

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dior marks Maria Grazia Chiuri's retail launch with pop-up series

March 2, 2017



Dior's pop-up in Paris

By SARAH JONES

French fashion house Christian Dior is ushering in a new design era in dedicated bricks-and-mortar environments.

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To launch the debut collection by its recently appointed artistic director Maria Grazia Chiuri, Dior is staging a series of pop-up boutiques, using the temporary store format to create a dedicated retail story around the apparel and accessories. Creative transitions often result in gradually updated store designs, but Dior's strategy enables the brand to make a more immediate statement.

"There is a brilliance behind Dior's strategy in that their pop-ups provide a unique palette allowing the brand to tell its story in its own way," said Fred Reffsin, president of [Brandgrowth](#), a luxury brand consultancy.

"Pop-ups can also be newsworthy to the press and to the fashionistas who follow the brand," he said. "Ideally they can help attract people who think they know everything they need about the brand.

"The flexibility of location also allows the brand to better deliver on the vision of the artistic director—in this case the immersion into and sharing of her universe."

Mr. Reffsin is not affiliated with [Dior](#), but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Dior](#) was reached for comment.

Making an intro

Ms. Chiuri christened her first spring/summer 2017 collection a "Dio(r)evolution." Her designs premiered exclusively at Dior's 57th Street boutique in Manhattan during New York Fashion Week.

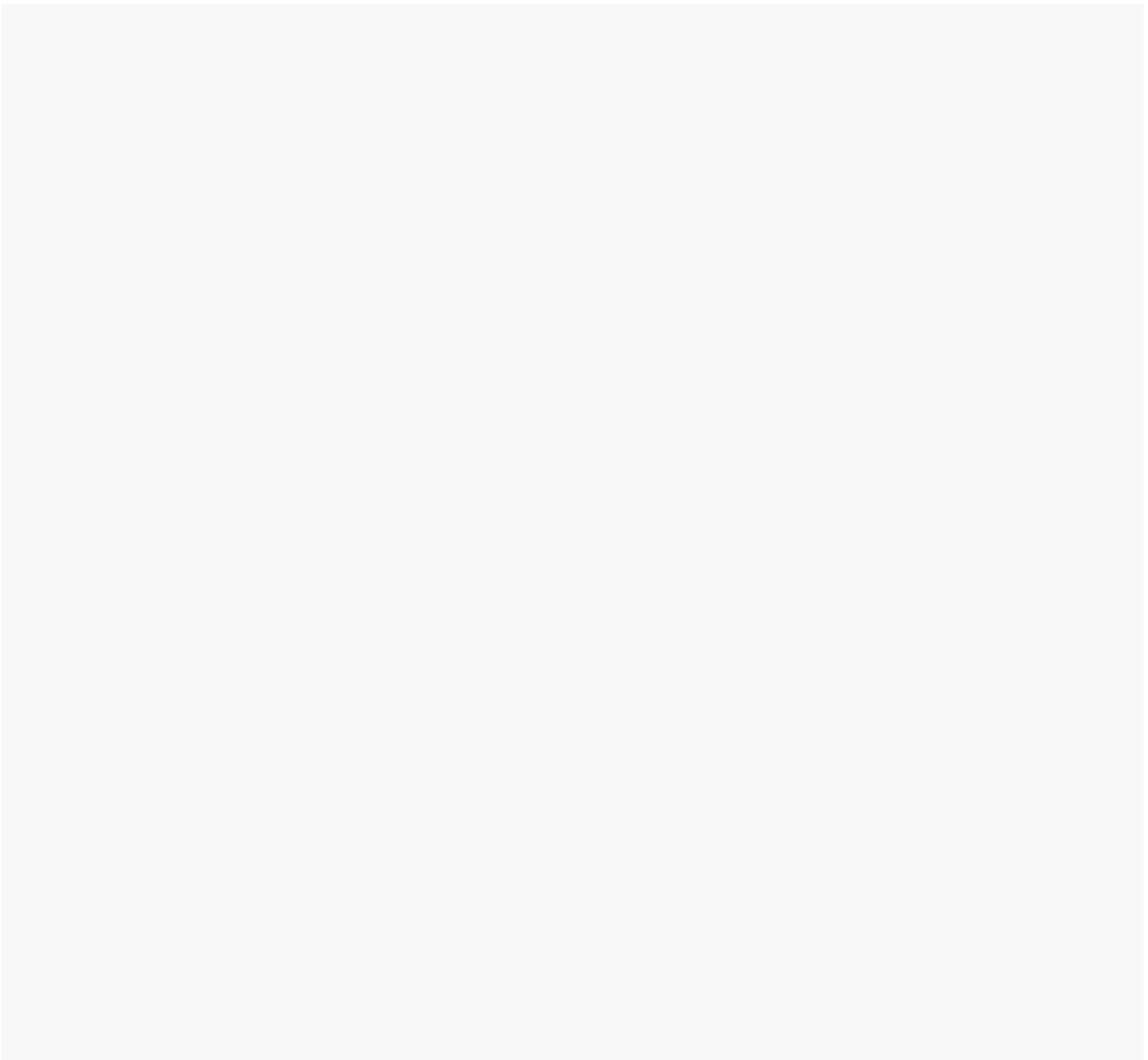
The merchandise is currently rolling out in other Dior stores around the world, but the brand is looking to make an additional impression through a group of pop-up and pop-in locations.




