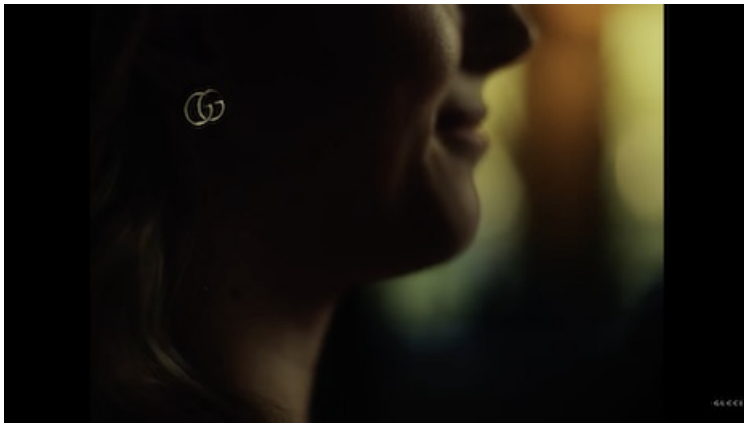


ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Gucci celebrates female esports leaders with GG Legends' docuseries

February 10, 2023



Gucci's decision to debut the docuseries with a female perspective makes space for conversations about gender equity. Image credit: Gucci

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Italian fashion house Gucci is extending the ongoing partnership with **Facelt** per a new Gucci Gaming Academy docuseries, which highlights the resilience of e-sports leaders.

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For the premier episode, Gucci chose to platform the story of female esports role model Jorien Sheever' van der Heijden. Celebrating her strength in the face of illness and discrimination, the launch of the docuseries is grounded in a female perspective.

"Sheever, a legend in her own right as one of the first Female Commentators, isn't for example an all-star player or the captain of a squad," said Tom Newman, independent director and filmmaker at **Tom Newman**, London.

"Yet, she has been on her own grueling battle to get where she is now," Mr. Newman said. "That's important, so we made a statement [by putting] the spotlight on her.

"Sheever should open the series."

Female-forward

Gucci intentionally picked Ms. van der Heijden for the series debut, setting the tone for the narrative going forward.

Documenting her journey toward being an e-sports broadcaster, the opening episode details the struggles that come with being a woman in the industry. The episode also covers the physical challenges that she has faced as a breast cancer survivor.

GG Legends Episode 1: Sheever

The film uses color and music to communicate Ms. van der Heijden's state of mind throughout her life, going from anxious undertones and neon colors to soft hues amidst shots of natural landscapes.

"The beauty of filmmaking is that you have an arsenal of weapons that can elevate those points; make the ideas you're trying to highlight more digestible, more real," Mr. Newman said.

In the beginning, Ms. van der Heijden felt like she did not belong in the e-sports world, due to her outlier status as a female gamer. Tense strings play in the background as she describes the ridicule and barring that she experienced while trying to break into the digital world.



Bringing viewers into the loneliness Ms. van der Heijden felt, wide-frame shots are used. Image credit: Gucci

At one point, she is presented in the center of a frame, as the camera zooms in on her from a distance as if she is an outsider.

She later speaks to her battle with breast cancer, as she rides her horse fiercely through falling leaves. Her family weighs in on the strength that she exhibited in the face of the illness, describing a person facing what so many women have also faced with unique courage.

Light, grayish hues are used as she speaks to her battle with cancer, communicating a feeling of cold isolation. Bright reds and neon lights come in as she discusses her uphill battle in the gaming world, with warm tones coloring the scenes of family acceptance.



Mr. Newman's use of colors helps to communicate the many sides of the barriers faced. Image credit: Gucci

With shots of her family laughing around a table and supporting her, it is made clear that her loved ones are not only her safe space but inspire her to not give up in the face of discrimination. Throughout, they ground the episode in stories of her childhood and familial admiration.

By the end of the piece, uplifting music is used as well as warm tones. The feeling of anxiety is gone, and Ms. van der Heijden talks about how using her voice and being a broadcaster gave her "a sense of freedom" amidst her trials she found herself.

Telling the story of a female storyteller within the world of e-sports brings forth a much-needed spotlight one that can remind others that there is a place for everyone in the gaming world, and that adversity does not have to be a death sentence to dreams.



Bringing female leaders like Ms. van der Heijden into the spotlight via storytelling paves the way for a gender-equitable future. Image credit: Gucci

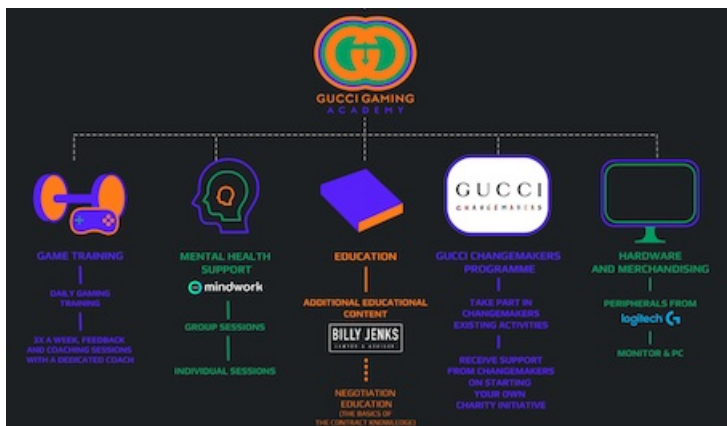
There are surely other female leaders waiting to feel seen, and Gucci's docuseries is an exploration of that fact.

"One of the core pillars for the series was overcoming adversity, and whilst E-sports is still in its infancy I do believe there are a lot of stories yet to be told in the space," Mr. Newman said.

Gucci gamers

Gucci's celebration of this journey is the brand's way of supporting female voices within the gaming community.

The Gucci Gaming Academy works to platform underrepresented gamers, and open doors for them ([see story](#)). The choice to feature Ms. van der Heijden speaks to the brand's commitment to the leading women within that community.



Gucci Gaming Academy platforms stories like Ms. van der Heijden's in an effort to empower e-sports community members. Image credit: Gucci

Dior has also recently dove into the world of gaming, turning to creative director Kim Jones for visual inspiration ([see story](#)). As the digital age marches on, more luxury brands are sure to join them.

The gaming world still has a long way to go as far as gender equity with women seldomly welcomed warmly often having to overcome enormous hurdles in order to prove themselves. Storytelling is a powerful way to break down barriers, appealing to people's innate creativity and humanity.

Gucci is clearly embracing that mode of activism, with filmmakers like Mr. Newman leading the way.

"Any medium that can give a voice to the people should be championed, Mr. Newman said.

"Storytelling in the case of our Gucci series encompasses that notion," he said. "We're trying to bring subjects to the surface that are tough to discuss."