

EVENTS/CAUSES

Lalique, Waterford unveil new design partnerships at Maison et Objet

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Lalique "Eternal"

By SARAH JONES

Home furnishings brands are turning to annual Paris trade show Maison et Objet Jan. 23-27 to reveal new collaborations that show a different side to their aesthetics.

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Luxury Daily

Irish crystal-maker Waterford unveiled a more dramatic, rebellious nature, while French lifestyle brand Lalique lent a new artistic flair to its crystal with a Damien Hirst partnership. Though happening in Europe, brands incorporated their social media audiences to extend the reach of their displays.

"For our market, Maison et Objet is one of the largest stages as well as one of the first of the new year for home collections to shine," said Karin Fritz, **MissoniHome** brand manager.

"This is where we get to meet with our current partners and retailers, some of our favorite architects and designers, top U.S. press and more face to face and give them the first look at what we've been working so hard on for the past year," she said. "Maison et Objet demands a level of quality from exhibitors and visitors alike that keeps the show among the most popular in the industry."

Social butterfly

Before the trade show began on Jan. 23, Waterford teased its new collection Rebel on social media, sharing an image of a young model wearing a biker jacket, and promising consumers a “revolution.”



Facebook post from Waterford

The brand also included a link to a video, which invites consumers to “discover [their] inner rebel” with the new gift collection. In the short film, a model sashays in a dimly lit room, showing off studded jewelry.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/z3L0B8N0GD0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/z3L0B8N0GD0)

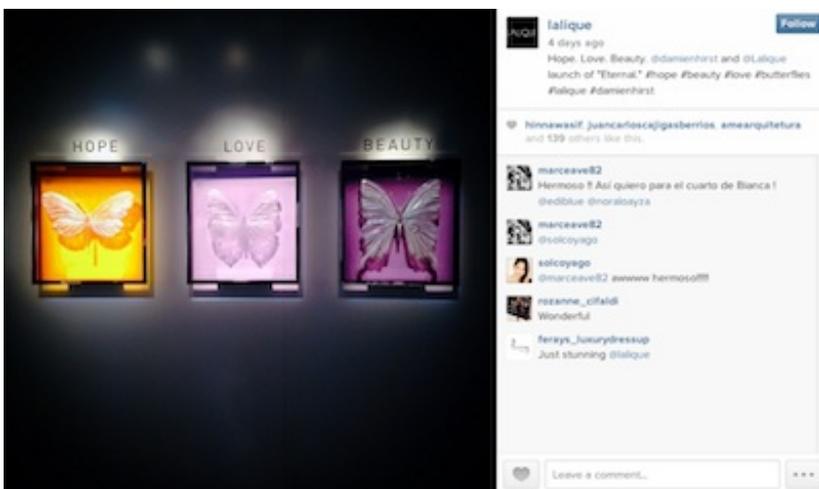
Rebel by Jo Sampson Studio - Waterford

Throughout the weekend, Waterford used its Instagram and Twitter accounts to keep its global audience a part of the show, revealing more parts of the collection designed by Jo Sampson. The line includes jewelry, barware and gifts in pink tones and metallics.



Instagram post from Waterford

Lalique was also celebrating the launch of its new partnership with Mr. Hirst on Instagram. The brand's Eternal line features panels with a butterfly motif, seen in a number of the artist's pieces.



Instagram post from Lalique

Italian fashion house Fendi revived a former collaboration with designers Thierry Lemaire and Toan Nguyen with new pieces for Maison et Objet, sharing some of the couches on social media.



Tweet from Fendi Casa

"Lalique and Waterford are wonderful luxury brands that need to establish their relevancy with a new generation," said Marie Driscoll, CEO and chief consultant of Driscoll Advisors, New York. "They can't just be beautiful things that your grandmother collected. They need to live today.

"To that end, alliances with avant garde artists and celebrities is a path to awareness for a new consumer set," she said. "Karl Lagerfeld did it for Chanel and Marc Jacobs at Vuitton. They bring excitement to a luxury label and refresh and reset the brand for today.

"Departing from past aesthetics while maintaining iconic elements of the brand along with maintaining best of class quality is how luxury brands transition through time."



MissoniHome Lilium Multicolor collection

In contrast, Italy's MissoniHome led with its own designs, envisioned by Rosita Missoni. The Lilium Multicolor collection features abstract florals on bedding, carpets and pillows.

MissoniHome is also highlighting its design pairing with Richard Ginori, who created utensils, placemats and dishes in colorful hues.

"We set up our Maison et Objet stand with product of all categories to give visitors the chance to experience the MissoniHome lifestyle in full," Ms. Fritz said. "From rugs to divider screens, bedding to poufs and furniture to lighting, the interplay created between each object and pattern combines for an intricate display unique to the brand.

"It's important that we show the new collection in this way and at this particular show so that all orders are set to arrive in the U.S. as early as possible, which will be in late February or early March."

In addition to social media, Missoni shared its plans for Maison et Objet via its Missoni Moments blog.

Trading spaces

Interior brands are embracing digital, with social media and ecommerce, but trade shows fulfill a need to see products first hand that online mediums cannot always compete with.

For instance, home furnishing trade show Salone del Mobile 2014 kicked off in Milan, with luxury fashion brands using the event as a platform to showcase their interior collections.

Even if they were not showing in a booth at the show, brands incorporated digital campaigns and charity initiatives to draw consumers interested in interior design to their stores. This provided an opportunity for brands that are not usually known for their home furnishings to remind consumers of the range of their merchandise ([see story](#)).

Instead of replacing the physical displays, social media augments the booths, giving a larger audience the opportunity to participate.

For the 25th annual Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie, 16 of the world's top watchmakers convened in Geneva Jan. 19-23 to unveil their most creative and avant-garde timepieces amid those who share a passion for horology.

Although the event is trade- and invite-only, social media has greatly improved visibility for participating watchmakers, and those that are not showing at SIHH, but want to capitalize on industry attention. Social media posts have ranged from photos and videos of newly unveiled timepieces to cocktail party recaps to underscore the glamour of the industry, used as a way to virtually include horologists unable to attend the event in person ([see story](#)).

These new designs create buzz for brands, both in-person and online.

"Collaborations are an integral part of every luxury brand in the world," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami, FL. "The buzz at Maison et Objet proves design brands 'get it.'

"Choosing to launch collaborations at Maison et Objet illustrates the importance of collaborations for brands in design," he said. "The affluent trust peer alliances. In fact, they look for them. It's only by context that an affluent will understand a brand that is bought infrequently.

"Every interior designer and decorative brand should be actively pursuing collaborations to increase their brand awareness and revenue," he said. "Collaborations allow you to expand the boundaries of your brand. Rebel is a new point of view for Waterford; it ensures relevancy.

"Trade shows are about community. Maison et Objet is a celebration of vision, inspiration, design and now, collaboration."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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