

IN-STORE

Dolce & Gabbana turns to street artists to prove #ItalialsLove

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Dolce & Gabbana ad campaign, summer 2016

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Italian fashion label Dolce & Gabbana is leading consumers through its doors with a heritage-inspired street art campaign.

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To complement the #ItalialsLove campaign ([see story](#)), the brand is inviting street artists to paint outside its boutique doors. Calling forth an Italian tradition and working with contemporary artists demonstrates Dolce & Gabbana's respect for its heritage and provides a more immediate form of advertising.

Mr. Ramey is not associated with Dolce & Gabbana, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

"Dolce & Gabbana understands that being Italian precedes the collection/fashion," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami. "Luxury means brand first."

"Italy and all things Italian is core to Dolce & Gabbana's DNA," he added. "The narrative behind the Italian Madonnari is gaining traction. Dolce & Gabbana understands and feeds the thirst."

[Dolce & Gabbana](#) could not respond by press deadline.

Love for Italy

In the 16th century, artists working on monuments or collaborating with architects often had to travel around the country from job to job or find a way to subsist between jobs. The artists began to recreate church paintings or other scenes of national or religious interest onto the pavement.



Dolce & Gabbana Madonnari at work

A popular subject for these paintings, which became more common over the years, was the Madonna, a tendency that lent the name Madonnari to the artists. Many of these artists remained anonymous, but some, most notably El Greco, achieved some level of contemporary or lasting fame.

Street art has since moved beyond Italy to many parts of the world, but in 1972 Italy held a competition that has since blossomed into the Fiera delle Grazie, a four day festival. As such, street art retains a recognized place in the national culture.

Consequently, Dolce & Gabbana is inviting street artists to replicate images from the brand's summer 2016 #Italiaislove campaign in front of the label's boutiques. The initiative shows a respect for the brand's national culture and is a creative and inviting way of promoting its summer 2016 collection.



Valentina Sforzini street art

On Feb. 26, Valentina Sforzini, the youngest Madonnara in Italy, began working on an image from the collection on Via della Spiga, one of Milan's premier high streets. In London on March 3, Jon Hicks created a cartoon image summing the collection's inspirations outside the brand's New Bond Street store.

A drawing has also taken place in Madrid, with two more, in Barcelona, Spain's Paseo de Garcia on March 17 and on Kurfurstendamm in Berlin the following day.

Artwalk

Whether it is in marketing or in the products themselves, Dolce & Gabbana has a tendency to think outside the box.

At the beginning of 2016, the brand launched its first collection geared exclusively toward Muslim women.

The Dolce & Gabbana Abaya fall/winter 2016-17 collection includes a range of abayas and hijabs in the label's bright and colorful prints. International interest in high-fashion labels has resulted in brands embracing cultural differences through product output such as beauty products in a variety of shades and clothing options ([see story](#)).

This is not the first time that street art's Italian roots have been harvested.

Last year, Italian fashion designers Prada and Versace were among the creatives participating in a cultural initiative literally on the streets of Milan to benefit nonprofit organization Oxfam Italia.

Twenty-four artistically designed manhole covers will be sporadically placed throughout Milan's fashion district from Feb. 24 until January 2016. Now in its third edition, "Over the Under Manhole Art Tells the Story of a Cabled City," organized by European fibre optic network Metroweb, sponsored by the Municipality of Milan and in partnership with the National Chamber for Italian Fashion, was seen as a tribute to Milan's internationality and excellence in craftsmanship and products ([see story](#)).

"Italy remains the intersection of sophistication and culture, music and art, fashion and love," Mr. Ramey said.

"Dolce & Gabbana remains the interpreter and arbiter; capturing the essence of all things Italian. There is a fascination with all things Italy that Dolce & Gabbana taps into."

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