Karla Otto’s The Independents buys Parisian production house Bureau Betak

By Dominique Muret - 14 September 2021

The Independents has reached a new milestone, as it continues to position itself as a key player in fashion and luxury. The group, born in 2017 from the merger of communication agency Karla Otto with Asia-based events company K2, has announced its third acquisition. This time, the Independents set its sights on a major target, Parisian events and show production specialist Bureau Betak, in which it has acquired a majority stake.

The operation’s financial details have not been disclosed, but according to Isabelle Chouvet, CEO of The Independents, this is a “major turning point for the group’s development.” The group also stated that it is constantly growing “thanks to the support provided by long-standing minority shareholder Cathay Capital, as well as by its financial partner Tikehau Capital.”

The operation also included the acquisition of Bureau Future, Bureau Betak’s digital subsidiary. Bureau Betak was founded in 1990 in Paris and New York, with offices also in Shanghai and Los Angeles, by Alexandre de Betak, who will continue to run the company alongside Bénédicte Fournier Beckmann, Paco Raynal and Guillaume Troncy, his long-time associates and now partners.

Bureau Betak has established its reputation over the course of three decades, becoming a benchmark in the fashion world by organising and staging over 1,500 catwalk shows, parties and events for the most prestigious labels and brands, among them Dior, Calvin Klein, Lacoste, Victoria’s Secret, H&M, Tiffany & Co. and Nike.

“The goal of this operation is to enable two leading luxury players to join forces. Together, The Independents and Bureau Betak constitute the largest international group active in communication and in experiential, influencer and digital marketing for the fashion and lifestyle sectors,” said the group in a press release. The objective is to become “even more agile, relevant and responsive, in order to better anticipate the needs of our customers worldwide.”
Since the Karla Otto-K2 merger, the group has moved shrewdly on the market, boosting its corporate fire-power with an expanded array of integrated services tailored to the fashion industry. In 2018, The Independents bought Dubai-based luxury communication agency The Qode, last spring it acquired Lefty, a French website specialised in influencer marketing, and this week it announced the Bureau Betak deal.

Chouvet underlined that “The Independents brings together under one umbrella the best in digital communication and marketing (with Karla Otto and The Qode), in event organising and experiential content (with K2), and in influencer data and marketing (with Lefty),” while “the strategic acquisition of Bureau Betak and Bureau Future enables [the group] to expand its influence in these fast-changing sectors.”

Chouvet added that “Alexandre de Betak understood, well ahead of everyone else, the importance of culture and content for brands. His vision will help us progress even further, becoming a compelling communication partner able to advise our clients on advertising campaigns that will strengthen their DNA and brand culture.”

de Betak is nicknamed ‘the Fellini of catwalk shows’, and his expertise in the domain of artistic talent, notably with regards to content creation, is expected to be a crucial boost for the group, whose board he has become a member of. As creative director, de Betak will focus on growing the business in Asia and the Middle East, while injecting his creative vision into the new partnership.

“By combining our network and creative resources with the initiatives run by The Independents, we will be able to design and deliver bold, differentiating experiences - in fact legendary ones. And this is only the beginning: we want to bring new talents and new expertise to the group,” said de Betak, who will also be working on new creative projects.

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