

The greatest story ever worn celebrates 150 years of Levi's 501 jeans

2023 marks the 150th anniversary of Levi's 501 jeans, and in celebration, the brand has launched the *The greatest story ever worn* campaign.



Image supplied. Levi's celebrates 150 years of its 501 jeans with three short films in the *The greatest story ever worn* campaign

An enduring icon of global style and the original template from which all other jeans have descended, the 501 Original has been worn by millions of changemakers, risk-takers, experimenters, thinkers, icons, and creatives over the course of its 150-year history.

To commemorate these countless stories – from the mundane to the momentous – of fans in their 501 jeans, the year-long campaign includes the release of three short films.

With these stories as well as others inspired by true events, *The greatest story ever worn* celebrates the 501 jeans' past and its role in countless historical, cultural, and personal moments to inspire a new generation to write the next chapter.

Precious cargo

The first historically based film, *Precious cargo*, shares the story of how 501 jeans made their way to Kingston, Jamaica in the 1970s and how Jamaica turned and made them uniquely their own.

Directed by Melina Matsoukas and shot by academy award nominated cinematographer Bradford Young, the film is a celebratory exploration of an island that's distinct style, rhythm, and soul has reverberated across the globe.

"Early Levi's spots were some of the pieces that actually inspired me to pursue commercial filmmaking. It is an honour to now be part of their cinematic legacy.

"I always gravitate toward brands and creatives who lean into authentic storytelling and, with this piece, we were able to pay homage to a small but powerful piece of history.

"Droga5 have been incredible partners who are willing to push the idea of commerciality and I love that courage. We are cut from the same cloth in that way," says Matsoukas.

Fair exchange

The second film, *Fair exchange*, tells the story of a beloved family bellcow and the son who swapped the beast for a pair of 501 Jeans, much to his family's dismay.

Directed by Martin de Thurah and shot by cinematographer Kasper Tuxen, a cold Georgian winter is the backdrop to a film

that explores 501 jeans as a beacon for something bigger – a dream.

Legends never die

The third film, *Legends never die*, tells the true story of one devoted Levi's wearer who requested to be buried in his 501 jeans – a final wish that many people have relayed to the brand over the years.

This specific fan asked all funeral attendees to wear their 501 jeans too.

Also directed by de Thurah, the film is a beautiful meditation on the type of collective love that would inspire a group of people to show up in denim for a beloved family member and friend. It is a celebration of humanity and the inextricable connection between a man who truly lived in his Levi's 501 jeans.

"I have done some of my best work over the years with Droga5, and I was intrigued by the challenge to create little stories in a mini format together.

"Levi's is an iconic brand and being able to celebrate the 150th anniversary alongside my favourite people was a wonderful opportunity," says de Thurah.

Still being written

"For 150 years, we've bore witness to the greatest story unfolding. The story of the everyday exploits of 501 wearers," says Tom McQueen, group creative director, Droga5.

"Unearthing these more intimate, unexpected and unbelievable stories from the archives, it brings us great joy to be able to bring these true stories to light in celebration of an iconic milestone and iconic product.

"Rare are those who have made it this far without skipping a beat, but that's the magic of the 501 jeans. And 150 years on, *The greatest story ever worn* is still being written."

Everyone's story

More than a pair of jeans, they are not just one person's story, but everyone's story. This ever-expanding narrative features a collection of characters, events, ambitions and memories from everyday heroes to unbelievable icons.

"Few products, let alone pieces of clothing, have been as consistently present for so many human experiences, for as long as the 501," says Chris Jackman, VP of brand marketing, Levi's.

"Coming from the humblest of beginnings as workwear pants, Levi's 501 jeans have become a blank canvas for self-expression and a timeless symbol for rule-breaking that transcends the boundaries of culture, and class.

This is an incredible moment and milestone for the Levi's brand and through *The greatest story ever worn* campaign we aim to celebrate the legacy of the 501, its unrivaled breadth and global relevance, and to inspire the next generation to create the next chapters," says Jackman.

More stories will be shared throughout 2023 along with milestone celebrations around the world.

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