

INTERNET

Etro fortifies artistic identity through eclectic community

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Photo by Nicolo Gialain for Etro

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Etro is examining the many facets and connections that exist within the art world by creating a dialogue between creatives.

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"The Circle of Poets" brings together 11 Milanese artists in disciplines as diverse as tattooing and architecture, profiling them to create a construct for larger cultural discussion. Etro was founded on artistic ideals, making this an initiative that comes from the brand's heart.

"The 'Circle of Poets' concept seems to mimic the brand's foundation as a business run and closely held by a family," said Tina Masciadrelli, client services director at The O Group, New York. "The concept brings together a group of the most talented people to highlight incredible work in the art world - echoing the Etro mindset that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Ms. Masciadrelli is not affiliated with Etro, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Etro was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

Making an introduction

Etro introduced its circle on social media and its Web site. A dedicated page has been created for the campaign, at the top of which is a manifesto on the project.

In a paragraph, the brand explains that it is trying to create a "sense of belonging" and plant the seeds of ideas. After likening each individual to a circle, the brand describes how each sphere will meet others.

ETRO THE CIRCLE OF POETS by Nicol Gialain (2)



Etro's Circle of Poets

Much like art forms the core of Etro's identity, this bohemian collective will build a foundation for the larger circles to branch out.

"This initiative is an opportunity to involve the community in the Etro's Circle of Poets campaign," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#), New York. "By highlighting this artistic approach, they will receive user generated content and also create an opportunity to spread the word through social.

"They are essentially merging art and fashion, and collaborations with artists will be an asset to their strategy of conveying their brand imagination," she said.

Below this, Etro introduces the initiative via a short video by film director Adalberto Lombardo, one of the circle members.

In the short, the members of the circle, 10 men and one woman, are first shown separately. They wander the streets of Milan or practice their art form before they eventually come together.

The Circle of Poets

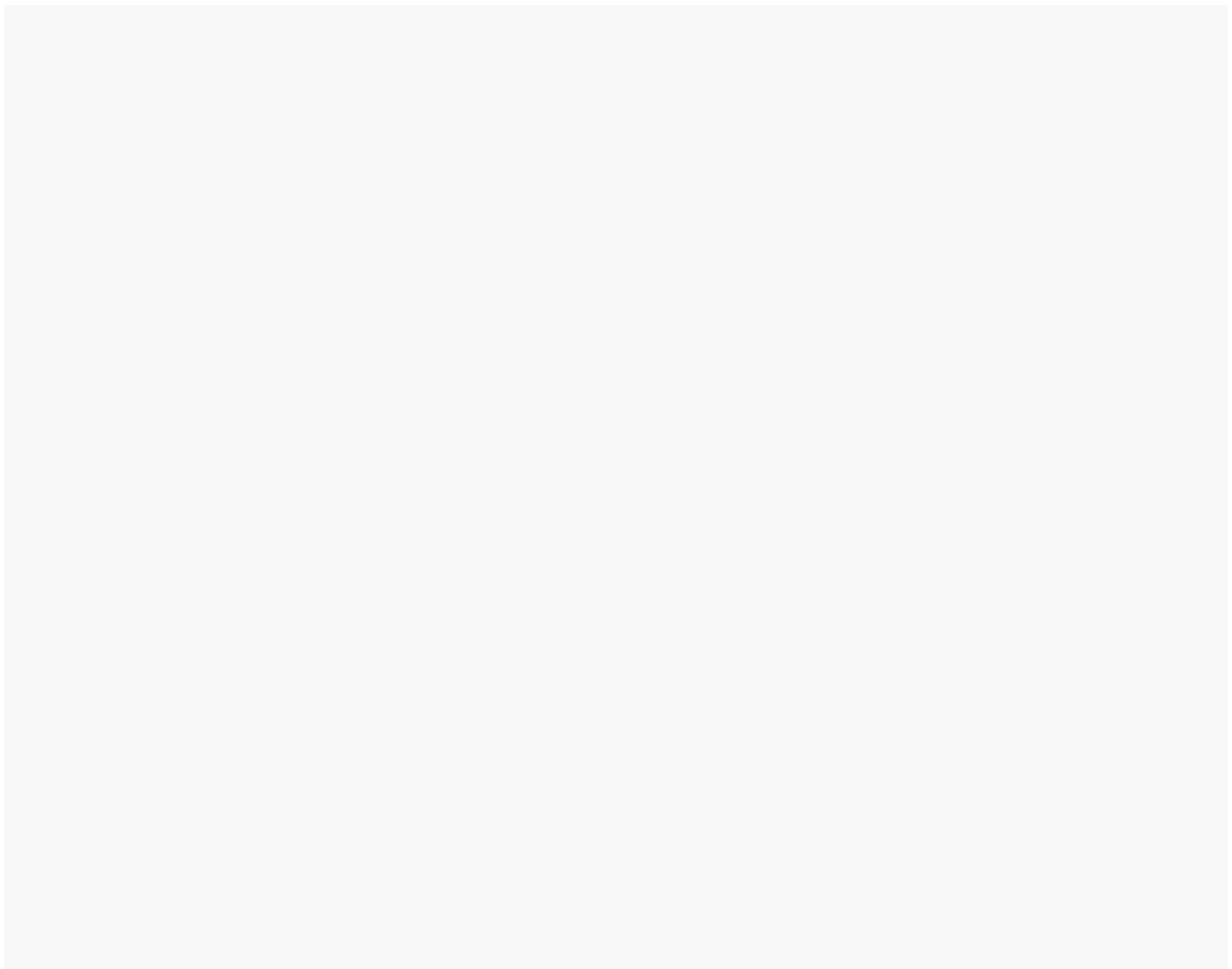
Further down the page, Etro gives consumers the opportunity to participate themselves to grow the circle wider by uploading their art. Viewers are encouraged to show "enthusiastic thinking that only freedom can bring" in the form of paintings, photographs, sculpture, music and more.

