

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Condé Nast International Luxury Conference to meld topics of tradition, technology

April 6, 2015



*Florence's Palazzo Vecchio*

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By JEN KING

As hard luxury and technology continue to merge, the inaugural Condé Nast International Luxury Conference will tackle this growing industry trend and assess its impact on the market.

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**Luxury Daily**

Hosted by Condé Nast International, in partnership with Swarovski and Place Vendome, the conference will bring together various speakers from across verticals to discuss the issues facing the industry and how the concept of luxury is evolving. Held in Florence, Italy, this event aims to bring together the power of Condé Nast International's titles and the industry insights of host, Suzy Menkes.

"This is the first Condé Nast International conference, but I have been organizing conferences for over a decade now," said Suzy Menkes, editor of *International Vogue*, London. "I think one of the most important things about a conference is who you're going to meet, and this conference has already got some great people booked to attend from more than 30 countries."

“They’re all coming to learn, to find out more about the industry and to network, and I think that’s where Condé Nast International brings an extra reach,” she said.

### Luxury gathering

Held April 22-23 at Florence’s Palazzo Vecchio, a 14th century building that is used as the city’s town hall, **Condé Nast International Luxury Conference** will bring together 500 attendees from more than 30 countries to discuss the hard issues and emerging opportunities in the luxury industry.

Primary topics of the conference agenda include the battle of the share of the luxury consumers’ wallet, connecting with younger affluent demographics, how technology is reshaping how the luxury and fashion industry operates and the modern design of watches, jewelry and luxury goods as a whole, among other subjects.

# LOEWE



*Loewe campaign, the brand's creative director, Jonathan Anderson, will speak on Day Two*

“Hard luxury’ – the industry term – means watches and jewelry, and we certainly have great speakers from that world – from Van Cleef & Arpels to Tiffany & Co., as well as a new dynamic generation of women jewelers who are challenging convention,” Ms. Menkes said.

“But I chose the name ‘hard luxury’ for the conference to refer to the fact that it is tough in the luxury world right now,” she said. “There’s a slowdown in China, there are currency exchange rate shifts and there’s also increasing competition for luxury goods from the tech sector.”

The conference’s opening session April 22 will set the tone for the day with a conversation between Ms. Menkes and Apple’s senior vice president, design, Jonathan Ive

and designer Marc Newson.



### *Apple Watch is set to debut this month*

Keynotes for the day will include the CEO of Berluti, the president of Saks Fifth Avenue and the CEO of Tiffany & Co. These executives will share their thoughts on how luxury is being reshaped by external forces and how CEOs can navigate the new landscape and where opportunities may lie.

Later, executives from Salvatore Ferragamo, Wire Consulting and Hermes will examine “From Leather to Lifestyle” and how craftsmanship is the key to luxury, but technology may change its reception in the future.

Additional sessions for the day include Kering’s CEO of luxury watches and jewelry, Albert Bensoussan, who will discuss his views of growth opportunity for the sector and how digital can merge with the traditional. Also in relation to the jewelry, Ms. Menkes and Franca Sozzani, editor in chief of Vogue Italia, will discuss the shifting gender roles in the sector with a panel of including Nadja Swarovski, a member of the executive board of Swarovski.

Likewise, president and CEO of Van Cleef & Arpels Nicolas Bos will talk to the future of the brand and how he balances the creative with commercial side of the jeweler’s operations.



*Van Cleef & Arpels' koi fish watch*

The day will end with an intimate discussion between Ms. Menkes and revered fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld.

Day Two focuses on “Views on Technology” and includes an opening keynote with David Lauren of Ralph Lauren where he will discuss how the brand is embracing technology. The morning continues with Lanvin’s creative director Alber Elbaz in a session titled “Computers can never replace designers!” where he will chat with Ms. Menkes about the factual reality versus science fiction.

The conference continues with a series of panel discussions revolving around technology, accessories, youth and talent, heritage in terms of brands and the city of Florence itself. Speakers include the president of Chloe Geoffery de la Bourdonnaye and creative director Clare Waight Keller, creative director of Moschino Jeremy Scott, creative director of Loewe Jonathan Anderson, CEO of Emilio Pucci Laudomia Pucci and Roberto Cavalli, founder of his namesake label.

#### Historic luxury

Given the importance of heritage to many of the brands represented throughout the conference agenda, Condé Nast International sought locations within Florence to showcase a glimpse of the artisans and craftsmanship embedded within the city.

For example, after the conclusion of the first day’s speakers Salvatore Ferragamo is hosting a drinks reception at Museo Ferragamo. Here, attendees will have the opportunity to view the “Equilibrium” exhibit that was extended to align with the conference’s dates.

The nine room exhibit will honor Salvatore Ferragamo’s dedication to the science and the art of the human foot. The display will likely present consumers with a deeper

understanding of the brand's origins ([see story](#)).



### *Ferragamo's Equilibrium exhibit*

A nighttime event is also planned for April 22, but as of press time details have not been announced.

Similarly to Ferragamo, Emilio Pucci is hosting the closing cocktail reception on April 23 at Palazzo Pucci. The home, which has been in the Pucci family since the 15th century, is an example of Baroque decor but surprisingly never received the same colorful, quirky aesthetic as the brand's clothing.

Selecting Florence as a setting for the first Condé Nast International Luxury Conference is fitting due to the city being one of Italy's traditional centers of craftsmanship and tailoring.

"Florence might look like a city of old bricks and old buildings, but it's not," Ms. Menkes said. "A dynamic modernity pulses through everything. The city was at the heart of the Renaissance. Buildings like the Duomo were daring and technically challenging at the time, while artists like Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci helped pull the world from the darkness of the Middle Ages into the light.

"Today, the city is one of the fashion capitals of the world, home to brands like Ferragamo, Pucci, Cavalli, Gucci, Ermanno Scervino and a hub for leatherwork and artistry," she said. "It's also the location for Pitti Immagine, which has had the smart idea of digitizing its shows so that visitors can re-visit them online. We'll hear more about this at the conference."

Final Take

*Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/t6JJHqWdssE>

1 thought on "Condé Nast International Luxury Conference to meld topics of tradition, technology"

1. **Chiara** says:

**March 16, 2016 at 5:57 am**

It's always so very nice to read about people's experiences of my city. I've just published a post that captures some photographic highlights around Florence and I hope you and your readers will enjoy them.

here is the page

<http://www.fibnb.com/insights/florence/things-see-florence-italy/>

Warm regards,

Chiara

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