

LUXURY DAILY AWARDS

Louis Vuitton's Virgil Abloh is 2021 Luxury Personality of the Year

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Virgil Abloh. Image courtesy of LVMH

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

The late Virgil Abloh, men's artistic director at Louis Vuitton, is *Luxury Daily's* 2021 Luxury Personality of the Year for his lasting contribution to fashion and for promoting inclusivity in the industry.

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The posthumous honor also recognizes that Mr. Abloh's role at LVMH Mot Hennessy Louis Vuitton had been elevated this year. His growing influence was also apparent in his most recent collaborative partners.

"I think what was fascinating about Virgil Abloh in the last year was that he helped so many people," said Milton Pedraza, founder/CEO of the [Luxury Institute](#), New York. "He really wanted to inspire so many others."

The Luxury Personality of the Year award was decided based on leadership with impeccable strategy, tactics, creative, executive and results. All candidates selected by the *Luxury Daily* editorial team had to have appeared in *Luxury Daily* coverage this year. **Judging was based purely on merit.**

Lasting legacy

Mr. Abloh passed away on Nov. 28 at the age of 41 years old after privately fighting an aggressive form of cancer, cardiac angiosarcoma ([see story](#)). The loss came as a shock to many in the fashion, music and luxury communities, with an outpouring of tributes for the designer.

Months earlier, Mr. Abloh and LVMH had expanded their professional relationship.



Louis Vuitton men's artistic director Virgil Abloh seeking inspiration for his spring summer 2020 collection runway show. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

In July, the French luxury group announced it acquired a 60 percent interest in the Off-White trademark, while Italy's New Guards Group remains an operating partner for Off-White through its licensing agreement with Off-White LLC. LVMH and Mr. Abloh had also planned to launch new brands and partner with existing labels outside of the fashion sector ([see story](#)).

While this potential will go unfulfilled, the designer's influence at LVMH was becoming apparent beyond Louis Vuitton.

Mr. Abloh had joined the jury for the LVMH Young Fashion Designer Prize, years after his was named a finalist for the award for his streetwear brand, Off-White c/o Virgil Abloh.

This summer, he also supported the launch of UNICEF's Generation Unlimited (GenU), a program focused on youth and entrepreneurship in Ghana. As part of the initiative, Mr. Abloh designed Silver Lockit bracelets, with sales benefitting UNICEF's effort ([see story](#)).



The Louis Vuitton x Nigo pre-spring 2022 capsule collection. Image credit: Louis Vuitton

In September, LVMH-owned fashion label Kenzo named Japanese designer Nigo its new artistic director. Nigo had previously worked with Mr. Abloh on a Louis Vuitton capsule collection in 2020, an experience that undoubtedly earned him attention within the group and luxury fashion circles ([see story](#)).

The collaboration between Mr. Abloh and Nigo was successful enough that the designers reunited for a second NIGO x Louis Vuitton LV collection, which launched in mid-November ([see story](#)).

Following Mr. Abloh's death and respecting the wishes of his family, German automaker revealed Project Maybach, an electric concept car, at Miami's Rubell Museum on Dec. 1. The Mercedes-Maybach was the second joint project between Mr. Abloh and Gorden Wagener, chief design officer at Mercedes ([see story](#)).

Louis Vuitton honored the late fashion designer with a presentation of his spring/summer 2022 collection

On Nov. 30, two days after the designer's passing, Louis Vuitton hosted a runway presentation of Mr. Abloh's spring/summer 2022 collection. Held in Miami as well, the event drew many of Mr. Abloh's famous friends and collaborators, including Kanye West, Kim Kardashian West, Rihanna, Pharrell Williams, Venus Williams and Maluma, among others.

"You can go on and on about the affiliations and connections, but I think the biggest thing was that he connected with human beings, all individuals," Mr. Pedraza said.

Runner's up: Alexandre Arnault

Now 29 years old, Alexandre Arnault, the third child of LVMH chairman and CEO Bernard Arnault, has taken on more responsibility within the luxury group this year.

In January, he was named the executive vice president of product and communications at Tiffany & Co., following LVMH's acquisition of the U.S. jeweler ([see story](#)).



Alexandre Arnault, left, following the LVMH acquisition of Rimowa. Image credit: LVMH

Mr. Arnault's first role at the family business was as an investment manager, leading the group's 2016 acquisition of Rimowa. He then served as CEO at Rimowa for four years, until joining Tiffany.

His new role at Tiffany is a show of support from his father, as he now has an opportunity to reshape the brand that was LVMH's largest acquisition yet.

"He really knows luxury in all its elements, and I think that Tiffany needed that reinvigoration," Mr. Pedraza said.

Since the acquisition, Tiffany has moved in a more youthful direction, expanding its roster of ambassadors with talents including K-pop singer Ros, actor Anya Taylor-Joy and model Hailey Bieber.

Most notably, the jeweler debuted its "About Love" campaign this fall, starring music legends and married couple Beyoncé Knowles-Carter and Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter ([see story](#)). Although it is the first time the couple has appeared together in a brand campaign, they have already been featured in numerous ads.

"As a brand that has always stood for love, strength and self-expression, we could not think of a more iconic couple that better represents Tiffany's values," Mr. Arnault said in a statement at the launch of the "About Love" campaign.

Tiffany has also furthered leaned into product collaborations, which remain especially popular among younger luxury shoppers.



Beyoncé and Jay-Z. Image courtesy of Tiffany & Co.

In November, the jeweler launched a capsule collection with streetwear brand Supreme. The new partnership elegantly unites the style of the two brands, with Tiffany's classic "return to" plea engraved on the pivotal heart pendant right above Supreme's recognizable box logo ([see story](#)).

This month, Tiffany joined Swiss watchmaker Patek Philippe to release a special version of the Nautilus Ref. 5711 watch. In celebrating the watchmaker and jeweler's 170-year partnership, Patek Philippe made 170 special versions of its most popular timepiece complete with a watch face in Tiffany blue ([see story](#)).

"All of these elements are creating a reinvigorated Tiffany," Mr. Pedraza said. "I think that [Alexandre] is his father's son in the sense that he probably has the same passion and skill, and even at an early age, to create desire, as they like to say at LVMH.

"You look up to him to do special things, and I think he has done several special things on behalf of Tiffany and on behalf of the luxury industry in 2021."

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