

RETAIL

Le Bon March pays homage to punk in spirited campaign

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Le Bon March's "So Punk Rive Gauche" campaign will run through October. Image credit: Le Bon March

By STAFF REPORTS

French department store Le Bon March Rive Gauche is putting a Parisian spin on punk style and music in a campaign that invites consumers to rebel and take risks in the new season.

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From Aug. 31 to Oct. 30, the LVMH-owned retailer will host a "So Punk Rive Gauche" takeover complete with eccentric fashion offerings and in-store activations. Retail today is about more than shopping and customer service, differentiating the stores that can turn a visit into a memorable occasion.

"While every September Le Bon March Rive Gauche hosted an exhibition dedicated to a destination, this year we wanted to be even more disruptive with an exhibition that is joyfully celebrating the punk spirit," said Jennifer Cuvillier, style director at **Le Bon March Rive Gauche**, Paris. "It is the opposite of the 'No Future,' the 'Yes Future.' A modern interpretation of punk, with a twist, and a very Parisian sophistication, yet without losing any of its subversive force, of course.

"What we loved from the punk attitude is to dare to do things, don't wait for someone to give you permission, take control," she said. "We also loved the idea to express your difference. The youth expressed its singularity in its style, with an art for the do it 'yourself,' the customization, the recycling and reusing, and everyone was its own stylist.

"It is the same connection to fashion that today's customers want, so we tried throughout this exhibition to express it all over the store."

Music meets fashion

The punk scene that originally emerged in the 1970s has had an ongoing effect on fashion and music in the ensuing decades.

A key component of Le Bon March's campaign is a focus on fashion and beauty products that include a rebellious flair, such as studded loafers from Tod's. Animal prints, activist T-shirts and brightly colored makeup are also featured heavily.

Consumers will have a chance to put their own spin on apparel through events, such as a T-shirt customization

workshop with Notify. Shoppers can also decorate their leather jacket with Godert Me pins, expressing themselves through personalization.

For a more permanent statement, jeweler Maria Tash will offer custom piercings and will be showcasing her punk body jewelry collection.

"At Le Bon Marche, we offer many exclusivities as well as a big diversity of permanent and ephemeral services from personalization to tailor-made," Ms. Cuvillier said.

"Le Bon March's philosophy is not so far from the movement's key ideas of inviting everyone to boldly express their uniqueness," she said. "Assert their tastes and desires. Break free from conventions, all the better to stand out from the crowd. Take risks preferably without taking yourself seriously. And what could be more punk than this attitude?"

Le Bon March So Punk teaser

Punk jewelry and accessories were a significant trend on the fall runways, from safety pin-embellished layered necklaces at Alexander McQueen to spiked masks at Gucci.

"Punk has been making a comeback within some designer shows recently, so this seems a natural tie-in," said Kathleen Fischer, director of marketing at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston.

"Le Bon March has always tried to be avant-garde and celebrate art, so punk fits into the retailer's personality quite nicely," she said.

Exploring the punk music style and culture, Le Bon March's in-store activities go beyond shopping.

Fragrance label Lola James Harper has set up a studio where consumers can make their own recording. The brand will also be holding a pop-up music school.

Independent record store Big Smile Bazaar is taking an experiential approach, enabling customers to listen to vinyl albums.

There will also be a chance for shoppers to give a Deus Ex Machina motorcycle a makeover.

Outside of music and fashion, Le Bon March has translated the punk theme into food at its La Table restaurant. Michelin-starred chef Guillaume Sanchez has created a special menu for the campaign that will only be available for a limited time.

Mr. Sanchez will also host a cookery show on Sept. 7 at La Grande picerie, during which he will delve into two of the dishes created for the So Punk event: Rock the Saint-Pierre and Wild Yogurt.

"The So Punk exhibition will take over the store, from fashion to music, food, design and kidswear it is something that will most likely speak to everyone," Ms. Cuvillier said. "For the first time, all of the services at Le Bon March will be under the punk influence with special experiences from restaurants, chefs, hair and nail salons, personal stylists, piercing and tattoo artists, and even punk-related kids workshops or a music school by Lola James Harper.

"This is one of the several exhibitions and events that we do throughout the year and that have become annual rendezvous for our customers," she said. "From our artistic carte blanche in January to more fashion-related events, we want to innovate each time and reinvent ourselves in order to always offer a different and unique experience."

Retail experience

Le Bon March is joining the throngs of luxury retailers transforming the physical space to go beyond simply showcasing products. But its recent focus on geek chic put a new spin on the idea.

The retailer's "Geek mais Chic" initiative was a new concept that joined luxury, technology, postmodern elements and experiential shopping throughout an omnichannel experience. Via partnerships with Armarium, an online luxury rental service, Jaeger-LeCoultre, Smartwater and others focused on technology, the long-term pop-up shop showcased cutting-edge products and unique in-store services ([see story](#)).

Le Bon March also brought a taste of Los Angeles life to Paris in a retail exhibition.

"Los Angeles Rive Gauche" took inspiration from the Californian sun, offering consumers products, styles and experiences designed for times between sunrise to sunset. This campaign aimed to let consumers embody the lifestyle of Los Angeles, a cultural hub known for its music, wellness and sporting scenes ([see story](#)).

"This is a different way to draw attention and interest to the store," Ms. Fischer said. "It really plays into the 'retail is

theater' concept of entertaining the customer to keep her coming back to shop."

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