



JONATHAN SAUNDERS IN NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 2016. ALL CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES: SAUNDERS' OWN.

## Jonathan SAUNDERS

Photography CHRISTIAN MACDONALD  
Styling KARLTEMPLER

AS THE NEW MAN HEADING UP DIANE VON FURSTENBERG, THE SCOTTISH DESIGNER IS REINVENTING THE ICON OF EASY, SEDUCTIVE CHIC.

There may be no fashion label more synonymous with New York than Diane von Furstenberg, whose wrap dress is an institution in itself: Included in the Smithsonian's collection, the curve-clinging dress has exuded a pragmatic sex appeal for over four decades.

Liberation has always been a credo for the designer, and last year, fittingly, von Furstenberg got a bit more of her own. With an eye on her many philanthropic pursuits, she handed over the company's design reins to Jonathan Saunders, 39, who now serves as the brand's chief creative officer, overseeing the scope of ready-to-wear, accessories, advertising, store concept, and art direction. The match, and the timing, was fortuitous. Saunders, a Central Saint Martins alum who broke out of the London scene

in the early aughts with his exuberant silk-screened prints and architectural-minded construction, had recently shuttered his eponymous brand and, rumor had it, was in contention for the vacant post left by Raf Simons at Dior. "I made the big decision to move away from my label," the affable Saunders notes, speaking from DVF's headquarters, located in the Meatpacking District. "I was going to have a moment where I developed my own line of furniture, which is one of my loves. And then I got a call from Diane. I saw, very quickly, an exciting opportunity."

Saunders made the transatlantic jump last May, producing his first collection, for spring 2017, in just three months. "My partner and my dog have been very, very tolerant," Saunders says with a laugh. "I

came in here and hit the ground running. Everyone felt like they had been run over by a bus. They haven't quite experienced the crazy Scotsman that I am." His labor paid off. His inaugural outing cleverly twists the von Furstenberg vernacular into a jumping-off point for Saunders's own DNA, the slinky asymmetrical draped dresses, effusive color combinations, and sensuous kimono silhouettes tapping into a modern ease that doesn't sacrifice complexity or intricacy. But Saunders is also deftly attuned to the work ahead. "I learn new things every day," he says. "And every day I'm impressed with such a fantastic team of people who are all supportive of me, supportive of the brand and the direction, to make sure we take this brand into the next decade." —COLLEEN KELSEY





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*THIS SPREAD: ALL CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES: DIANE VON FURSTENBERG SPRING/SUMMER 2017. HAIR: SANDY HULLETT. MAKEUP: MARLA BELTSTREETERS. MANICURE: MAKI SAKAMOTO. THE WALL GROUP. MODEL: ALICIA BURKE/SUPREME. CASTING: SHAWN DEZAN/MICHELLE LEE CASTING. SPECIAL THANKS: RED HOOK LABS. FASHION DETAILS: PAGE 262.*