VIRTUAL INFLUENCER HAS VERY REAL IMPACT ON FASHION INDUSTRY

Noonoouri, a digital avatar, is closing in on 300,000 Instagram followers and has already worked with major brands like Dior and Versace

Spotted: Munich-based designer and creative director Joerg Zuber is the human behind one of the internet’s most influential virtual personas: Noonoouri. The digital persona has become a major player in the fashion world, closing in on 300,000 Instagram followers and having already worked with major brands like Dior, Versace and Swarovski.

Noonoouri is said to be 19 years old and living in Paris. Her Instagram posts sometimes feature product placement, like posing with a bottle of Calvin Klein’s Eternity perfume in a recent sponsored post. The post has received nearly 10,000 likes. Other times, she’ll appear in images or videos alongside notable humans from the fashion industry.

Each still image that gets posted takes about three days to create, to “find the right concept, getting her rendered in the pose in 3D, tailor making the clothes to her body and then compositing the whole,” Zuber told Springwise. Animations can take between two and six weeks, Zuber said.

The concept was developed by Zuber and his creative agency, Opium Effect, about seven years ago. After failing to secure any financial backing from investors, Zuber launched Noonoouri himself in late 2017.
Noonoouri is considered one of the first virtual influencers to make it big, though Miquela Sousa (@lilmiquela), with her 1.6 million Instagram followers, is often credited with spawning the genre.

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**Takeaway:**

Virtual influencers appeal to brands for several reasons, including their popularity with younger demographics, and are considered a cheaper and safer marketing option than working with humans (virtual influencers rarely get into PR trouble). Like Miquela, Noonoouri has characteristics of a real fashion model. But she is unique in other ways. “When I created her, I wanted to have something that is completely different from a real human, which means that she really is at first sight recognizable as a character, not a human being,” Zuber told Springwise, adding: “I developed her as a global citizen who is able to connect societies, people and even countries, with her open and fearless mind.” Noonoouri proves that virtual influencers do not have to be 100 percent life-like to be effective, and may alleviate some of the ethical concerns that come with blurring the line between reality and virtual reality.