

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Louis Vuitton shares wonder of adventure through the eyes of tiny travelers

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The photographs show Iceland through young eyes. Image credit: Viviane Sassen for Louis Vuitton

By ELLEN KELLEHER

France's **Louis Vuitton** is indulging in wanderlust through an ethereal brand campaign shot by avant-garde fashion photographer **Viviane Sassen**.

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Dramatic photographs capture children exploring and posing next to Louis Vuitton luggage in the otherworldly Icelandic countryside, creating a scene of curiosity and wonder. Glaciers and waterscape add a surrealist edge to the images, sparking appreciation for travel, discovery and possibility.

"When you think about Iceland you do think of a place that is environmentally clean, a step into a life that is simple, a purity and a synergy with nature that feels like it has been untouched," said Kimmie Smith, cofounder of **Athleisure Mag**, Atlanta. "In the lens of living in a pandemic, it does feel like a mental excursion that makes you think that at some point, the world will be in a new normal where we can go back to traveling and interacting with one another, albeit in a new way."

True to its roots

Louis Vuitton's luggage and leather goods are iconic, and the trunks, hat boxes and weekender bags artfully featured in Ms. Sassen's shots of Iceland conjure up thoughts of exotic destinations.

When the Louis Vuitton building opened on the Champs-Élysées in the early 1900s, it was said to be the world's largest travel goods store. Today, the label's travel collection features items such as hat boxes, retailing for \$6,500 and up, and a Malle Haute 110 trunk priced at \$49,500.

For the brand campaign, Ms. Sassen presents a diorama of seven children's escapades in the Icelandic outdoors. The Dutch photographer, who has shot campaigns for Stella McCartney and Miu Miu, is known for her use of abstract bodies and geometric shapes.



A young boy in galoshes confronts a tower of LV trunks. Image credit: Viviane Sassen for Louis Vuitton

In one snap, a tow-headed boy in galoshes and with a yellow-and-black umbrella confronts a teetering collection of Louis Vuitton trunks stacked on top of each other in a shallow pool of water.

There is some historical significance to the stacked luggage. Back in the 1850s, when Louis Vuitton introduced its trunks with a flat top, which are still made by hand, most of its rivals still had rounded tops and could not be stacked for voyages.

Behind the boy is a jagged mountain that is black in color due to volcanic soot. It is difficult to assess whether the boy is playfully trying to topple the stacked LV trunks or is at peace with their existence.

In another photo, he looks wistfully at the glacial mountain in front of him as he stands in his galoshes with three LV travel trunks and a bag at his side.



A gaggle of children play with luggage. Image credit: Viviane Sassen for Louis Vuitton

A glimpse of all seven children in the campaign is on display in another photograph. Two girls and five boys, clad in black, are frolicking on a rocky Icelandic beach and playing with LV hat boxes.

They look like they are having an exceptional time as a few jump into the air. Beyond them is the grey sea and in front are a series of stacked beach stones, which adds to the surrealism of the scene.



Joy is on display in all of the shots. Image credit: Viviane Sassen for Louis Vuitton

Another photos shows the children carrying giant gold keys, topped with various LV insignias, that are meant for opening trunks.

The scene suggests the metaphor that they have been handed the keys to Louis Vuitton's kingdom and are making it a merry one. While the friends wander the scene's tan lunar-like landscape, one child sits cautiously like a guard atop a trunk with his key across his lap.

A final enchanting shot shows the same boy, with a bright monogrammed weekender bag at his side. He is staring at a model sailboat from his perch on a rocky ledge overlooking a blue glacial lagoon.



The photos feature LV trunks, bags and hat boxes. Image credit: Viviane Sassen for Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton has shared the photographs on its website as well as social media channels. By capturing the spirit of travel and adventure, the images are sure to resonate with many who have been unable to explore this year.

Authenticity push

The release of Louis Vuitton's latest campaign comes as luxury brands are putting empathy and authenticity at the center of their marketing.

Approaches vary widely, but at the core, share a simplicity and a desire to reveal a more authentic voice.

Last month, Italian fashion brand Fendi showcased the intricacy of the handiwork of its artisans in a new film series focusing on craftsmanship. The spots reflect Fendi's desire to evaluate its place at the end of the supply chain at a difficult time ([see story](#)).

Echoing this attempt, Dolce & Gabbana made a similar move and raised funds to combat the pandemic by unveiling a short film series offering a glimpse of Italian artisans at work ([see story](#)).

As the world unifies around the pandemic fight, Louis Vuitton has also simplified its branding message and put its opinions at the forefront with its latest attempt to encourage customers to see possibilities.

"The LV brand has its expected parameters in terms of the kinds of materials that they use, the products that it makes and the pricing of its pieces," Ms. Smith said. "But when it comes to showcasing them, there is a shift where everything is really being taken down to basics and making things conversational, attainable and allowing the products to take more of a focus as opposed to doing opulent campaigns around it."