

ARTS

For LVMH, 2019 was a "year of engagement with art and culture"

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For LVMH, 2019 was a year of engagement with art and culture to underscore the roots of its 75-plus maisons. Image credit: LVMH

By STAFF REPORTS

This was a year of engagement with art and culture across the LVMH Group, according to its chairman/CEO who briefly this month became the richest person in the world.

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In a year-that-was look-back, Bernard Arnault pointed out how the French conglomerate's 75-plus maisons' appeal is rooted in the creation of exceptional products arising from exquisite craftsmanship and rare mtiers.

"Right from the creation of LVMH, I clearly established philanthropy in support of the arts and culture as a key component in our development," Mr. Arnault said in a statement.

Given its philosophy, the group in 2019 amplified initiatives that supported art and culture to coincide with LVMH's values of "savoir-faire, excellence and creativity."

In its report, **LVMH** highlighted several efforts this year that aligned with its attention to art and culture.

One that stands out is the \$221 million pledge of support from the Arnault family and LVMH Group after Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral, that very bold symbol of France, was partially destroyed by a fire.

The immediate support to restore an edifice that reflects France's heritage and unity was matched by smaller amounts from other industrialists and LVMH rival and Gucci owner Kering, whose CEO Francois-Henri Pinault also pledged a major contribution to the Notre Dame reconstruction fund.

Reiterating its commitment to supporting women in their work was another proud moment for LVMH.

The group partnered with the makers of the movie, "Women," which premiered in September at the 76th Venice International Film Festival and is scheduled for a theatrical release in March.

The support reflected an LVMH stance that the position of women in society is closely tied to the recognition they get in their professional lives.

Directed by Anastasia Mikova and Yann Arthus-Bertrand, "Women" visits 50 countries to meet some 2,000 women,

immersing viewers in different life stories shaped by their culture, faith or family history.

Despite their diverse backgrounds, their collected voices reveal universal traits: facing similar life events and looking into the camera as they share feelings about intimate subjects such as femininity, maternity and their place in society with sincerity and kindness.

The passing of Karl Lagerfeld Feb. 19 was, undoubtedly, a blow to LVMH.

While the creative vision behind Chanel for decades, the late Lagerfeld also did double-duty in a similar design role for LVMH's Fendi, a famed Roman fashion label who he had helmed since 1965 the longest tenure in that position in the history of fashion.

From designing Fendi's logo to discovering new ways to wear fur, Lagerfeld left his oversized imprint on making Fendi an avant-garde label.

The tributes that came in from the couturier's passing were heartfelt, including one from Mr. Arnault.

"With the passing of Karl Lagerfeld we have lost a creative genius who helped to make Paris the fashion capital of the world, and Fendi one of Italy's most innovative Italian houses," Mr. Arnault said at the time.

"We owe him so much: his taste and talent were the most exceptional I have ever known," he said.

"I will always remember his boundless imagination, his ability to conceive new trends with each season, his inexhaustible energy, the virtuosity of his drawings, his carefully guarded independence, his encyclopedic culture, and his unique wit and eloquence."

Fendi paid Lagerfeld the ultimate tribute July 4 through its "The Dawn of Romanity" haute couture show, set against the backdrop of the Roman Forum.

Fifty-four silhouettes represented his 54-year tenure at Fendi, "the longest in the history of fashion," as noted by Silvia Venturini Fendi, creative director of the house.

The show was a symphony of shifting impressions in the heart of an ephemeral Italian garden, punctuated by glints of the sunset on reflecting pools with the Coliseum in the background, as LVMH puts it.

From the lines of the tailoring and the draping to the tucked shoulders and graphic collars, archive sketches by Lagerfeld informed the allure collection's silhouettes.

LVMH's ultimate nod to culture, the Fondation Louis Vuitton the brainchild of Mr. Arnault boasting a sizable collection of art donated by him and the group hosted two exhibitions that met with considerable public acclaim: "The Courtauld Collection. A Vision for Impressionism" and "Charlotte Perriand: Inventing a New World."

From Feb. 20 to June 17 this year, the Fondation Louis Vuitton showcased 100 Impressionist masterpieces, including some French works from the late 19th to the early 20th century acquired by British industrialist and patron of the arts Samuel Courtauld.

The exhibition spanning three galleries revolved around two series of works by two major figures from the period, Georges Seurat and Paul Cezanne.

Visitors could also view works by Claude Monet, douard Manet, Vincent Van Gogh, Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Amedeo Modigliani.

In October, the Fondation Louis Vuitton brought together more than 400 works to put together "Charlotte Perriand: Inventing a New World," presenting a dialogue between this trailblazer and the artists of her time, including Fernand Lger, Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Alexander Calder, Hisao Dmoto, Joan Miro, Henri Laurens, Le Corbusier and Sofu Teshigahara.

Two hundred works of art are displayed, either integrated with Charlotte Perriand or underscoring links with her design works, tracing the contours of a new world between tradition and modernity, per the museum. The exhibition runs through Feb. 24.