

RETAIL

## Luxury brands condemn racism even as looters damage Chanel, Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom stores in US

June 1, 2020



*U.S. department store chain Bloomingdale's flagship store in midtown Manhattan being boarded up May 31 even as its downtown SoHo store was looted by rioters angry over police brutality toward African-Americans. Image courtesy of Mickey Alam Khan*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

If dealing with the COVID-19 lockdowns was not enough, now luxury brands and retailers have to be on full alert as rioters across the United States lash out over the demise of George Floyd, an African-American man whose death by a Minneapolis police officer triggered a nationwide backlash.

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New York got hit May 31 and June 1 morning with looters breaking into Chanel and Bloomingdale's stores in the trendy SoHo district downtown.

The looters tore through the boarded Chanel storefront and damaged the store, along with other non-luxury shops in that neighborhood.

A similar scene played out in Los Angeles on Melrose Avenue and in Seattle, where windows were damaged and merchandise snatched from the flagship Nordstrom department store.

*Stores being ransacked in New York's SoHo and Tribeca shopping districts. Video credit: AP*

Boarded up

Carpenters were seen May 31 evening boarding up windows of the flagship Bloomingdale's store in New York on Lexington Avenue and 59th Street.

In adjacent Madison Avenue, New York's luxury boulevard already hit with several unrented stores, wooden boards have already been nailed to hide windows. Merchandise across most luxury brands' stores has already been removed as a precautionary measure.

The U.S. is reeling from the death of Mr. Floyd, whose video of his last moments has caused anguish nationwide and invited criminal elements to take advantage.

A police officer, Derek Chauvin, has been arrested for pressing his knee on Mr. Floyd's neck for eight minutes even

after the tackled man was heard saying, "I can't breathe." He died a few minutes later.

Even the area in front of the White House was subject to rioting, forcing the U.S. Secret Service to spirit President Trump away to a bunker.

Presciently, many luxury brands had already withdrawn merchandise to their warehouses and boarded up their storefronts as New York went under lockdown in March, anticipating public anger with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 coronavirus that originated in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

At that time, many criticized luxury brands for taking such measures. Now, unfortunately, their decision has at least spared many the additional loss of stolen merchandise.

Riot police and the state National Guards are out in several U.S. states to prevent further looting. Many arrests have been made, but it is quite likely the anger has yet to be quelled.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Bloomingdale's (@bloomingdales) on May 31, 2020 at 6:45pm PDT

### Speaking up

Many luxury brands have taken a stand on racism, although their posts on Instagram have been critiqued as being too soft or oblique.

U.S. fashion label Marc Jacobs came out swinging, though.

The New York-based brand's Instagram post showed two photos, one of graffiti applied to its store window and the other with the brand's name scratched out and sandwiched between Sandra Bland and George Floyd, both victims

of police brutality.

Adjacent to that post were March Jacobs words: "A life cannot be replaced. Black lives matter."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Marc Jacobs (@marcjacobs) on May 31, 2020 at 11:54am PDT

For its most, Gucci posted words from Cleo Wade.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Gucci (@gucci) on May 29, 2020 at 3:47pm PDT

Jeweler Tiffany & Co.'s post read, "We are one community and we #BelieveInLove."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Tiffany & Co. (@tiffanyandco) on May 30, 2020 at 11:29am PDT

Department store giant Saks Fifth Avenue was a bit stronger in its Instagram condemnation: "We are united in the belief that all people deserve to be treated equally, fairly and respectfully. Racism and bigotry cannot be tolerated."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Saks Fifth Avenue (@saks) on May 31, 2020 at 6:31pm PDT

Even Bloomingdale's took a firm stand against bigotry and racism in a detailed Instagram post.

France's Louis Vuitton, whose menswear design is led by Chicagoan Virgil Abloh, was even more explicit in its Instagram posting: "MAKE A CHANGE. FREEDOM FROM RACISM TOWARDS PEACE TOGETHER.

#BlackLivesMatter."

The brand posted a video by Julian Klincewicz that was commissioned by Mr. Abloh on the occasion of his inaugural season for Louis Vuitton. The film was exhibited as part of his Coming Of Age exhibition.

MAKE A CHANGE. FREEDOM FROM RACISM TOWARDS PEACE TOGETHER. [#BlackLivesMatter](#)

Video by Julian Klincewicz commissioned by [@virgilabloh](#), on the occasion of his inaugural season for [#LouisVuitton](#). The film was exhibited as part of his Coming Of Age exhibition.

[pic.twitter.com/Dsjg7zuYaj](https://pic.twitter.com/Dsjg7zuYaj)

Louis Vuitton (@LouisVuitton) [May 31, 2020](#)

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