

MULTICHANNEL

Selfridges celebrates contemporary Indian design with multiplatform campaign

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Miuniku look for Selfridges Loves India

By SARAH JONES

British retailer Selfridges is bringing a taste of Indian culture to consumers with the launch of a multichannel effort in collaboration with concept store Bombay Electric.

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Coinciding with an exhibit on Indian fabrics at London's Victoria & Albert Museum, Selfridges Loves India consists of a pop-up store, an exclusive sari collection and a colorful film. Having this celebration of a cultural event in its hometown will help Selfridges connect and engage with consumers in a creative way.

"Timing the 'Selfridges Loves India' campaign with the opening of India's cultural heritage exhibition at London's legendary Victoria and Albert Museum creates additional excitement and interest," said Ken Morris, principal at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston. "This campaign strategy leverages other media buzz about India culture and capitalizes on the Indian diaspora in the UK.

"Tying campaigns to cultural events is a great way to instill more meaning and passion for a theme of products and creates a theatre for shopping," he said.

Mr. Morris is not affiliated with Selfridges, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Selfridges did not respond by press deadline.

East meets west

The V&A is currently hosting "The Fabric of India," the centerpiece of its India Festival. Opened Oct. 3 and running through Jan. 10, 2016, it is the first major exhibit to explore the history of handmade textiles from India, with examples dating back to the third century.

About 200 pieces will be on display, ranging from historic garments to heritage fabrics and modern, cutting-edge designs. These will look at how fabric played a role in religious and regal life, as well as its use in communicating wealth and status.



Rabari child's jacket from 20th century

Further exploring the contemporary uses of Indian textiles, Selfridges opened a showcase of fashion merchandise from India Oct. 5. The latest in a series that highlights emerging destinations for designer fashion, the pop-up at Selfridges' Oxford Street store and online hub feature an exclusive collaboration with Bombay Electric.

Using its knack for finding new innovative design talent in its native India, Bombay Electric is bringing a mix of ready-to-wear and accessories to Selfridges consumers.



Selfridges Loves India pop-up

The retailers also tapped five British designers, including Mary Katrantzou, Peter Pilotto, Roksanda Illincic, Mawi and Nicholas Kirkwood to put their own spin on scarves that can be worn as saris. These will be sold both by Selfridges and Bombay Electric.

A video produced for the project shows models wearing the sari collection. Taking reference from Hindu deities, the models work together to create multi-armed figures as prints and pictures are projected around them.

Selfridges Presents: Bombay Electric

In addition to the fashion items, Selfridges will be selling rare Indian wines and spirits and henna-inspired cakes from Sari.

Emerging activity

With India picking up speed as an emerging market, this collaboration may be a way for Selfridges to capitalize on the ecommerce potential within the country.

Luxury brands must continue to optimize Web performance to succeed in the rapidly growing Indian ecommerce market, according to a recent report by Catchpoint.

Web pages that fail to load at an acceptable rate discourage consumers and result in fewer sales. Despite the fact that most luxury brands have content-heavy sites, many loaded significantly faster than the sites of non-luxury brands, marking an impressive feat for the industry ([see story](#)).

Other brands have taken inspiration from Indian culture for product creation.

French jeweler Boucheron is retracing its historic link to Indian dignitaries through its new high-jewelry collection, Bleu de Jodhpur.

The four-piece high-jewelry collection symbolically ties together Jodhpur, the Indian "city of the sun" with Boucheron, known as the "jeweler of light," as well as Paris, often referred to as the "city of light." While many jewelers draw inspiration from locales outside their home country, Boucheron's collaboration with His Highness the Maharaja Gaj Singh II of Jodhpur for the collection adds authenticity ([see story](#)).

For Selfridges, this cultural celebration may help it appeal to a new set of consumers.

"Saris and other Indian clothing and accessories are a hip fashion statement that transcends the Indian culture," Mr.

Morris said. "Integrating pop-up stores and partnering with Bombay Electric and their cult concept store helps Selfridges appeal to aspirational, younger generations that may become future brand enthusiasts.

"Upscale retailers like Selfridges need to continue to attract new, younger customers to become loyal customers and tapping campaigns that appeal to this demographic is a clever strategy," he said. "They need to sell to my daughter, not my mother."

Final Take

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