

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Gucci blends physical, digital engagement in pop-up project

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Gucci Pin store in Hong Kong Harbour City. Image courtesy of Gucci

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Gucci is experimenting with new bricks-and-mortar experiences through an ongoing pop-up initiative designed to give the brand a presence in more global cities.

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Gucci Pin, named for the icons placed on digital maps, is kicking off with a series of five ephemeral boutiques centered on the brand's holiday collection. As Gucci Pin rolls out in waves, some of the pop-ups will be situated in markets where the brand does not have a flagship store, enabling Gucci to bring a fully branded retail experience to more corners of the world.

"Gucci is looking for ways to gain further exposure to its current and potential clientele," said Kathleen Fischer, director of retail marketing at [enVista](#).

"These pop-up stores will only be up for five weeks and offer opportunities for customers to shop in areas that may not have a current store," she said. "The ability to offer a continually changing and fresh assortment through different themes for the pop-up waves is a great way to create brand excitement and generate sales."

Ms. Fischer is not affiliated with Gucci, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Gucci](#) was reached for comment.

Putting Gucci on the map

The first Gucci Pin opened on Nov. 5 in Hong Kong on Canton Road. In the first wave, Gucci will also be opening Pin stores in department store Iwataya in Fukuoka, Japan; Hyundai Department Store Pangyo in Seongnam, Korea; Denver Cherry Creek Shopping Center in Denver, CO and Galeries Lafayette in Paris.

Gucci is dedicating the inaugural handful of Gucci Pin stores to its 2019 Gift Giving collection.

The collection is based on the Gucci Flora print originally drawn by illustrator Vittorio Accornero in 1966 for a scarf gifted to actress Grace Kelly. The Flora print is featured on Gucci's Ophidia handbag with web stripes, as well as small leather goods.

Gucci Pin is also displaying ready-to-wear, shoes and accessories at the shops.

Giving the gifting pop-ups a sunny look, the shop windows feature illuminated palm trees.



Gucci Pin in Hong Kong. Image courtesy of Gucci

Next year, Gucci Pin will celebrate Chinese New Year with a Mickey Mouse-themed store concept complete with a baggage conveyor belt.

Between January and March 2020, Gucci Pin GG Psychedelic stores will launch to showcase luggage, accessories and ready-to-wear.

Along with opening in major markets such as Paris and Seoul, Gucci plans to bring its Pin concept to markets where it does not already have a flagship.

While the Gucci Pin stores are physical, a key element of the boutiques will be digital engagement.

Playing off the pin concept, Gucci's pop-ups in some nations will feature as branded pins in Google Maps. These icons will be decorated in patterns reflective of the stores' themes.

Gucci is also introducing a special section of its mobile application that will feature augmented reality experiences and filters for Snapchat and Instagram designed after the store themes.

In 2020, the label will be exploring new augmented reality innovations for its Gucci Pin locations.

The pop-ups will also be shoppable online through digital storefronts designed as mini themed worlds. Consumers can explore products across platforms including Instagram, Snapchat, Kakao, Line, WeChat, Gucci's Web site and the Gucci mobile app.

"Customers want the ability to shop in a physical environment to touch and feel merchandise with the benefits of a digital environment offering further personalization and relevant messaging," Ms. Fischer said. "In addition to the pop-up stores, Gucci is creating an interactive and immersive experience both in and out of the store environment, allowing their customers to engage with the brand in many different ways."

Ephemeral retail

Gucci has previously used pop-ups to explore new retail concepts and collaborations.

For instance, the label set up a temporary home for its dcor line during Salone del Mobile in Milan.

Gucci's pop-up shop at 19 Via Santo Spirito housed the brand's furniture, porcelains and furnishings in a space that mixed for-sale Gucci items with repurposed vintage pieces. This store enabled Gucci to further its lifestyle image through its dcor offerings ([see story](#)).

This past summer, Gucci took up residence in Montauk, NY through a collaboration with a local vintage shop.

The house teamed up with Melet Mercantile on a three-week pop-up that retailed both Gucci goods and vintage finds from store owner Bob Melet ([see story](#)).

Beyond Gucci, luxury brands have placed pop-ups at the core of their strategies, allowing these designers to keep up with the changing retail landscape while maintaining their exclusive status.

Pop-up shops have created a unique opportunity for brands to connect with consumers on a more personal and fun level and are forcing many to rethink retail, says a [report from Fashionbi](#). For luxury brands, the pop-up shop offers

them a chance to provide unforgettable experiences that they are known for while also staying relevant ([see story](#)).

"Gucci is looking to create impact by theming each of their waves of pop-up stores to offer customers further reasons to follow the brand and plan a return visit when the next pop-up opens," Ms. Fischer said. "The biggest challenge for Gucci will be to convert customers who shop these pop-up stores into loyal brand customers."

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