

EVENTS/CAUSES

Luxury celebrates Venice Biennale with art installations, sponsorships

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The Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition opened May 9

By KAYSORIN

The 56th Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition in Italy celebrated its opening weekend May 9, and many luxury brands used the opportunity to connect with the affluent consumers who frequent the event.

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Brands including Marni, Missoni and Jaeger-LeCoultre participated by hosting their own exhibitions and sponsoring artists whose work was on display. Luxury and the arts are closely connected, and it is important for brands to attend these large, international events to stay up-to-date on the latest trends and connect with patrons of the arts who may purchase products.

"With more than 300,000 people in attendance and a history dating back to the nineteenth century, Venice Biennale has established itself among the world's most prestigious art institutions," said Christine Ferrell, marketing director for the [Global Luxury Management program](#) at NC State University's Jenkins Graduate School of Management, Raleigh, NC.

"Venice Biennale is beautiful yet subjective, innovative yet grounded in history, massive yet focused on the art-lover," she said.

"The question really should be, 'Why would more personal luxury brands not be involved?'"

Arts and leisure

The Venice Biennale is one of Italy's most significant art exhibitions, so of course many of the Italian luxury brands were eager to be involved. The event is an opportunity to highlight Italian culture and share it with visitors from around the world.

Italian fashion house Missoni presented a retrospective exhibition at the MA*GA Museum in Gallarate entitled "Missoni, l'Arte il Colore" that celebrated Missoni's aesthetic and its longstanding relationship to art. The exhibition includes pieces from the Venice Biennale's official 56th International Art Exhibition "All the World's Futures," which was curated by Okwui Enwezor.



Missoni's exhibition highlighted the brand's signature rhythm and color, inviting viewers to experience the brand in a new way. The affluent attendees of the Venice Biennale could be potential consumers, so it is beneficial for the brand to reach out to them in this noncommercial setting.

Italian fashion label Marni is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, so the exhibition is particularly meaningful for the brand. Marni created a site-specific installation at the San Gregorio Abbey in Venice.



The installation features the work of the Brazilian artist Véio, who created 100 wooden sculptures out of pieces of wood, clogs and branches that he finds along the river near his home. The installation was supervised by Carolina Castiglioni, creative director of Marni's special projects, and curated by Stefano Rabolli Pansera, founder of Beyond Entropy.

Brands from all over the world are participating in the Venice Biennale as well.



Swiss watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre was inspired by the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, a historical monument in Venice, because of the beautiful and precise paintings inside. The brand completed a three-year restoration project, and the building will be open to the public for the first time during the Venice Biennale's opening weekend.

All of these projects will help the participating brands stay relevant during this important event. Because the Venice Biennale attracts affluent consumers from around the world, it is the ideal location for the brands to connect with them.



Fair weather friend

Cosmetics brands also showed an interest in participating in the art-focused event. Shiseido-owned Clé de Peau Beauté introduced its products to a wider consumer demographic through an outdoor installation commissioned by architect Shigeru Ban.

Clé de Peau Beauté's exhibit "Reverberation — Pavilion of Light and Sound" was on display May 8-9 in Venice, Italy, during the opening weekend of the 56th Venice Biennale. Brands often stage exhibits and public art displays during festivals such as this to generate interest in their offerings while targeting a specific, affluent class ([see story](#)).

The Venice Biennale is not the only international art fair that luxury brands can participate in throughout the year. Earlier this year, Luxury brands took advantage of Hong Kong Art Week March 14-21 to promote their products in different ways and appeal to artistically minded consumers in the Chinese city.

Many brands introduced initiatives that engaged consumers visiting for the numerous events that took place that week. It is an excellent way to appeal to international affluents who are already looking to purchase and may be looking to enjoy themselves while traveling ([see story](#)).

The 56th Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition will likely have a similar affect on the brands that choose to participate.

"Art and personal luxury – notably fashion – have a long and fascinating marriage, so it's to be expected that top brands such as Marni, Missoni, Clé de Peau and Jaeger-LeCoultre all have exciting projects on display during this year's exhibition," Ms. Ferrell said. "With almost no exception, brands benefit from exposure, and savvy brand managers ensure that exposure is contextually relevant."

Final Take

Kay Sorin, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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