

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

A Chinese New Year controversy: Is Gucci fur-real?

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Things are not looking good at the Italian luxury house after animal rights activists called out the use of rabbit felt in its Year of the Rabbit capsule. Image credit: Gucci

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Despite Kering going fur-free in 2021 and Gucci itself being a certified member of the [Fur Free Alliance](#), the Italian luxury house's Lunar New Year capsule included products made of rabbit felt.

In addition to featuring a 100 percent rabbit felt hat, among other accessories, the collection was shot with real-life bunnies a move that was widely-critiqued as being in extremely poor taste. It was brought to the spotlight by activists including French filmmaker [Rebecca Cappelli](#) in various social media posts last week, consequently making it a viral case for concern.

Seeing as China accounts for around [35 percent of Gucci's annual sales](#) revenue (Barclays 2022), it is beyond a rookie error. Gucci therefore opted to immediately, and quietly, pull all of the products in question.

The Jing Take: Prior to taking the products off shelves, Gucci initially argued that rabbit felt is not classed as fur, seeing as the animal skin is not actually attached to it. However, the production of felt is generally linked to unethical or cruel treatment of animals.

The most baffling part of this controversy is that this is the second year in a row that Gucci has come under scrutiny over its Lunar New Year activities.

For the 2022 Year of the Tiger, the Italian luxury house incorporated real-life tigers in its advertising campaign, [met by uproar](#) from animal welfare organizations.

The imagery ultimately portrayed the exotic mammal as a pet or luxury item, and was slammed for glorifying captive wild animals.

Somehow, it seems that this latest incident has largely flown under the radar of netizens in the mainland.

Across Weibo, consumers seem more interested in Sabato De Sarno being the new creative director, or local actor Xiao Zhan acting as a brand ambassador despite being appointed over a year ago, the hashtag [#Gucci#](#) has 275,000

reads at the time of writing.

To avoid further backlash, the brand has scrubbed all of the Lunar New Year promotions from its social media platforms, though, the clothing collection sans rabbit felt is still available to shop. A lesson in swerving unwanted noise, perhaps.

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