If any sector in fashion has enjoyed an immense boom this past decade it is outerwear, from the ginormous success of Moncler to millions of ubiquitous puffers selling in market stalls. However, few marques have quite hit the sweet spot of marrying performance with polish as Mackage, a classy Canadian label, which just signed the lease for its first flagship in Paris.

Founded by Eran Elfassy in 1999, Mackage has been busy on multiple fronts of late. This month it released its latest campaign, a pathbreaking vision starring model and eco-activist land protector Quannah Chasinghorse, a Native American born on Navajo Nation territory in Arizona.
Shot by the hyper talented Tyler Mitchell, the Brooklyn based photographer who has done projects for Loewe and J W Anderson; and is known for his optimistically noble portraiture of people of color.

The Quannah Chasinghorse S/S 2022 campaign underlines how Mackage is definitely not chasing the pack but setting the agenda in outerwear and imagery. And also in ecology, as Mackage is about to achieve B Corp Certification, confirming it has verified standards in terms of employee benefits, supply chain practices and input materials.

Some three years ago, it also had an update courtesy of design master Fabien Baron, who developed a slashed house logo for the brand. And, its name actually stems from a mispronunciation of the French word for makeup, maquillage, by Elfassy’s niece.

Last summer, Mackage hired Tanya Golesic as CEO. She joined the brand with an impressive resume; one that includes stints at Ralph Lauren, Marc Jacobs and Jimmy Choo. So, we caught up with Golesic for a morning coffee Zoom from New York to learn about her goals for Mackage.

Fashion Network: What attracted you to work with Quannah Chasinghorse in your SS22 Campaign?
Tanya Golesic: Well, we first started with Quannah in fall 2021 when she was launching her career. She is a strong independent woman who stood for land protection and is also a woman to whom fashion is attracted. Since then, she has been able rise it in the world of fashion, walking for Gucci and Chanel and attending the Met Gala. For spring 2022, we have used Quannah to launch our Sustainability collection, giving a quiet strength that she brings in an authentic way - like two forces coming together. And, we have been supporting her environmental cause of choice.

When I first started here in July 2021, I sat down with our founder Eran Elfassy to explore some of the fabrics and learn how much sustainability there already was in our collections. The only thing is we hadn’t been telling that story. We never talked about it. In fact, many fashion brands are striving to achieve what we had already achieved. To be concrete, we hope very shortly to be B Corp Certified. Very few fashion companies are. It takes years and years of work and prep. Literally hundreds of boxes to tick and is a long arduous process. But we are getting close, hopefully this year.

FNW: And why did you want to work with Tyler Mitchell?
TG: We thought Tyler would be a great partner in shooting Quannah as we were most interested in his portraiture, and not so much his fashion. It has a quiet strength and beautiful stability that felt right for these times. The collection actually featured on Quannah is 100% recycled and responsibly certified down. This is the first in series of our protector campaigns and will probably continue into next year.

FNW: Define the DNA of Mackage?
TG: I would say it’s really about aesthetics that protect. Our product is beautiful but also protective and these two attributes are super important. High performance that does not compromise on style, and craftsmanship.

FNW: Who are your competitors?
TG: I would love to say we look at Moncler as our competitor. But yes and no, as they are in their own stratosphere. But Moncler is aesthetically pleasing and also has a sense of protection, like Mackage. The others I think of are more about just performance.

FNW: What did you learn at Ralph Lauren, Jimmy Choo, Canada Goose and Marc Jacobs that you hope to
apply at Mackage since moving over last summer?
TG: What I understood from Jimmy Choo, Marc Jacobs and early in my career at Ralph Lauren was the disciple needed to build a brand. Each had a specific brand DNA that they stayed true to. So, I saw an opportunity at Mackage, where what was really missing was storytelling, which needed reinforcing, especially in digital. That was vital. Jimmy Choo was about footwear and bags; Ralph Lauren was a complete lifestyle, and so was Marc Jacobs. Now, since Mackage also plays in skiwear and even footwear. We believe it will be able to create a lifestyle brand.

FNW: What is your next step in retail?
TG: We have a flagship opening at 418 Rue Saint-Honoré in September. We have really robust wholesale distribution in Europe; a store in London; and we show up at specialty stores and places like Selfridges. But Paris is the epicenter of fashion! And as I am sure you know finding a location on Rue Saint-Honoré is no easy feat, but we signed a month ago. Our plan is to feature collabs, exclusives and launch events starting in Paris Fashion Week.

FNW: How many stores do you have?
TG: We will own and operate 20 by the end of 2022 including Paris. We have around 700 points of sale and are well distributed in China and Japan. We just brought our Korea business in house. And we hope to open next in Milan and Beverly Hills.

FNW: Annual sales?
TG: As we are a private company, we don’t release annual turnover. I really wish I could tell you, but I cannot.

FNW: Well, how large is your retail footprint financially?
TG: Again, I wish I could say. What I can tell you is that we are sold in over 40 countries. And that our e-commerce platform has grown substantially during Covid. Accounting today for somewhere about the high 20s to low 30s percentage of sales.

FNW: Who owns Mackage, and what is the exit strategy?
TG: Our founder Eran Elfassy and private equity have a pretty even split. And, yes, we are considering different opportunities like an IPO. Or whether LVMH or Kering could also acquire us. We are looking at different opportunities, but nothing in the immediate future.