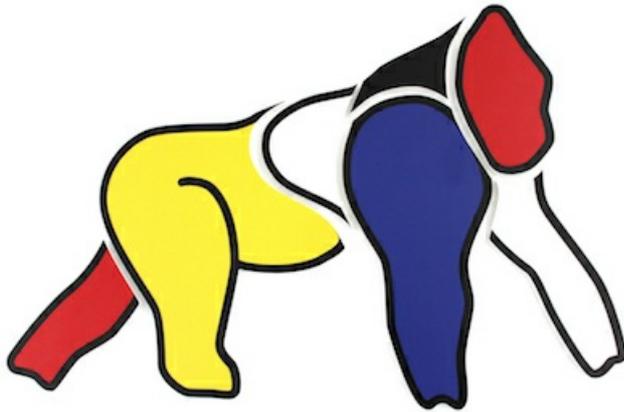


FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

## Swiss beauty care brand Valmont meshes love for Berlin gorilla with philanthropy

October 19, 2018



*Ode to Mondrian: Valmont Group chief Didier Guillon's tribute sketch of Berlin Zoo gorilla Ivo. Image credit: Didier Guillon, Valmont*

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

Switzerland's Valmont Group and Foundation Valmont through Oct. 21 are in the midst of their first United States art exhibition titled "The Elegant Symmetry of the Gorilla."

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Held in Lower Manhattan, the exhibition showcases a collection of 30 works designed and created by Didier Guillon, president and artistic director of Valmont Group and Foundation Valmont.

"This exhibition is a very concrete way to express our motto, 'When Art Meets Beauty' retail concept, how the Valmont Group is connected to art," Mr. Guillon said.

The 33-year-old **Valmont** produces a range of anti-aging skin treatments and cosmetics from its headquarters near Lake Geneva in Switzerland.

### Going wild for Ivo

Inspired by a visit last year to the Berlin Zoo, Mr. Guillon and his younger daughter Valentine fell for Ivo, the famous gorilla and zoo mascot.

As an art connoisseur, Mr. Guillon envisioned an alternative destiny for this elegant animal with his angular and resolutely cubist silhouette. As a result, he designed a series of artistic tributes to portray the quest of a gorilla in pursuit of happiness using different medias, in several dimensions, juxtaposing various materials.



*Valmont boss Didier Guillon's watercolor sketch of Berlin Zoo gorilla Ivo on newspaper. Image credit: Didier Guillon, Valmont*

"The Elegant Symmetry of the Gorilla" will next travel to Munich and Berlin.

To celebrate the exhibition, Valmont has partnered with One Drop, a global nonprofit dedicated to engaging communities to bring sustainable access to safe water.

During the months of October and November, Valmont will donate \$10 to One Drop for every product sold at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York and Spa Valmont at Plaza Athne New York.

Valmont will also donate 100 percent sales of three artworks from the exhibition to One Drop.

Please read the interview with Mr. Guillon:

What is the thinking behind "The Elegant Symmetry of the Gorilla" exhibition?

I was inspired by Ivo the Berlin Zoo gorilla mascot.

In 2017, I visited this zoo with my youngest daughter, Valentine. We were both inspired by Ivo.

In his cage, Ivo looks at visitors of the zoo and has the feeling that people are sad to see him in his cage. But Ivo isn't sad.

On the contrary, Ivo has the feeling that people are sad.

Valentine asked me if we can help Ivo to go out of his cage. I replied that unfortunately no. The only solution we have to help him is to transform him in a piece of art so that he can travel around the world through itinerant exhibitions.



*Ivo the gorilla in Berlin Zoo. Image credit: Berlin Zoo, Didier Guillon, Valmont*

How did you decide the format and creative for the exhibition?

I first made different drawings of Ivo on paper newspapers. I decided to give a cubist form to Ivo and started with primary colors with [with a] tribute to Mondrian reference to my daughter Valentine, like a child drawing. Then, I asked my friend and artist/sculptor Isao to reinterpret my drawing in 3D.

Who is the artwork and exhibition targeting?

This exhibition is for everyone. For children and for art lovers. Everybody can understand the concept of the exhibition. The interpretation is free.

For each exhibition organized by the Foundation Valmont, the goal is to offer art to a large public and to question children and adults on different subjects.

Where will it travel?

The Elegant Symmetry of the Gorilla started in New York this year and will continue its travel in Germany and Japan in 2019.

How will this exhibition play out commercially in terms of the relationship with Saks and other retailers and hospitality brands?

This exhibition perfectly embodies our group philosophy and brand values.

This exhibition is a very concrete way to express our motto, "When Art Meets Beauty" retail concept, how the Valmont Group is connected to art.

One of the missions at Valmont is to give back to the community. With this project we chose our partner in North America: One Drop, which is a non-governmental and nonprofit association that works for a sustainable access to safe water.

During the month of October and November 2018, for each product sold at Spa Plaza Athne New York and Saks Fifth Avenue New York, \$10 will be donated to One Drop. This is how our retailers are part of this activation.

This is part of Foundation Valmont's commitment to art and beauty. What cause will it support?

For this event, the Valmont Group and Foundation Valmont supports the access to safe water with One Drop.

Created in 2007 by Cirque du Soleil's founder, Guy Lalibert, their mission is access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene as a transformative force to improve the living conditions of some of the world's most vulnerable communities.

From Latin America to India, One Drop has 13 ongoing projects and an impressive reach of over 1 million beneficiaries.

Here is how we will support One Drop:

For each Valmont product sold at Saks Fifth Avenue New York and at Spa Valmont for Plaza Athenee New York, Valmont will proudly donate \$10 to One Drop during the months of October and November 2018.

Valmont will donate 100 percent of sales for three of the artworks from The Elegant Symmetry of the Gorilla' exhibition to One Drop.



*Valmont's store in Lausanne, Switzerland. Image credit: Valmont*

You come from a family of art collectors. How has that shaped your attitude toward works of beauty?

When I was young, I went to museums with my father and was introduced to art. Sensitive to this way of expression, I began to create. It inspired me to develop the Valmont brand identity while creating visuals always with an art connection.

Integrating art was obvious to me and inspired our motto, "When Art Meets Beauty."

It was also obvious to continue this art-beauty meeting by organizing my own exhibitions through the Foundation Valmont and thus continue the beautiful path that my ancestors passed on to me.

Valmont is known for its eco-friendly beauty products. What is next in the pipeline for the company?

Switzerland is a tremendous supplier of raw material of natural resources.

The entire country is eco-friendly and develops a culture based on this natural spirit. These beautiful resources are the only inspiration we need to imagine and create the products of tomorrow.

Where is the market for sustainable and green cosmetics and beauty care products today? What are consumers demanding?

The market for sustainable beauty care products is universal.

Each consumer has their own personal criteria and need to use environmentally friendly products.

*"The Elegant Symmetry of the Gorilla" exhibition in New York*