APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Gucci sponsors playful introspection with 'Visions' exhibition

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The gallery showcase starts a new chapter for the luxury brand's three-story creative and collaborative space at the historic Palazzo della Mercanzia in Florence, Italy. