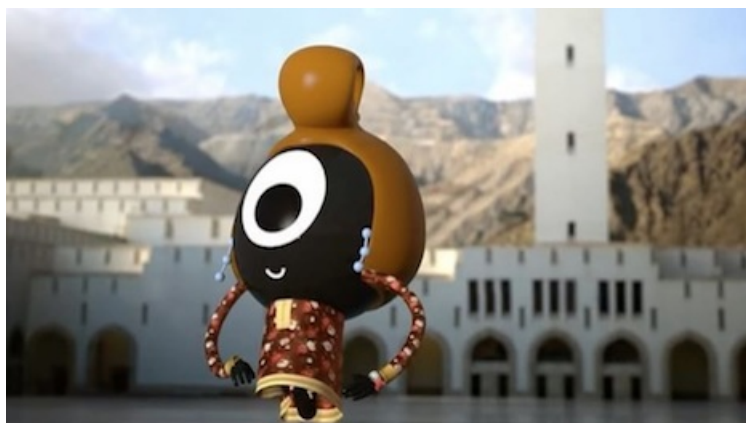


MEDIA/PUBLISHING

## Cond Nast International Luxury Conference examines 21st-century silk roads in Oman

March 24, 2017



*The Suzy Menkes mascot on-site in Muscat, Oman*

By JEN KING

Cond Nast International is retracing the trade routes of the Middle East to better understand the region and the luxury world at large for its third annual Luxury Conference.

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This year's summit takes attendees to Muscat, Oman April 4-6 with an agenda lineup that will explore topics of new wealth generation and how emerging markets are on pace to be a source of 21st century growth for those in the luxury industry. In partnership with Place Vendôme Qatar and Oman Air, "Mindful Luxury," sessions invite creative talents and business leaders to speak to a cache of topics pertaining to luxury's business opportunities and potential consumer relationships.

"Each Cond Nast International conference is different," said Suzy Menkes, editor of *International Vogue*, London. "My aim is to anticipate change, working at least a year ahead of the next seminar.

"When you think how the world has been turned politically on its head, the dynamic, forward looking Seoul conference called 'Future Luxury' would not be appropriate now," she said.

"I am very pleased to have chosen Mindful Luxury for Oman - a county where the spirit is quiet and restrained - particularly compared with other countries such as Dubai in the Gulf states."

The new silk road

Cond Nast International's "Mindful Luxury" will be led by International Vogue's Ms. Menkes, who has curated the media brand's luxury summit since its 2015 launch in Florence.

This year's event will be held outside Muscat's city center at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa, situated on the shores of the Gulf of Oman.

Although an enormous amount of attention is spent on luxury's potential and consumption in nearby United Arab Emirates, Ms. Menkes decided on Oman, as the country "stands at the nexus of this global trade, offering a perspective that encompasses India to the Far East and Europe to Arabia."

"Less is more' is the new mantra for high-fashion," Ms. Menkes said. "Anyone who wants sparkling, in-your-face luxury can find it in the pan-Arabia countries.

"But customers in the United Arab Emirates have become more sophisticated and a more thoughtful approach has changed attitudes across the region," she said. "The power of the Internet is also impressive - as witness the beauty online specialty across the Far East and the Middle East.

"This is something that different countries with a vibrant population share."

Supported by the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Tourism, Cond Nast's two-day conference will bring together nearly 500 delegates from more than 30 countries. As with Florence in 2015 and Seoul, South Korea last year, the program brings together influencers and innovators of business and creative for storytelling and experience-sharing.

