

EVENTS/CAUSES

Luisa Via Roma leaves room for interpretation with fashion influencer project

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Luisa Via Roma's Firenze4Ever

By SARAH JONES

Italian department store Luisa Via Roma is exploring the intersection of technology and fashion with the help of a bevy of bloggers.

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The 12th edition of its Firenze4Ever event, which brings together journalists and influencers in Florence, takes inspiration partly from Swarovski and will explore visionaries and "TechDreamers." Fashion and tech are colliding more frequently, making this a timely subject for the retailer's biannual event to investigate.

"Innovation is the new form of luxury," said Yuli Ziv, founder/CEO of [Style Coalition](#), New York. "By associating their brand with technology, Luisa Via Roma is elevating its perception among consumers."

Ms. Ziv is not affiliated with Luisa Via Roma, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Luisa Via Roma](#) was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

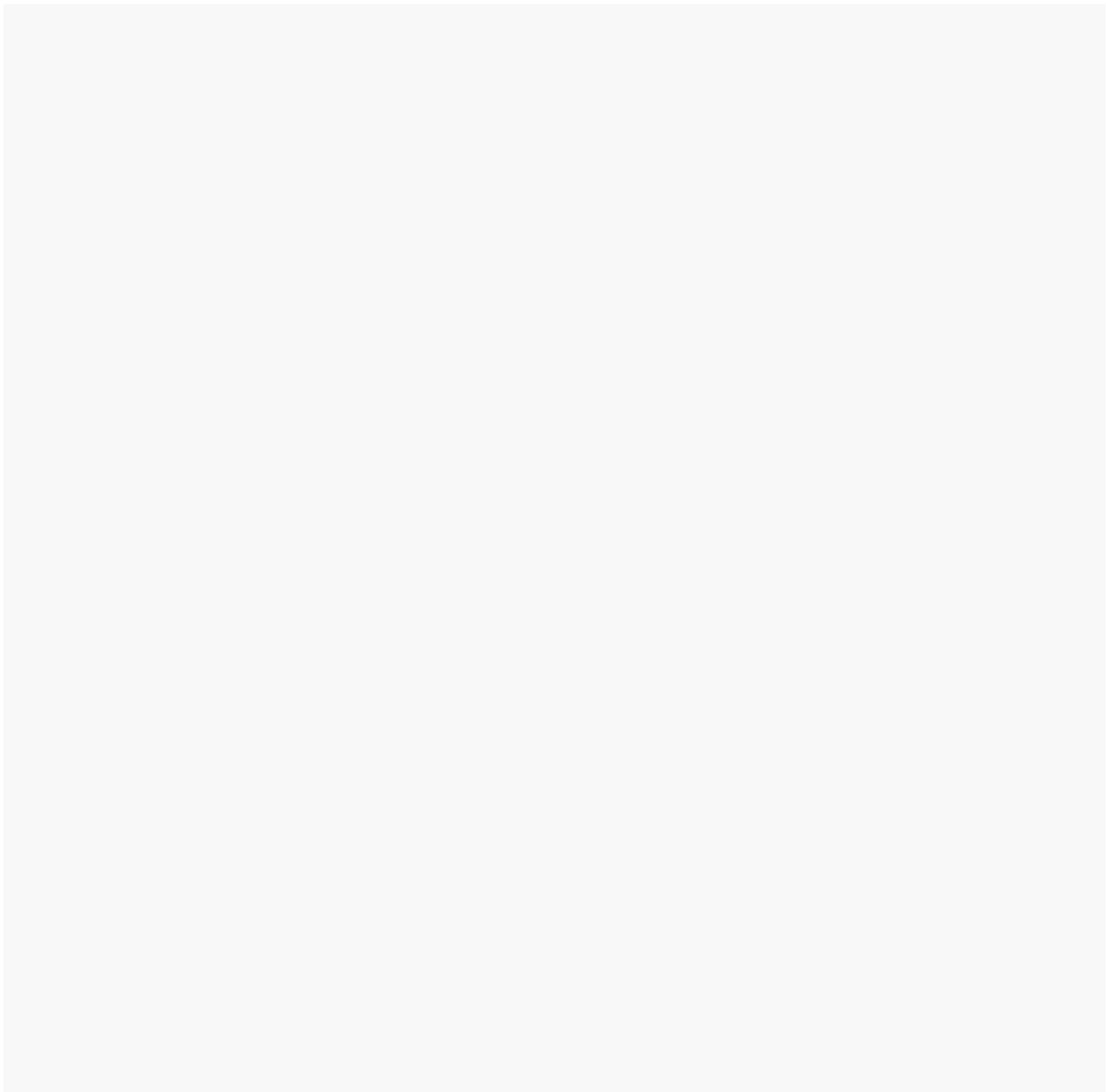
Fashion on film

This Firenze4Ever is being held at the start of Pitti Uomo, the men's fashion week in Florence.

