

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

At Shanghai Fashion Week, virtual reality takes center stage

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Pronounce's VR show at Shanghai Fashion Week. Image credit: HTC

By DANNY PARISI

Virtual reality continues to infuse every aspect of global luxury and fashion, including the runway.

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GQ and HTC, the makers of the popular Vive VR platform, worked together at this year's Shanghai Fashion Week for a live event that made special use of HTC's VR capabilities. The HTC Vive was used as part of the launch show of luxury menswear brand Pronounce, relying on VR tech to sell the experience.

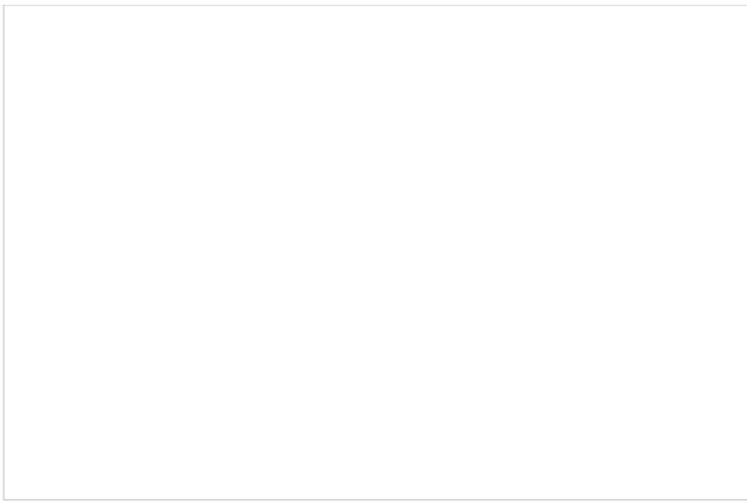
"There is a gap between in-store and on-the-go shopping for many products, and that gap often creates a barrier to purchase for many customers," said Casey Gannon, vice president of marketing at [Shopgate](#), Austin, TX. "Virtual reality bridges this gap, especially through a branded app."

Virtual reality

Virtual reality has increasingly become a major part of how luxury brands today market and sell their products.

As customers desire more unique experiences that help a brand stand out in their minds, virtual reality has emerged as one of the best ways to do that.

At Shanghai Fashion Week, HTC brought its Vive VR platform to a number of different luxury fashion shows, most notably during the launch show of Pronounce, which was sponsored by GQ. Many of the pieces in the show were designed using HTC's Vive technology, and the president of Vive in China even walked in the show as a guest model while wearing a Vive headset.



Pronounce's clothes were designed in VR. Image credit: HTC

The show was also recorded in 360 degrees, allowing those who could not attend the show to still experience it through virtual reality.

Vive was also present at this year's Art Basel event, helping to showcase fine art that was created using VR or with VR in mind.

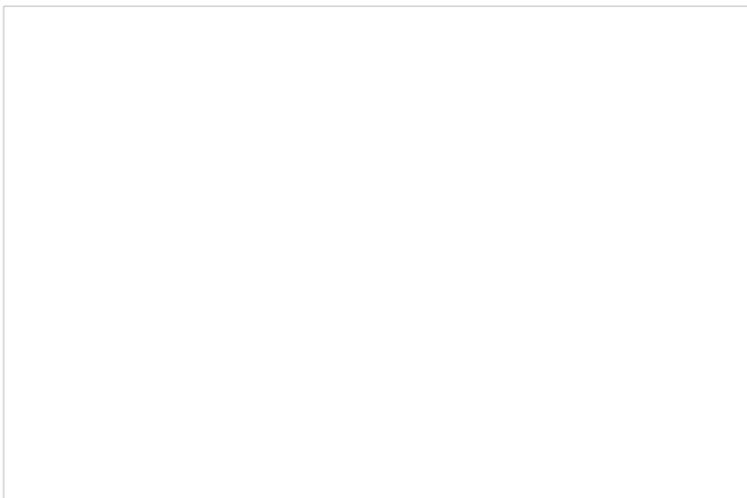
Overall, the Vive is slowly becoming one of the most popular VR platforms in the luxury world, beating out competitors such as Oculus or Google's Daydream.

Innovative tools

Virtual reality in the retail and ecommerce space is set to generate around \$1.8 billion in 2022, according to data from ABI Research.

The report looked at the myriad ways that virtual reality has played a part in improving the retail experience and giving brands and retailers advanced tools to lure in more customers. The applications of VR are already readily apparent in the worlds of real estate, fashion and more ([see story](#)).

For example, Kering-owned Gucci used a technology-driven approach to raise awareness for its 2017 gifting catalog through placement on New York Times' digital edition late last year.



The team behind the show. Image credit: HTC

Gucci made digital its main focus for the 2017 gifting season with efforts ranging from peer-to-peer communications to out-of-home displays and scannable store windows. One addition to Gucci's gifting initiative leveraged virtual reality video to explore its creative partnership with Spanish artist Ignasi Monreal ([see story](#)).

Similar to how the pieces in the Pronounce show were designed in VR, British automaker McLaren is also streamlining the design process for its supercars and sports cars through virtual reality.

Working with software startup Vector Suite, McLaren has developed a bespoke tool that allows its designers to simultaneously sketch by hand and model their design in 3D. While a number of luxury brands have incorporated

VR into their consumer-facing marketing tactics, the technology is also finding a place behind-the-scenes, helping companies facilitate tasks ([see story](#)).

With HTV's Vive making moves in the fashion world in China, it is likely that more brands will begin to tap into VR as a tool for offering memorable experiences to customers.

"With over 66 percent of revenue on mobile devices occurring through an app, high-end brands need to investigate whether VR is a viable option for them," Ms. Gannon said. "This type of micro-moment gives consumers an unexpected experience, deepening their relationship with the brand.

"I expect to see VR deploy successfully for luxury companies in the near future and eventually roll into all major fashion brands."

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