Dior's pop-up on Avenue Montaigne

At 44 Avenue Montaigne, down the street from Dior's historic townhouse in Paris, the brand has installed an homage to femininity. Ms. Chiuri, who came to Dior from Valentino, is the brand's first female creative director, and fittingly gave her first collection a feminist message.

Representing modern femininity, models walked in everything from reimagined fencing uniforms to frothy tulle dresses. Some looks included a slogan t-shirt reading "We should all be feminists."





On the night before her first couture show for Dior, our recently-appointed Artistic Director of women's collections #MariaGraziaChiuri has joined the movement wearing our 'We Should All be Feminists' T-shirt during the final preparations for the unveiling of tomorrow's highly-anticipated collection! @fravaliani

A post shared by Dior Official (@dior) on Jan 22, 2017 at 12:10pm PST

Giving these designs a spotlight in a minimalist boutique. Elements of the nearby townhouse, including a grey and white color palette, are offset with more modern touches such as concrete and wooden pieces and contemporary furniture.

Evoking this pro-female message in the Paris boutique, Dior tapped feminist artist Tracey Emin. Her piece, crafted exclusively for this location, is a neon sign reading, "Should love last," in yellow.

In a short film, Ms. Emin explains her thoughts on being female, a subject she has tackled in previous works including drawings, video installations, photography and sculpture.

Avenue Montaigne Pop-up Store - Tracey Emin's Interview

She says that her neon series, which began in 1995, is most effective when the phrases featured are open-ended. Therefore, "Should love last" is left without a question mark, making it a more positive quote.

Prior to the pop-up in Paris, Dior opened a temporary boutique in Los Angeles. Other temporary outlets will be opened in Japan, Dubai, Seoul, Singapore, Beijing and Shanghai, with 15 total planned.



Dior pop-up in Los Angeles

Along with Dior's freestanding pop-ups, the brand will also make an appearance within Saks Fifth Avenue's flagship store and retailers including Miami's The Webster, Isetan in Tokyo, Shinsegae in Seoul and Dubai's Level Shoes, according to [WWD](#).

At Saks, Dior will take over 16 of the retailer's windows. The retailer is also participating in Dior's charity initiative in collaboration with pop star Rihanna.

After casting the singer in one of its campaigns and co-designing a line of sunglasses, Dior is now teaming up with Rihanna for a charitable initiative. The brand is donating a portion of proceeds from the sale of its "We should all be feminists" shirt to the artist's nonprofit The Clara Lionel Foundation.

The shirts will retail in Dior boutiques and on Dior.com through May 15. Saks will also sell the style, including an exclusive black version, on its ecommerce site from March 14-28, per [Billboard](#) ([see story](#)).

"Compared to traditional retail, [pop-ups] can be a more dynamic branding environment," Mr. Reffsin said. "The label owns the space, and can do with it what they want, when they want and where they want.

"I believe they infuse a label with an energy that is especially helpful for more traditional brands looking for new customers or markets."

Ephemeral environments

Pop-ups offer brands the opportunity to create immersive, specific retail environments without a long-term commitment.

For instance, French atelier Chanel shared its stylistic vocabulary with New York-based retailer Bergdorf Goodman's consumers via a four-day pop-up.

The Jewel Box was open Sept. 7-11, and introduced Bergdorf Goodman consumers to Chanel's latest Coco Crush jewelry collection for fall. Bergdorf Goodman is known for its curated selection of the finest luxury goods, making its Chanel pop-up well-suited and of interest amid its affluent consumers ([see story](#)).

Also, French footwear label Christian Louboutin brought its vision of its hometown to life in a pop-up at Le Bon

March Rive Gauche.

Part of the department store's celebration of Paris, Christian Louboutin's temporary boutique let visitors share a scooter ride with the brand's eponymous founder and take a look at iconic designs from the house over the years ([see story](#)).

"While physical stores allow brands to present their collections in a more controlled environment, their impact and importance have been diminished by the way people shop," Mr. Reffsin said. "Ushering in a new era has to go beyond a store experience in order to appeal to a new era of customers.

"Brands must acknowledge the where and the why they believe in brands," he said. "For example, the use of influencers especially in social media can create a more personal connection to the brand.

"Are physical stores still important—of course in terms of looking and seeing but not the immersion discussed earlier. However brands that rely too heavily on the halo of a particular city, street or shopping area are missing out on creating deeper engagements with their customers.

"That's why pop-ups are great. Strong marketing tool, with the flexibility of location without a long term financial commitment."

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