

MULTICHANNEL

Hermès invites consumers to wander through Paris in London exhibit

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Promotional image for Hermès' Wanderland

By SARAH JONES

French leather goods house Hermès is celebrating the art of exploration and urban meandering with an exhibit at Saatchi Gallery in London.

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Opened April 9, Wanderland features a curation of objects pulled from the Hermès archives and positioned to form a “cabinet of curiosities” that references Parisian-inspired scenes. This exhibit celebrates Hermès' Parisian heritage while also showing the brand's singular point of view and adoration for the unpredictable.

"This concept extremely whimsical, playing on the brand's foundation of collecting various pieces of art and creative collections," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#), New York.

"While the exhibition highlight's Hermès, it does it in an illuminating and entertaining manner through visually and contextually storytelling," she said.

Ms. Strum is not affiliated with Hermès, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Hermès](#) did not respond by press deadline.

Get lost

Wanderland, which sits on the second floor of the gallery, invites consumers to become the flâneurs and “revel in the unexpected.”

Eleven rooms designed by Hubert le Gall take consumers to a fantastical Paris landscape of a café, square or covered passage, where they can view installations by various artists using different mediums. These art pieces incorporate items taken from the Hermès archives at 24 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the brand's current collections, from a bike or card deck to travel case or watch.

To introduce the exhibit to its consumers via its content site, Hermès created a feature which allows consumers to wander digitally through a series of shorts and animations related to the showcase.

When consumers press a pointing finger icon labeled with a “Let’s wander!” call to action, a wheel of sketches spins. When the drawings stop rotating, a random piece of content opens automatically.



Screenshot of Hermès Web site

One, hidden within a cane decorated with a duck's head, is a social video showing a man performing a soft shoe duet with the walking stick. He spins until he divides himself into two, enabling him to turn his double into feathers.



Still from Hermès Wanderland

At the end of the video, he throws a scarf in the air and swings the cane until it catches the fabric, turning it into a bindle, which he carries off, presumably on his way to wander.

Also on the wheel, consumers are invited to explore the book published this year on the subject of flânerie, or leisurely wandering. Available at Hermès and Actes Sud bookstores, the accordion-style book features text from Bruno Gaudichon that follows six individuals as they journey through a surreal Paris illustrated through collage by Emmanuel Pierre.



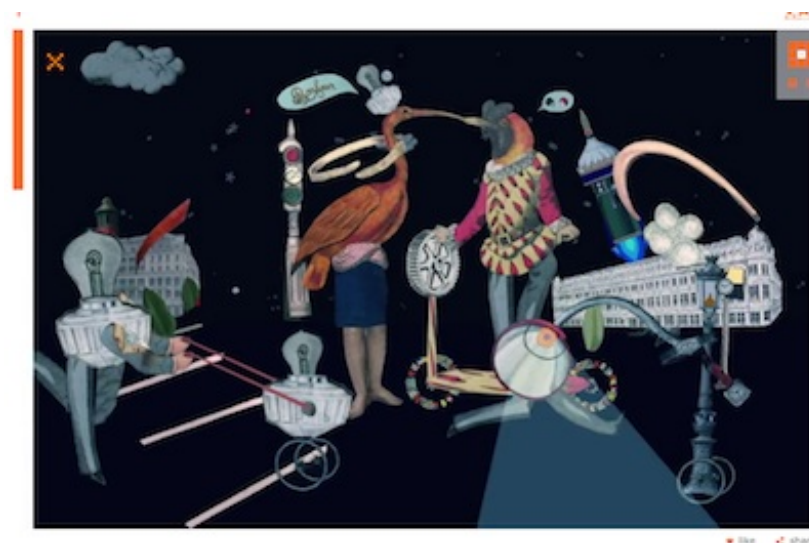
Wanderland book

This collage style is brought to life in a number of shorts hidden within the wheel.

One depicts a golf ball gone awry, as it crashes through houses disturbing the peace.

A separate film shows an unconventional foot race, with children competing in wheeled boots or bouncing along in spring-adorned shoes.

Yet another shows a woman in Paris both during the day and at night as she encounters oddities, such as birds in full dress bumping into each other as they cross a street.



Still from Hermès Wanderland

These shorts have a lot happening within them, potentially prompting multiple views to

catch additional details. As they watch, consumers cannot replay a film manually, requiring them to spin the wheel and “wander” further to watch again.

Wanderland will be open through May 2.

"The cabinet of curiosities as an exhibition is fun way to discover the iconic heritage and history of Hermès," said Kwame Taylor-Hayford, vice president of digital for [Sid Lee NYC](#). "It communicates that the brand is accessible and contemporary in its use of digital media and experiential.

"The spinning wheel provides a playful interaction through which users can actively discover the brands heritage by clicking to reveal embedded content," he said. "It's a storytelling device that drives continued engagement through gamification.

"By creating the interactive online experience, Hermès has by provided an opportunity for more consumers to connect with its brand beyond the physical exhibition. I think it will generate interest and hopefully inspire some real world visits."

Expect the unexpected

Hermès previously celebrated the wandering spirit with a video series showcasing its menswear.

The videos all feature a “flâneur,” which translated to English means stroller or idler, as he encounters oddities along his lackadaisical path. This effort enables the brand to show off some of its attire in a subtle way while entertaining its audience ([see story](#)).

Hermès revels in the unexpected, creating marketing campaigns that ask consumers to seek out hidden delights.

Last season the brand's seasonal digital magazine, Le Monde D’Hermès, has been overtaken by curious creators.

Always one to embrace its whimsical and cheerful side, Hermès’ fall/winter 2014 digital magazine edition, “Elsewhere,” featured quirky animations drawn by artistic duo Mrzyk and Moriceau. The issue was introduced via email depicting Hermès’ apparel in a mountainous desert setting with two llama-like figures wearing cowboy hats popping up from behind the mountain’s peak ([see story](#)).

Wanderland provides an opportunity for Hermès to surprise consumers in person.

"This exhibition allows Hermès to increase touch-points to their customer and allows them additional opportunities to develop an emotional connection," Ms. Strum said.

"Once they create an advocate out of their customer, their interest level of visiting them at various locations will increase along with their desire to attend future events."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/TgtiVUOMLR4>

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