

IN-STORE

## Dior looks to virtual reality experience to showcase quality, craftsmanship

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*Dior Couture spring/summer 2015*

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By JEN KING

French fashion house Christian Dior is exploring the parallels between technology and couture with the introduction of in-store virtual reality headsets.

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**Luxury Daily**

The LVMH-owned house worked with DigitasLBI Labs France using a 3D printer to develop its Dior Eyes experience. By placing Dior Eyes in a number of its boutiques, Dior will maintain its relevance as the retail landscape acclimates to the changes in consumer behavior and mobile readiness.

"Well, the game is on to grab the millennials, so Dior is likely hoping to attract their attention and seem hip," said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR Research](#), Miami. "But I just can't see it for the majority of shoppers."

"It'd be one thing if it was being used at home, but to use it when you're out and about...I would expect shoppers to be embarrassed to be seen wearing it," she said. "I can't envision a woman wanting this on her head, or a man for that matter. Dior will have to provide hairdressing services to go with."

Ms. Rosenblum is not affiliated with Dior, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Dior and DigitasLBI did not respond by press deadline.

## All eyes on Dior

For the creation of Dior Eyes, Dior's workshop partnered with Digitas LBI Labs France, using a 3D printer, to stay true to the house's quality craftsmanship as it ventures into a technology-focused retail experience.

Dior Eyes uses ultra-immersive virtual reality and state-of-the-art technology to create a mesmerizing 3D experience. The headset is equipped with high-definition image resolution and holophonic audio, or "acoustic holograms," to create an immersive encounter with Dior's fashions and runway atmosphere.

The Dior Eyes headsets will be introduced to consumers through in-store placement during the month of June. Inaugural content for the Dior Eyes launch will consist of footage of models having cosmetics applied by Peter Philipps, creative and image director of Dior Make-up, before a runway presentation.



*Dior's Dior Eyes virtual reality headset*

"I think [Dior Eyes is] intended to reinforce the exclusivity image," Ms. Rosenblum said. "Lately, I've been noticing that the luxury market is sort of commoditizing.

"Too many doors in too many cities, it seems to me," she said. "Pulling the image back to the runway experience is a way to reinforce that it's not a commodity, and I think it's meant to generate excitement as well."

Going forward the Dior Eyes virtual reality headset will allow Dior enthusiasts to discover behind-the-scenes at the brand's runway shows. Also, this is another way in which Dior plans to spotlight its "superb craftsmanship" both on and off the runway.

By allowing consumers to experience the sensations of its runway shows in 360° vision, Dior will likely strengthen consumer interest in the fashions seen through Dior Eyes. It is also likely that Dior will see repeat visitors to boutiques where Dior Eyes is installed to view each season's runway presentation in a new way.

Embedded Video: [https://www.youtube.com/embed/\\_XdFT4hgr9M](https://www.youtube.com/embed/_XdFT4hgr9M)

*Dior Eyes - Virtual Reality - Making-of*

Virtual reality may not seem to meld with luxury fashion houses, though it is catching up, but the technology has been embraced by automakers and yacht builders to give consumers a more accurate sense of its models digitally.

For example, Italian yacht maker Dominator International provided visitors to the Dubai Boat Show a unique teaser of its highly anticipated 87-foot, hybrid D26 Ilumen with a virtual reality experience.

The initiative launched this year at the Düsseldorf Boat Show and the Miami Boat Show, and Dominator brought virtual reality to the Middle East with the Ilumen's digital experience. Virtual reality matched the futuristic twist of the innovative yacht and gave a greater incentive for potential buyers to purchase prior to the expected completion in 2016 ([see story](#)).

One door closes, another opens

Although Google Glass was not as successful as had been projected, the concept paved the way for luxury brands to use the technology in ways that enhance in-store experience, from sales associates behind the counter aiming to build awareness and cohesion ([see story](#)) to consumer-facing touchpoints.

For example, French atelier Saint Laurent Paris' beauty brand YSL Beauté enhanced product demonstrations at its cosmetic counters with the introduction of Google Glass tutorials.

The beauty brand rolled out Google Glass tutorials at retailers such as Bloomingdale's and Selfridges to temporarily personalize the in-store experience through technology. Brands and consumers alike have struggled to incorporate Google Glass into everyday life, but the functionality of the technology in an in-store setting is hard to dispute ([see story](#)).

Even if Google Glass was a bust, the determination of luxury brands to reflect modernity and consumer interest through incorporating the wearable technology showed lasting relevance and market suaveness.

But, technology is constantly evolving. In just 15 years time, the luxury industry's current retail models will no longer work as consumer expectations will have radically evolved.

During "The Future of Luxury: Global Research Insights, Emerging Trends and New Business Models for 2030" presentation June 3, conducted by graduate students of the Fashion Institute of Technology class of 2015, the peer groups suggested that lasting memories, "centers of creation" flagship stores and like-minded cities will drive luxury sales in the future ([see story](#)).

To maintain a competitive edge, brands must embrace technology integration into in-store models to continuous meeting the demands of consumers. But, most importantly, a luxurious aesthetic must be retained.

"If [Dior Eyes is] going to meld with luxury, it'd have to be sleeker, smaller, more

manageable," Ms. Rosenblum said. "You don't see luxury adoption of Google Glass, and that's a lot smaller."

## Final Take

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

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