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Inventive Designer Secures Times Square Exposure

The interdisciplinary artist Amanda Mehl is drawing attention to the direct-to-consumer label Mehl.

By ROSEMARY FEITELBERG JANUARY 20, 2023, 3:36PM



The interdisciplinary artist and fashion designer acts out 50 different characters in the short video. IMAGE BY AMANDA MEHL/COURTESY

f Many designers toil away for years in order to afford Times Square **advertising**, but the little-known label Amehl is making a splash there in an unusual way.

t The company's founder Amanda Mehl, who is an interdisciplinary artist, filmmaker and designer, crafted a film that will play through the end of this month outside of 10 Times Square. Titled, "There Is No 'I' in Team," the short features 50 characters modeling looks from the Mehl collection. Mehl acted in, directed and shot the two-minute clip in her Brooklyn, **New York**, apartment during the pandemic.

Meant to be a political satire and spoof on capitalism, the premise of the video is a national athletic competition in the fictitious country of "Amehlica." An image of Mehl is featured on a billboard with phony logos for Bank of Amehlica, Amehlican Express and Amehlican Airlines. The billboard is located on some prime Midtown real estate — the southeast corner of 41st Street and Seventh Avenue. The billboard is owned by ZAZ10TS, an art gallery that plays up digital art on billboards and installations in their building. Visitors there can view the full run of Mehl's film in the lobby of 10 Times Square.

The opportunity came about through the curator and philanthropist Tzili Charney, chairman of the real estate business L.H. Charney Associates, who Mehl met a few years ago. Charney conceived ZAZ10TS. In keeping with the contract, the video is not **advertising** and had to be logo-free. Mehl hoped that her Amehlica spoofs would make the cut and was glad they did. While the exposure has resulted in some new followers, but not necessarily new shoppers, more than anything it offers more “cred” with people who already knew the brand.

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Mehl and her family relocated to the U.S. when she was seven. Her mother Beverly is a fashion designer whose signature label was carried at Bergdorf Goodman, Barneys **New York** and other leading stores at one time. The elder Mehl now sells her collection via her home and at pop-up events, and taught her daughter all about fashion.

On Thursday night, Amehl will be staging a fashion show at Times Square that is being billed as the inauguration of the Amehl Semiannual National Spirit Games. The two-hour event will include guest speakers and performances, serving as a substitute for **New York Fashion Week**. Solely a direct-to-consumer business now, Mehl said she stopped selling wholesale a few years ago. Distribution through Isetan in Japan and select boutiques was not worth with the expense, nor was the added cost of showroom representation, she said.



The digital billboard will be up through the end of January. ZDRAVKO COTA

In addition, the 39-year-old has a solo exhibition, “Hustle for Muscle,” on view further north at the PWA gallery through Feb. 6. Located underground in the 50th Street downtown subway station in Times Square, the gallery’s name is an acronym for Public Works Administration. The space features Amehlican products, sculptures and three Amehl fashion-inspired art films.

Partial to the unexpected, Mehl has previously held shows in a schoolbus, a hardware store and Manhattan’s diamond district. Looking ahead, drops and films, including a sci-fi one, are in the works.