

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Brands reach potential new customers at a higher level at Art Basel Hong Kong

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The upcoming Art Basel Hong Kong, more than ever before, reveals that the line between art and luxury is blurring. Image courtesy of Gucci

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The upcoming Art Basel Hong Kong, more than ever before, reveals that the line between art and luxury is blurring. As the ultimate luxury item, art has long been a way for labels that produce handbags, jewelry and clothes to transcend their commercialism through sponsorship and collaborations, reaching prospective customers on a higher level than can be achieved in a retail setting.

This is especially true in China.

Thanks to its role as a critical global market for both art and luxury goods, China has become a key location where brands are using museums, galleries and fairs such as Art Basel to reach a young, affluent audience.

“This contemporary Chinese culture is for the new generation, for Generation Z, for the millennials,” said [Adrian Cheng](#), founder of the [K11 Art Foundation](#) known for its art-infused department stores, or ‘Art Malls.’

“As China is getting wealthier, people need to have more cultural identity,” he said. “We are proud of our own country and think contemporary Chinese culture is very important – not just art, but design, architecture and furniture.

“Young generations want to be part of this new cultural identity that represents the new China; they want to grow with it, and also hopefully make it an international thing as well.”

Traditional players in the art market are heading the other way.

For example, noting the interest among China’s “art-lennials” generation in combining luxury and art, the leading auction house Sotheby’s is transforming itself into a premier global luxury platform.

As a part of its ongoing efforts, Sotheby’s partnered with influencers and pop personalities, such as K-pop star T.O.P and *Marie Claire* creative director and Project Runway judge Nina Garcia, to draw in a younger demographic through social media last year.

The upcoming Art Basel Hong Kong exemplifies this convergence of luxury, art and contemporary Chinese culture,

with brands not only collaborating with artists but selecting and showcasing the work of specifically Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese artists.

1. Gucci: Art Wall

For Art Basel, Gucci is installing another art wall in Hong Kong's D'Aguilar Street, designed by Spanish artist Ignasi Monreal. It is also the first Art Wall in Asia by Gucci, which features three ladies dressed in Gucci's latest collection.

2. Ruinart x Liu Bolin

Ruinart collaborated with Liu Bolin for "Reveal the Invisible," a series of images employing Liu Bolin's signature "invisible man" motif within the environs and history of Maison Ruinart, one of the oldest Champagne houses.

Mr. Liu painted himself and some of the Ruinart employees to camouflage into the background of the crayère (chalk cellars), the vineyard, the Blanc de Blancs bottles and other locations at the site. The series starts its world tour at Art Basel Hong Kong.

3. Lady Dior As Seen By

The French fashion powerhouse Christian Dior has again commissioned a group of artists to reinvent the signature Lady Dior handbag for the *Lady Dior As Seen By* exhibition.

The exhibition was first held in Shanghai in 2011 and then traveled to Beijing (2011) for the grand opening of Dior's Beijing Flagship store, Hong Kong (2013), Tokyo (2012), Milan (2012), Seoul (2016), São Paulo and Düsseldorf (2017). This time, it features a number of international artists and photographers including Chinese artists Liu Jianhua and Liu Chih-hung, who were tasked with reinterpreting the House's iconic handbag.

4. Louis Vuitton: Objets Nomades

French luxury brand Louis Vuitton has previously collaborated with top-notch artists such as Haruki Murakami as well as the streetwear brand Supreme.

At Art Basel Hong Kong, they will feature a collection of travel-inspired objects designed by a group of contemporary artists, including Hong-Kong-based Andre Fu, who also designed the exhibition's scenography.

5. MGM Collector's Lounge and Encounters Sector

MGM, a partner of Art Basel Hong Kong, will showcase the work of Hsiao Chin and Liu Guofu from the MGM COTAI Chairman's Collection in their Collector's Lounge. They are also supporting the Encounters sector which presents installations and site-specific works by artists such as Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan, Chou Yu-Cheng, Toshikatsu Endo, Ryan Gander, Subodh Gupta, Iván Navarro, Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran, Shinji Ohmaki, Jorge Pardo, Erwin Wurm, Ulla von Brandenburg and Nyapanyapa Yunupingu.

6. Coach x Keith Haring

Coach not only featured the work of Keith Haring in its Spring 2018 collection, but will be bringing an interactive art walk, digital installations and a temporary tattoo station in honor of Haring to Art Basel.

7. La Prairie x Julian Charrière

Swiss luxury skincare brand La Prairie has commissioned Swiss artist Julian Charrière to make a film featuring frozen landscapes around the globe. The film's launch will be concurrent with the launch of its latest cream, "White Caviar Crème Extraordinaire."

8. Lane Crawford: What is ART?

Lane Crawford has partnered with APPortfolio, in collaboration with artists Hajime Sorayama, POSE, Zebu and Craig & Karl to create "What is ART?," a series of installations, exhibitions and products scattered throughout Art Basel Hong Kong.

The luxury shopping mall also takes the excitement online, launching an interactive art piece maker on their Web site where visitors can snap a photo of themselves and pick stickers from Craig & Karl to create their own artworks.

*Fiona Graham writes for **Jing Daily**, the leading digital publication covering Chinese luxury. Reproduced with permission and adapted for style.*