

RETAIL

Galleries Lafayette hosts African fashion, culture takeover

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Galleries Lafayette's billboard for Africa Now!

By JEN KING

French department store chain Galleries Lafayette is underscoring the dynamism of Africa's art and fashion scene in a store-wide initiative.

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Galleries Lafayette's "Africa Now!" touches on art, fashion, design, music and African creativity through in-store events, conferences, pop-up shops and exclusive fashion and homeware collections. Taking a cultural approach to in-store efforts can help a retailer speak directly to the many different consumer demographics that shop its store as well as to introduce visitors to new and unfamiliar brands.

Galleries Lafayette was reached for comment.

Cultural explorations

Galleries Lafayette's Africa Now! campaign and events program will run from March 28 to June 25.

At Galleries Lafayette's Boulevard Haussmann flagship, photographs taken by Lakin Ogunbanwo will be displayed in the store's window panes. An art installation by Joel Andrianomearisoa will be staged under Galleries Lafayette's iconic dome for the duration of Africa Now!

Africa Now!'s artistic focus will continue with a dedicated gallery at the Galerie des Galeries, the retailer's art space.



A display for Galeries Lafayette's Africa Now!

From March 28 to June 10, visitors can learn about a new generation of African artists in the "Le jour qui vient" exhibition designed by Marie-Ann Yemsi. A number of participating artists will be exhibited in France for the first time during Africa Now!

On April 2, Galeries Lafayette will host an in-store parade with more than 100 participants.

The Africa Now! parade participants will roam round the Haussmann store's many departments depicting six exclusive scenes.

The parade will be styled by Amag Ayivi for Le Marche Noir with makeup by Nadeen Mateky, using Bumble & Bumble and M.A.C products.

Also on April 2, Galeries Lafayette will welcome three food trucks serving African cuisine. Food trucks include Black Spoon serving Senegalese and Malian fare, afro and African, Caribbean and European fusion foods by New Soul Food and marinated sliced meat trays prepared by La Brigade.

Africa Now! includes apparel and accessories for men and women inspired by African style codes such as batik, kasai and raffia wax prints. Designers include Koche, JW Anderson, Atlein, Gkero, Rochas, N 21, Marco de Vincenzo, Isa Arfen and Walter Van Beirendonck.



Galeries Lafayette's window pane for Africa Now! featuring Essentiel

Galeries Lafayette exclusives include a Chateau Rouge pop-up in the women's department and a temporary menswear shop by Laurence Airline.

Retail exclusives include capsules by Max Mara, Furla and housewares from Absolutement Maison in addition to collaborations between Galeries Lafayette and Rad, MSGM, Essentiel and Sessun et Soeur.

A similar effort was put together by Canadian retailer Holt Renfrew in 2015.

Holt Renfrew celebrated African culture and artisans by featuring the continent at its annual H Project in-store shop. The H Project allows Holt Renfrew to work with nonprofit organizations and support socially and environmentally responsible fashion. In 2015 the boutique was called "Uncrate Africa," and focused on brands that work with African artisans or donate proceeds to African charities, emphasizing Holt Renfrew's commitment to charity on a global scale ([see story](#)).

