

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Harrods interprets masculinity through dance ahead of new menswear concept

March 27, 2019



Harrods focuses on masculinity through dance

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

British department store Harrods is taking a look at masculinity, as the subject becomes a significant topic in mainstream conversation and menswear in high-fashion continues to grow and evolve.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

After a recent advertisement from men's personal care brand Gillette discussing the topic of "toxic masculinity," consumers have been abuzz with debate on the subject and whether or not the notion really exists. Harrods' approach to the polarizing topic focuses on empowering men through dance in a partnership with editorial platform Nowness, to celebrate its new interpretation of menswear in bricks-and-mortar.

"There is ample evidence that, particularly among younger generations, there is not only a heightened emphasis of gender-evoked equality male/female, sexual preference there is an accompanying shift in gender-role perceptions," said Dipanjan Chatterjee, vice president and principal analyst at **Forrester**, Cambridge, MA. "The idea of masculinity is shifting away from broad strokes of machismo to a pointillistic definition of the individual expression.

"Harrods' use of the creative expression through dance bears a strong analogy to the creative and unique expressions of masculinity that will define those who identify as the modern male," he said. "The message here is about positivity, which is the right way to align to the new mindset.

"Unlike, for example, Gillette, which recently took on toxic masculinity' by berating the negative, this execution, to its credit, focuses on the possibilities of the positive."

Harrods unfolds masculinity

While the Gillette ad focuses on an important issue today, looking to combat problems such as bullying and sexual harassment, it opened up a debate among consumers.

Harrods' campaign also tackles the topic of masculinity, but in a different manner.

The editorial on Nowness' Web site, directed by Campbell Addy, focuses on four male dancers.

Each dancer discusses how he came to dance and what it means to him. They touch on topics such as using dance

as a means of expression and a form of therapy.

The men are featured in striking dance numbers alone, while wearing various men's style to show off their individual personalities.

Harrods' video with Nowness

Harrods' collaboration with Nowness promotes its new menswear destination, named Men's Superbrands.

As men are no longer strictly focused on suits as an expression of their fashion sense, with streetwear continuing to grow in high fashion, Harrods is taking a new approach.

The new menswear concept will consolidate the department from three floors to just one, situated on the second floor, as part of Harrods' seven-phase redevelopment plan.

Men's Superbrands is 42,000 square feet, featuring 19 of what it believes are the top fashion brands in menswear. Each boutique has its own flair, including a private shopping suite in Louis Vuitton and a foosball table in Berluti.

Other labels such as Gucci, Balenciaga, Dior and Ermenegildo Zegna will also be featured in the Superbrands department.

While menswear is growing as a whole, Harrods saw the increase itself within its own store. The department store has worked with design studio David Collins to optimize the luxuriousness as well as usefulness of the space.



Harrods' new menswear concept. Image credit: Harrods

The space is focusing on a way to easily launch pop-up and concept shops for various brand launches and collaborations.

Menswear elsewhere

Similarly, department store chain Nordstrom put a focus on menswear with the launch of a thematic pop-up series.

New Concepts allow consumers to shop a revolving selection from numbered pop-up shops via digital and online. Curated by Sam Lobban, Nordstrom's vice president of men's fashion, New Concepts cycles through different brand partnerships, allowing the retailer to provide newness to its male clientele ([see story](#)).

Nordstrom also launched a flagship store in New York devoted to menswear ([see story](#)).

With a market size of \$570 billion and annual revenues of \$333.4 billion, the menswear category is expected to grow at a constant rate of 2-3 percent a year, according to a report by Fashionbi.

As size and revenues for the market has increased, so has consumer spending, with menswear seeing an 18 percent jump in purchases over the last five years. While far from a new market segment, menswear has seen a type of resurgence as men of all demographics have begun to embrace style and trends ([see story](#)).

"Only time will tell if this is a success in the way conventional campaigns are measured," Forrester's Mr. Chatterjee said. "But it does succeed in laying a foundational position for Harrods in how they see themselves catering to their customers of today and to those of the future.

"The campaign defines Harrods as a brand as much as it defines the customers they serve," he said.

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.