

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Safilo's competitive edge bolstered by 3D-printed prototypes

November 2, 2016



Safilo prototypes created using a 3D printer

By STAFF REPORTS

Italy's Safilo is embracing 3D printing technologies to produce the prototypes of its eyewear frames in record time.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Safilo is the eyewear licensor of a number of high-fashion brands including Hugo Boss, Jimmy Choo, Christian Dior and Max Mara, among many others. By having the ability to quickly create 3D-printed models of potential eyewear designs, Safilo-licensed brands will be able to send new frames to market at a higher rate, a significant benefit due to the popularity of the eyewear category.

Framed in 3D

Safilo has begun using full color, multi-material 3D printers provided by Stratasys to produce photorealistic frames for its licensees. Using the 3D method to create the prototypes has proved 60 percent faster than traditional methods.

According to Safilo's product sample coordinator, Daniel Tomasin, the adoption of Stratasys printers reduces the design time for prototypes from 15 hours with a CNC machine and manual finishing to just three hours.

A speedier production time allows brands to stay on top of current market trends. The photorealistic qualities also provide a more true-to-life example for brands to consider as they approve potential designs.



Jimmy Choo's Vivy sunglasses are licensed by Safilo

Through 3D printing, the prototypes can be created in the same color and texture as a finalized design.

"This is the start of a new age for designers," said David Iarossi, creative designer associate director for Safilo, in a statement. "Thanks to the Stratasys J750's ability to combine a near endless gamut of striking colors with vary levels of transparency, we can produce a number of completely different frames.

"This allows us to perfect multiple designs early, enabling us to launch the latest fashion eyewear on-time and maintain our competitive edge," he said. "Stratasys 3D printing is fantastic as the frames surpass those produced manually, particularly as we no longer need to worry about the paint fading as the color is integrated into the 3D printed frame."

Stratasys J750 offers users 360,000 color choices, a number of material properties and ultra-smooth surface finishes.

Eyewear icon Safilo makes frames for top fashion brands in record time with Stratasys 3D printing

While the luxury fashion industry traditionally prides itself on the craftsmanship and handiwork that goes into creating a garment or leather good, it may be starting to warm to the idea of using 3D printing in its production.

At Chanel's haute couture show in July 2015, some of the tweed pieces that were modeled on the runway were created using 3D printing. Having one of the biggest names in high-fashion embrace the technology may open the doors for expanded use of 3D printing among luxury labels, which has the possibility of altering the definition and positioning of luxury ([see story](#)).