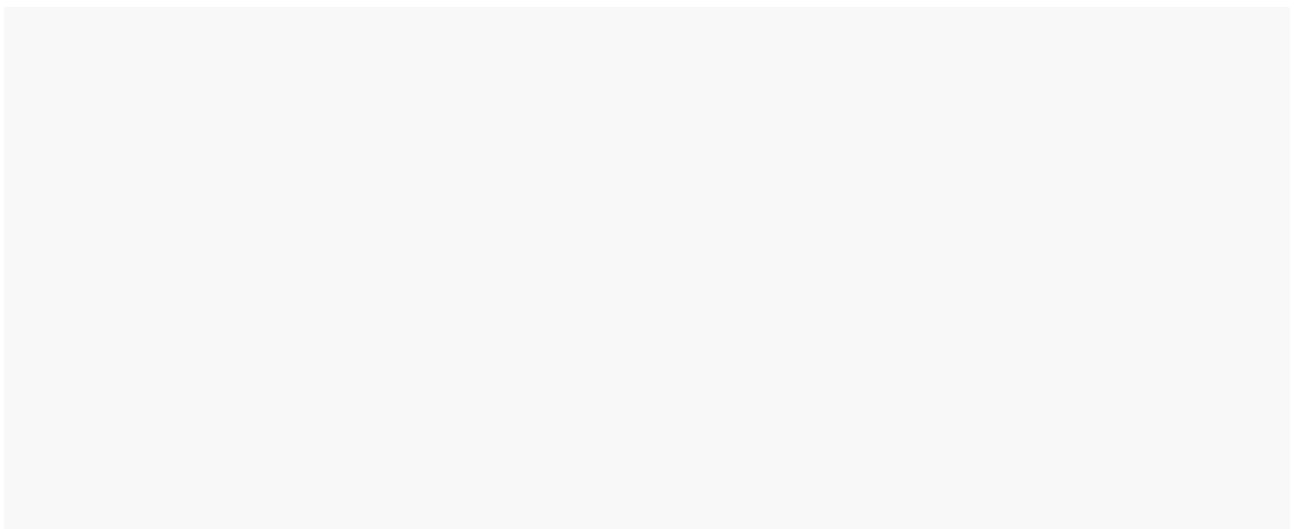


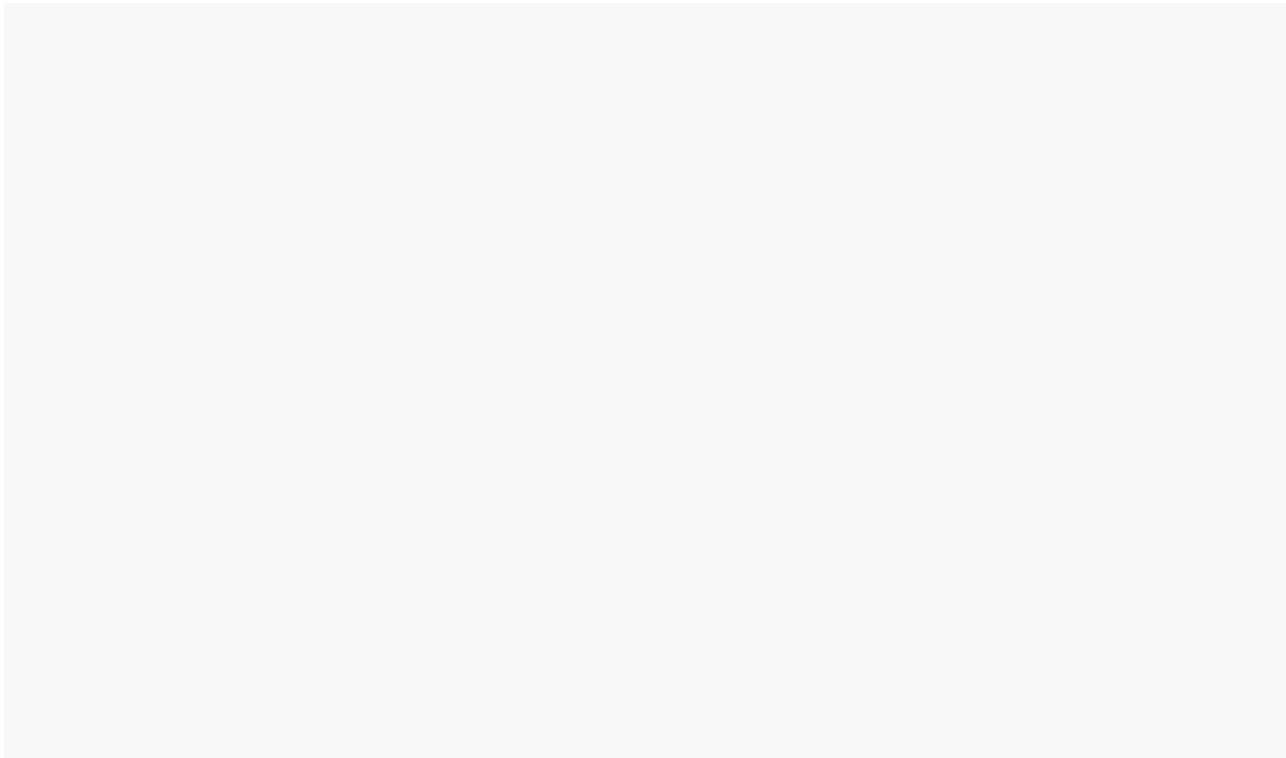
*Aerial view of Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa, Oman*

Primary topics include, among others, new market development, the evolution of global trade routes, luxury for the "post-luxury" consumer, the power of the Middle East and tracks dedicated to the perfume, jewelry and accessories businesses.

