

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Gucci nods to '80s culture to fete SoHo opening

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*Gucci is looking back to a prior decade as it debuts its latest store. Image courtesy of Gucci*

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By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Gucci is heralding its debut in New York's SoHo neighborhood by paying homage to one of the area's cultural heydays.

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In honor of its first store in SoHo, Gucci is putting a lens on the artsy scene that developed in the neighborhood in the 1980s, as it attracted creatives such as musician Blondie and painter Jean-Michel Basquiat. Dubbed Gucci Wooster, the brand's almost 10,000-square-foot boutique is designed to mirror its home, creating an eclectic space for both creativity and commerce.

**Gucci** was reached for comment.

### SoHo setting

Gucci's store opened at 63 Wooster St. on May 6. Set in what was formerly a pencil factory, the boutique spans almost an entire city block.

With its store design, Gucci tried to retain architectural details in the 155-year-old landmark building. Original brickwork, wooden floors and tin ceilings have been restored.

As well as leaning into SoHo's architectural history, Gucci also played with the neighborhood's industrial past with brass and steel design details. Bringing in its own heritage, the brand tapped three Italian artisans to create hand-painted floor designs.



*Gucci Wooster keeps many of the building's architectural details intact. Image courtesy of Gucci*

Gucci Wooster retails women's wear, menswear, jewelry, accessories and décor. The brand is debuting its collaboration with New York-based tailor Dapper Dan in SoHo, retailing the designs at this location two months ahead of the drop in other stores.

This location will also be the first Gucci store to house its new DIY range. Through an augmented reality experience, consumers can customize their own Ace sneaker or luggage with textiles or colors and see their design in real-time.

For the SoHo store, Gucci has prioritized experience. Frontline associates, or "Gucci connectors," will serve as ambassadors for the brand, helping to share Gucci's story.

Taking the boutique experience beyond the transactional, Gucci has built an in-store screening room that will host rotating installations. Consumers can sit in the space's velvet armchairs to view films in an intimate setting.

The screening room includes a 3D video display that does not require special glasses, providing more immersion into Gucci's world.



*Screening room within Gucci Wooster. Image courtesy of Gucci*

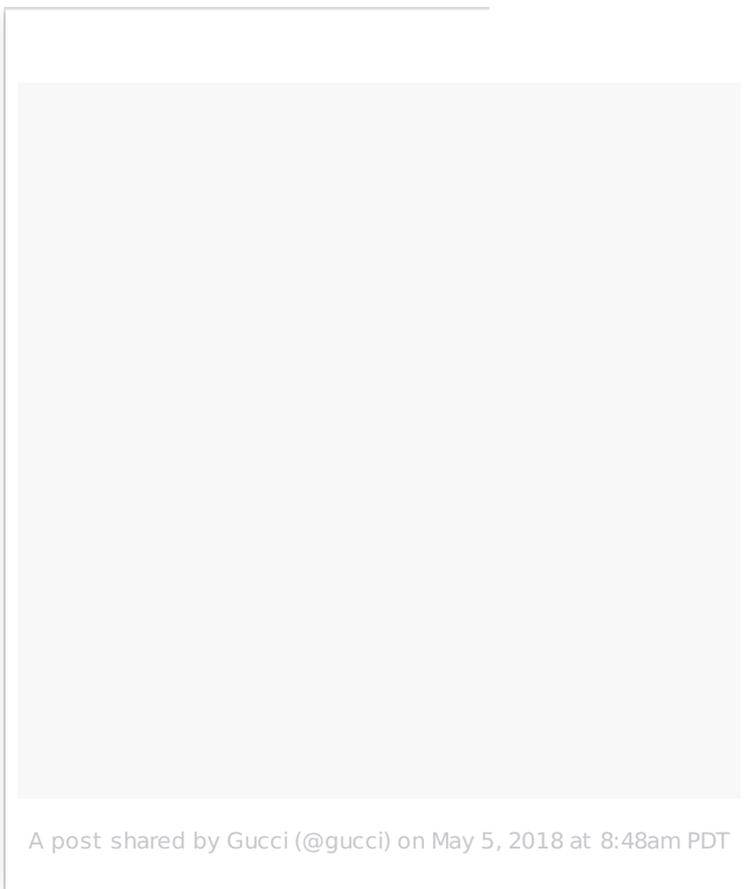
For the opening, the brand is screening a collaborative project with Frieze. The Wu Tsang-directed "Second Summer of Love" centers on the surge of rave culture in 1988 and 1989, when electronic music became more popular.

The film features eccentric characters as they discuss their thoughts on club culture.

Bringing this era to life in Gucci Wooster, the brand has tapped music producer John "Jellybean" Benitez, who was behind some of Madonna's hits, to curate playlists for the store.

Paying further homage to music in the 1980s, Gucci teamed with Interview Magazine to reprint an issue from 1985. Featuring Madonna on the cover, the special publication includes existing and new content.

The magazine's current editor Nick Haramis oversaw the issue, which includes a talk between rapper Nas and Dapper Dan and an editorial photo shoot of Gucci's fall/winter 2018 collection. Gucci and Interview gave local institutions such as Housing Works and the New York Academy of Art advertising space.



A post shared by Gucci (@gucci) on May 5, 2018 at 8:48am PDT

Produced in limited quantities, the magazine is being sold at Gucci Wooster.

Becoming a local

When brands enter a new location, they often link with local culture to integrate themselves into the neighborhood.

For instance, jeweler Tiffany & Co. celebrated the opening of its SoHo store in New York by allowing artists to create images of what they believe true love to be on the hoarding that surrounded the storefront.

Throughout the summer, the artists added to the hoarding to create murals inspired by True Love. Tiffany was likely tapping into the character of the SoHo neighborhood and the general brand image for this display ([see story](#)).

Along with the '80s, Gucci has also aligned itself with other significant cultural happenings. The brand is the exclusive designer of music superstar Elton John's final world tour outfits.

The recording artist's "Farewell Yellow Brick Road" tour will kick off in September and travel the globe for the next three years. Through this partnership, Gucci will have prime placement as the musician says goodbye to his fans ([see story](#)).

Gucci Wooster is indicative of the direction the brand is taking, bringing its cultural concept to a physical environment.

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