**B.P.:** It might be a risk on paper, but we need this new energy and everything I've seen so far is pointing in the right direction. There hasn't been a single moment where I've thought, "This isn't right." I find it deeply exciting to welcome new perspectives and interpretations. This is the first of many collections to come, so it will be a progressive evolution, but you need that initial spark.