

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Valentino goes virtual in effort to connect with consumers

February 19, 2021



Living room/dining area of the Valentino Insights virtual home. Image credit: Valentino

By NORA HOWE

Italian fashion label Valentino is leaning on interactive campaigns, including a new immersive virtual reality experience, to continue to engage with digital-first consumers.

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Valentino Insights is an interactive digital environment that brings a new perspective to the brand through architecture and design, inviting consumers to understand the lifestyle of creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli through immersive virtual reality technology. With this single-player-style exploration program, Valentino aims to bring its consumers closer to its products and heritage.

"While there is no replacing the tactile sensuality of the luxury boutique experience, in a time of global pandemic, VR technology affords brands and their admirers with a medium to orchestrate digital multi-sensory experiences," said Scott Forshay, director of business development at [Propane](#), San Francisco. "Through virtual interactive lifestyle marketing, these escapes showcase the artistic vision of the label and portray the aspirational lifestyle sensibilities of the brand."

Valentino Insights

Upon entering the brand's website, consumers are invited to begin the Valentino Insights experience and "make themselves at home."

Inspired by Mr. Piccioli's childhood home near Rome and created by [Virtual](#), the virtual space is set in an open-floor plan contemporary villa on the Mediterranean coast.



Digital map of the virtual home. Image credit: Valentino

The home boasts high ceilings and large windows allowing "natural" light to flow through the space, which is accessorized with mid-century modern decor and pieces from various Valentino collections.

A digital map of the home shows multiple areas to explore: pool, garden, living room, master bedroom and a walk in closet.

In each area of the virtual home, visitors may interact with different items, such as books that showcase Valentino looks, a record player with a curated Spotify playlist, telephone with a voicemail and various accessories that direct visitors to the respective product pages with one click.

"Even with incredible advances in the blurring of lines between virtual and physical experiences, the lines of demarcation are still very pronounced," Mr. Forshay said. "Where Valentino succeeds in this execution is by smartly acknowledging the inherent differentiation of the medium and playing to its strengths."

As visitors explore the home and interact with the different items on display, they can find subtle decorative details, such as framed posters of actress and brand ambassador Zendaya, who was recruited as the new face of the brand in December ([see story](#)).

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Valentino (@maisonvalentino)

Although currently unavailable at this time, there is a Secret Room off of the living room area that will be utilized for future digital events hosted by the brand.

In December, Valentino launched the VG Roman Stud filter on Instagram, which places a larger-than-life Roman Stud bag in the user's image frame. The purpose of this campaign was to "follow the bags" as they led consumers to the Valentino Insights experience.

Virtual luxury

With an influx in technology and digital innovations becoming necessary elements for the luxury fashion industry and as health restrictions keep consumers out of physical stores, multiple brands have turned to virtual and augmented reality to rebuild relationships and better serve a market saturated by digital consumers.

Italian fashion house Salvatore Ferragamo introduced its Tramezza men's shoes collection with an augmented reality made-to-order service in October 2020. The brand collaborated with Microsoft Azure Cloud and HoloLens 2 to create an immersive and personalized virtual reality experience and meet the growing demands of the digital customer.

The service allows consumers to choose and customize the shoe collection, either in-store or online, through a high-resolution platform ([see story](#)).

In response to COVID-19 restrictions, Italian fashion brand Gucci introduced a virtual tour of Gucci Garden, a building in Florence's Piazza della Signoria that houses the label's museum curated by creative director Alessandro Michele.

Visitors could explore rooms, objects, exhibitions and ambience of the digital replication of the physical building, including the rustling of branches and chirping birds. Additionally, online shoppers could purchase souvenirs and postcards exclusive to Gucci Garden, to recreate the experience of touring a physical museum ([see story](#)).

Valentino has also experimented with interactive campaigns in the past, though not always incorporating VR.

Launched last fall, Chez Maison Valentino is the label's animated interpretation of its history told through the different rooms of its Roman headquarters, Palazzo Mignanelli. The interactive animation is updated seasonally, with holiday decorations and new content for Christmas and Valentine's Day ([see story](#)).

"For digitally-native brand loyalists, [Valentino] is engaging them on their terms and on their devices of choice," Mr. Forshay said. "As this emerging luxury consumer demographic assumes a greater percentage of spend with prestigious brands, this level of engagement will undoubtedly serve to create greater degrees of connection."

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