Hello, Africa

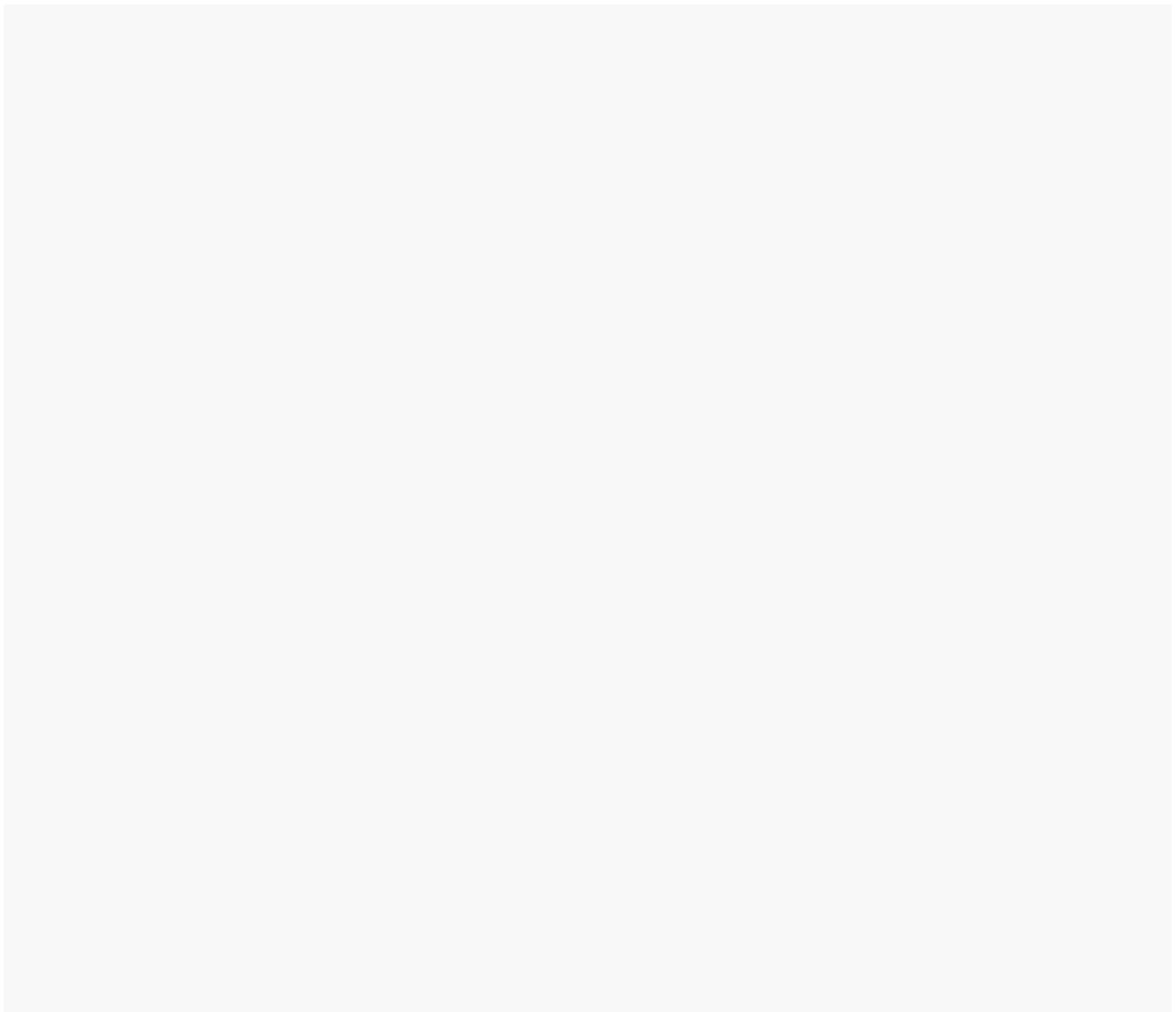
To promote the Africa Now! capsules and in-store initiatives Galeries Lafayette worked with Toilet Paper magazine on imagery.

Earlier this year, the retailer selected Toilet Paper magazine as its artistic director for all advertising campaigns. The unconventional Toilet Paper magazine, created by artistic duo Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari, will serve as the retailer's artistic director for new ads released throughout the year ([see story](#)).

Toilet Paper's Africa Now! campaign has been shared across its social channels as well as becoming a billboard placed on the exterior facade of Galeries Lafayette's Boulevard Haussmann flagship.

The ad shows two women against a teal background seated on cubes with African-inspired prints. The pair also wear outfits with exuberant prints and sport exaggerated hairdos that recall the shape of an afro.

Each of the women holds a telephone to her ear, with the cord extending from one's head to the other. A small speech bubble placed by the black woman's face reads, "Africa Now!"



Les Galeries Lafayette vous convient la parade sensationnelle Africa Now! le dimanche 2 avril 15h et toutes les animations qui ponctueront cette marche festive tout au long de la journe... #GaleriesLafayette #AfricaNow #SaveTheDate

A post shared by Galeries Lafayette (@galerieslafayette) on Mar 29, 2017 at 3:38am PDT

A film version of the ad depicts the models having a conversation with just "hello?" and the words "Africa" and "now?" Once the back-and-forth ends, the models, yell "Africa Now!" into the phones while speech bubbles appear on the screen.

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