From Jan. 9, Luisa Via Roma's store will be transformed. An installation of crystal-embellished mirrors will be installed, blurring the lines between the real architecture and the optical illusions of the reflections. Bringing in a taste of high-tech, Seditio Art Gallery in London has chosen 10 artists, whose video installations will be on view within the store.

A "Crystal Couture" exhibition from Jan. 10 through 24 at Luisa Via Roma's concept store will showcase haute couture creations alongside work from 30 up-and-coming talents. Leading into the venue will be a path constructed of 100,000 Swarovski crystals.

The work of the new talents, all of which incorporate Swarovski elements, will be available through Feb. 28 on Luisa Via Roma's ecommerce site.



@luisaviaroma presents TechDreamers inspired by @swarovski, an exciting collaboration dedicated to the visionaries who use technology to transform dreams into reality. #LVRTechDreamers #Firenze4Ever #F4E12

A video posted by LuisaViaRoma (@luisaviaroma) on Dec 24, 2015 at 12:09am PST

Celebrating 120 years in business, Swarovski has partnered with a number of retailers in the past year, bringing sparkle to Lane Crawford and Bergdorf Goodman ([see story](#)).

"Swarovski's iconic brand has been associated with the art of fashion for many decades and makes a perfect inspiration for the initiatives," Ms. Ziv said.

In addition to the installations, Firenze4Ever will gather influencers to photograph upcoming trends seen in the spring/summer collections at locations around Florence.

Are you a dreamer?

A summit on Jan. 11 will delve into fashion and tech with speakers from both worlds, as well as those who straddle the two. This includes Roland Harste, the vice president of global marketing at Swarovski, and marketers from Facebook and Instagram.

Also on Jan. 11 will be a "Dream Party" with live musical performances from Jasmine Thompson, Petite Meller, Dragonette and Nervo.

Generating excitement for the event, Luisa Via Roma filmed a short video featuring a number of industry insiders. Kenzo's creative director Humberto Leon says that he believes you have to be a dreamer to work in fashion, while designer Mary Katantzou shares that she thinks everyone has a little dreamer and pragmatist in them.

Under the influence

Previous incarnations of Firenze4Ever have also made a splash courtesy of design talents.

In 2015, Luisa Via Roma teamed with toymaker Hasbro to give iconic 1980s toy My Little Pony a high-fashion makeover.

For the Make Kids Happy auction, coinciding with the retailer's biannual Firenze4ever fashion event, My Little Pony figures decorated by labels including Fendi and Emilio Pucci were sold on eBay from June 15 to raise money for Save the Children. Choosing a lighthearted basis for this campaign will likely appeal to consumers' nostalgia and pique interest in the items up for bid ([see story](#)).

Fashion bloggers are becoming an important piece of the fashion marketing puzzle, making Firenze4Ever a strategic move.

Influencers today yield more power than celebrities to shape consumer opinion, presenting an opportunity for brands to reach their legions of followers through a trusted voice, according to a new report by Fashionbi.

"[Fashion Influencer Marketing: Creating Successful Brand Collaborations with Fashion Bloggers in 2016](#)" says that while traditional fashion imagery may seem unattainable to the average consumer, bloggers and social media stars can make fashion appear more attainable. Influencers can boost the ROI on marketing campaigns with the right strategic approach to a partnership, which requires a mix of control over the project and freedom to let the influencers be creators themselves ([see story](#)).

"These days, when retail gets reinvented through technology, it is a smart move for a retailer to be positioned as innovative and technologically advanced," Ms. Ziv said. "Influencers and digital creatives lead the revolution, so they are a natural choice as catalysts of this event.

"It is smart for the brand to strengthen their relationship with influencers through such a unique exclusive experience that fosters creativity."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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