High-spending Middle Eastern clientele hold a large growth potential for Western brands, provided marketers do their due diligence in getting to know these consumers and their cultures, according to a report from Fashionbi.

Recognizing the opportunities that exist in catering to Muslim consumers, a number of luxury brands have developed special collections, edits or campaigns that reflect their need for modesty. With increasing online penetration within the Middle East, social media, mobile marketing and ecommerce open up avenues for international brands to court consumers, but building a successful relationship requires a localized approach ([see story](#)).





Less than 2 weeks to go to the third @cniluxury Conference. Have you bought your ticket yet to join @suzymenkesvogue for this incredible experience? #suzymenkesvogue #dontforgettogetyourticket #mindfulluxury #placevendomeqatar #omanair #omran #beautyhasanaddress ? @joergzuber @opiumeffect

A post shared by CNI Luxury Conference (@cniluxury) on Mar 23, 2017 at 4:45am PDT

Cond Nast International will welcome attendees at a cocktail reception April 4 at The Courtyard of the Al Husn Hotel, a property within Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah's resort complex. The following morning, attendees are invited to partake in a yoga and meditation class held on the Al Bandar Beachfront.

Sessions will be held at the Al Bandar Hotel's ballroom with opening remarks from Jonathan Newhouse, chairman and chief executive of Cond Nast International and HE Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Albusaidi, the secretary general of the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by a word from Ms. Menkes.

The conference kicks off with a candid conversation between Ms. Menkes and couturier Elie Saab, who will discuss his Lebanese heritage and his namesake brand's beginnings.

"I am so proud to have Elie Saab as a keynote speaker - the first time he will tell publicly his extraordinary story of starting his career with Lebanon in turmoil and building a family business that spans Paris, London and New York," Ms. Menkes said.

Day 1 highlights include "Welcome to Vogue Arabia" where editor in chief of the newly launched Cond Nast title Deena Aljuhani Abdulaziz will discuss the imprint and its Middle Eastern perspective ([see story](#)).



*Gigi Hadid on the cover of Vogue Arabia's first print edition*

Attendees will also hear from Alber Elbaz, Vetements' Guram Gvasalia, Giambattista Valli and others on various topics. The "Mapping the New Silk Route" module continues after lunch with a word from Vogue India's editor at large Bandana Tewari during the "Fashion, Luxury and Gandhi" session.

Cond Nast International titles are well represented on Day 1, as the imprints are ingrained in the local culture and well-versed in consumer sentiment in each region. Cond Nast Traveler Middle East's editor in chief will discuss the rise of non-material luxury and Vogue China's editorial director will tell of the mindful Chinese consumer.

Day 1 ends with a gala hosted by Cond Nast International and Place Vendôme Qatar at Shangri-La's Turtle Beach, an on-site sea turtle sanctuary.

Those who do not stay up too late are again invited to the optional beachfront yoga and meditation session before Day 2's sessions begin.

Day 2's themes include "The power of accessories" with sessions with Jimmy Choo's CEO, Salvatore Ferragamo's women's footwear design director and Edgardo Osorio, the founder and creative director of Aquazzura.

Online retail will be discussed by founder/CEO of Farfetch Jose Neves and children's wear will be covered by Raffaello Napoleone, CEO of Pitti Immagine and the chairman of Yoox Net-A-Porter Group.

After lunch, sessions are dedicated to jewelry maisons local to the Middle East and surrounding regions such as Mouawad, Amrapali Jewels, Daou Jewelry and Noor Fares.

The conference concludes with a "Mind Release" closing party organized and hosted by Muscat Bay at the Muscat Bay Experience Center and Beach. The party will include special guests and music provided by DJs.

"In a world where luxury can be a fragrant invention, Albert Elbaz and Frederic Malle are going to tell us about the scent of success," Ms. Menkes said.

"From business moguls such as Cem Boyner from Istanbul to Guram Gvasalia of Vetements, we will bring talking about the business of high-fashion," she said. "Then there are accessories from sunglasses, through handbags to the shoes of Paul Andrew for Ferragamo. They will help retailers embrace facets of fashion. While jewelry itself will be in the news through designers of Arab lineage.

"So many speakers! Such fantastic ideas! And, above all, a chance to network between dips in the sea and a party on the sand."

Cond Nast International's Luxury Conference: Mindful Luxury's full agenda can be found [here](#).

*Stay tuned for Luxury Daily's coverage of Cond Nast International's Luxury Conference April 5-6 from Muscat.*

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