

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Why Creed x Robbi debunks the need for China-only releases

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Selling out across multiple locations already, fragrance brand Creed's collaboration with Robbi has succeeded as a global launch. Image credit: Creed x Robbi

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In China, thanks to the high spending of young demographics, toy collectibles hold the same level of mainstream popularity as luxury products, with both industries naturally synced through cultural capital.

Therefore, French fragrance brand House of Creed linking with leading Chinese toy IP Robbi for the Lunar New Year wonderfully caters to the country's Gen Z collectors.

Producing two Robbis with the aroma of Silver Mountain Water fragrance, one 28cm (\$323/RMB 2,188) and the other 70cm (\$499.45/RMB 3,388), Creed made beauty industry history on Jan. 20 when it co-branded the first-ever scented designer toy.

The body art was designed by Hong Kong artist Laura Cheung, and each toy comes with a unique NFC chip. They are currently being sold at both Robbi and Creed's physical and online stores, as well as on the "Chinese StockX" Dewu (Poizon), having sold out in multiple markets already.

Though a collaboration with a leading toy brand in China would typically be aimed at just the local market, this one is, interestingly, a global release. After all, there are many fans of Creed among the Chinese diaspora who are based in Europe, the United States or elsewhere.

Furthermore, the toy collectible market is booming. For context, in 2022, the total gross merchandise value (GMV) of collectible toys on Tmall **rose by 694 percent** compared to the previous year, during the 11.11 shopping festival.

For Creed, a brand focusing on both innovation and the China market, this project feels like a natural step in its evolution.

Yet, marketing the fragrance house with a toy is likely to have more of an impact on the brand's identity outside of China. Seeing as the West and China both, at present, make up different Creed consumer bases, launching one singular release for the entirety of its consumers is a telling move about its future goals

To gain a better understanding of the direction Creed is taking, *Jing Daily* speaks with Sarah Rotheram, chief executive of House of Creed, who explains how this playful new release is contributing to the evolution of Creed's identity on a global scale.

How did the Robbi collaboration come about?

When I was on a trip in China recently, I saw all these people queueing outside a shop. Our Chinese team then explained to me that it's not just a toy, it's a whole lifestyle of collecting toys.

So that element of collectible was one of our reasons, and it just felt like a really nice partnership. It felt like a really fun way for us to celebrate Chinese New Year.

We also have a lot of Chinese followers on WeChat, even based in London, so bringing this collaboration to multiple markets including the U.S., other parts of Asia and the U.K. felt big. We're really excited about it.

What does the opportunity of new product categories such as this mean for Creed?

It started as tailors who then scented what they wore. We were even the first to actually brand the inside of a product.

Moving from fashion to fragrance means we naturally expect to journey into other categories.

The most obvious for us are category extensions. If it does well, we will have to do more Robbis. They're going to become more and more collectible as time passes on. But the collaborations we're talking about with artists are very much digital as well as physical.

Is the brand identity of Creed in China slightly different to how it is viewed in the West?

Well, if you look at our demographic in China, this is one of the things that's really quite surprising.

Elsewhere, we're quite split. In the China market, our core following are aged between 18 and 25. I think that's also the cultural difference between China and the rest of the world.

I mean, typically, elsewhere you don't have 18-year-olds that are necessarily going out and spending that kind of money on a fragrance.

[In China] they are very young with a high disposable income. It's really interesting, the younger Chinese consumers are very savvy, very well-informed about products.

We actually only opened our first standalone boutique in China in November 2021. We have three in Macau and one in Hong Kong, so now we've got quite a lot of momentum behind our own thing in China. But there's still so many people who have never even heard of us there.

So, it's quite tactical that the audience that we see in China is the audience that we're talking to first. But our projection of stores feel the same, all of our marketing assets are the same all over the world.

Of course, there are cultural differences in terms of how that plays out, but I actually think that keeping brand consistency is the thing that will win because that's what they're looking to buy.

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