

J'ADORE

WORDS **Mark Jacobs** • PHOTOGRAPHY **Bruce Weber**

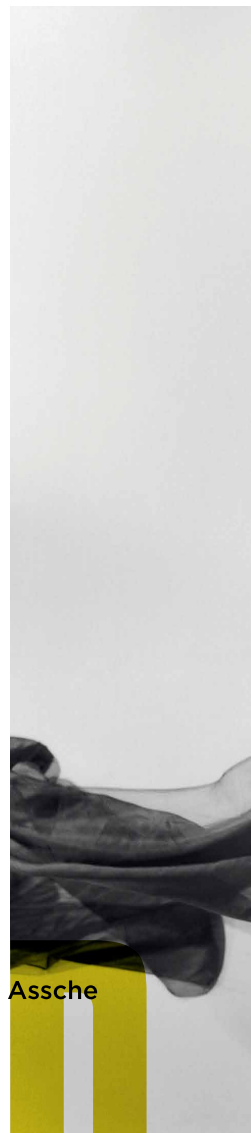
The rebranding of Dior Homme reaches its peak with a Bruce Weber-directed short film for its Miami flagship store, commissioned by artistic director Kris Van Assche

At a cocktail reception for the opening of the new Dior Homme boutique in the LVMH corridor of the Design District during the Art Basel Miami Beach art fair, a multiplicity of fashion, design and art royalty have clustered. Martha Stewart, the homemaking colossus, is here, too, smiling in her black-sequin capri trousers. By the black-on-black accessories wall, the 82-year-old model-turned-photographer Bunny Yeager holds court in turquoise floral print. Kelly Klein has swung by, in town for a signing of her second monograph on luxurious swimming pools, as are Ingrid Sischy, Sandy Brant and Calvin Klein himself.

The scene is the result of a specific intention – to evolve the emotional scope of Dior Homme. These seemingly brand-discordant American social pillars are guests of the great photographer Bruce Weber, celebrating *Can I Make The Music Fly?*, the ten-minute, Dior-commissioned film he directed, which is to be on permanent view at the store. Weber's participation itself is a curiosity, as his immediately identifiable, uncompromisingly robust signature style is a departure from the look of the house under Dior Homme artistic director Kris Van Assche (also in attendance), a Belgian partial to intellectualised restraint and the celebrated photographer Willy Vanderperre.

And yet Van Assche, a long-time admirer of Weber, has revealed himself to be a neoclassicist, pursuing what he calls “technical beauty”, an atelier-enhanced artful hardness that equates the appeal of an expertly constructed garment with that of a precision timepiece. “I like the notion of being athletic,” Van Assche says, citing model Adrien Sahores, who has been the fit model for the past two seasons. “He has the right face – a bad-guy face – but a totally elegant attitude. He’s perfect.”

Weber is an impeccable choice to make this evolution apparent. While men’s fashion can be cold, the beloved photographer has the ability to warm it up, roll it around in the grass and send it running bare-assed across a beach. He’s known for his caricatures of idealised masculinity – hairless, muscular, full-lipped, non-intellectual. Their frequent homoerotic arrangements seem to give his beautiful





Behind the scenes on Bruce Weber's film, *Can I Make The Music Fly*, which features dancer Sergei Polunin (left) and violinist Charlie Siem (below left)

mirror creatures permission to rightfully enjoy what amounts to self-love, while celebrating a heartfelt libertine spirit. Weber's explorations of male beauty span the 1977 men's grooming guide *Looking Good*; his iconic 1982 portrait of Olympic pole-vaulter Tom Hintnaus for Calvin Klein Underwear; and the 1999 monograph, *The Chop Suey Club*, which documented four years in the development of a teenage wrestler named Peter Johnson.

Weber also indulges the silly and the sweet, whether photographing models, celebrities, or elephants dressed in made-to-measure garments created for him by designers such as Karl Lagerfeld and Yohji Yamamoto for *W* magazine's 2005 "Trunk Show" portfolio. When asked how imperfection interests him, Weber recalls his shoot for the Abercrombie & Fitch winter 2004 *A&F Magazine* of perfectly Weber-handsome congenital amputee Kyle Maynard, a wrestler born with arms that end at the elbows and legs that end near the knees. "I was so proud to see this picture running in all these magazines of him sitting on top of another wrestler, looking like the most beautiful guy in the world," he says. What has Weber learned about men after years of photographing them? "They're good kissers," he says, before misunderstanding a follow-up question about self-discovery. How about yourself? "I hope so!" he responds and laughs before righting his answer. "I've learned to be humble and happy with what I have. I feel so fortunate for the people that I've bumped into in my life, famous and not-so-famous."

The negotiation between his and Van Assche's masculinities found graceful

resolution. "With Dior Homme and Bruce Weber not being an obvious collaboration, everybody needed to grow towards each other," Van Assche says.

The common ground was Sergei Polunin, the youngest dancer to be made a principal of the Royal Ballet – touted as the heir to both Rudolf Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov – who made the news last year when he dramatically quit the company. Then Weber added violinist Charlie Siem, pianist Mason Burcher and 12-year-old violin prodigy Claudius Agrippa, dedicating the film to classical pianist Glenn Gould.

The result is Weber at the height of his powers. "I hope men see that it's really good to be an individual," Weber says. "I was always an outsider and alone a lot. I always felt that I have so many things in my life because I picked up a camera and took pictures of people and made films about people. And yet Nina Simone said something to me once and it's really true. She said, 'You can be on stage and all of these people are applauding you and telling you this and that but when you go home at night to the hotel room, by yourself, take off all of your clothes and get into bed, that can really do something to your head.'"

Weber premiered the film several doors down from the boutique opening at the Zaha Hadid-decorated Moore Building, where models circulated amid slashes of white fluorescent tube lighting. The strategic collision reached its conclusion as bass-heavy Toronto quartet Azari & III performed while screens replayed Weber's black-and-white tone poem to classical music, dinner jackets and balletic leaping. "It really is the story of Dior Homme," says Van Assche, clearly pleased. "I've been at Dior for more than five years now and to be able to put a dancer in a black suit is an evolution for the brand. We have loosened things up or that would not have been possible. It's a good statement for me. It's still this cliché that you can't move in a Dior suit. Well, yes you can." **GQS**



DIOR HOMME SS13

The blazer-centric new collection from Dior Homme expands on military, sportswear and outdoor apparel themes while maintaining the high-quality finish and tailoring the house is known for.