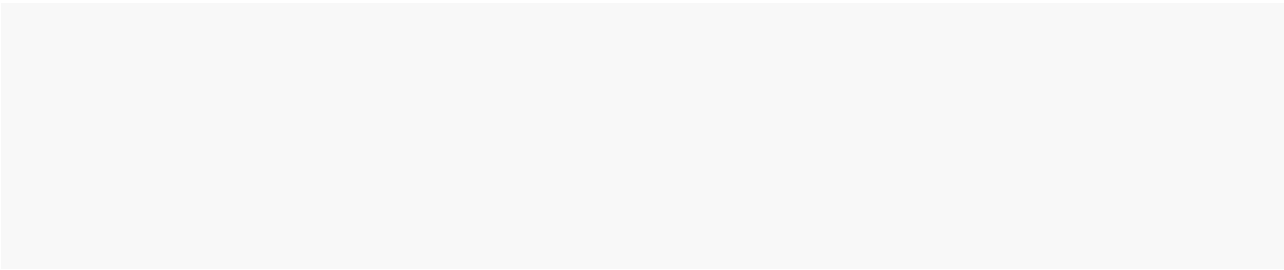
According to [WWD](#), judges from within Etro will pick from the submissions and give those individuals the opportunity to collaborate with the brand.

Consumers can also meet the circle members in more detail via short profiles accompanied by black-and-white photographs taken by the circle's Nicol Gialain wearing Etro's fall 2016 collection.

Instead of being bios, these profiles feature the artists talking directly to the reader, sharing their ideas of creation, artistry and expression.

A short clip shared to social media shows the first meeting of the circle members, giving an idea of the encounters to come over the next 11 weeks.





"We would like to share our first encounter with you all: the essence of the circle spontaneously born as we first met at Jacques' Brera studio, the sense of belonging and affinity that turns five minutes into hours of stories as the starting point of the project. Different generations and experiences united under the same freedom, heart and passion." Kean Etro #ThinKean #ETRO #thecircleofpoets

A video posted by etro_official (@etro_official) on Dec 22, 2015 at 2:37am PST

"Allowing consumers to engage and participate with the brand is necessary for both growth and relevance," Ms. Masciadrelli said. "By inviting user-generated content, Etro is able to tap into the lifestyle of their most loyal consumers and identify what inspires them and what might keep them coming back to the brand."

Artistic endeavors

Fashion and art are increasingly converging, resulting in projects that are focused more on expression than commercial outcomes.

Italian fashion label Gucci is speaking to the now immediate availability of art with an Instagram series that turns textiles into creative pieces.

#GucciGram asked visual artists to reinterpret the brand's new Blooms and Caleido prints into works of art, which were then posted to Instagram for Gucci's followers to view. Often, luxury brands have worked with artists on exhibits, but this social campaign makes the pieces accessible to a wider audience while also driving a conversation around the art ([see story](#)).

As marketers try to appeal to the next generation of consumers, they need more than data, according to a New York University professor at Luxury Interactive 2015 on Oct. 13.

Brands must also convey less tangible values through the vast array of channels and social media outlets at their disposal. Social media outlets offer brands creative ways to reach consumers, expedite the transaction process and convey brand values ([see story](#)).

"The Etro brand could only be positively impacted by the artistic community that it has set out to curate and nurture," Ms. Masciadrelli said. "The ideas and inspiration that arise from these artists have the potential to be reflected in Etro's future collections or collaborations."

"As their brand manifesto states, the Circle of Poets community exists to provide artistry 'a sense of belonging in contemporary Milan,'" she said. "The artistic community that Etro creates has the ability to bring a sense of humanity and emotion to the luxury fashion industry."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York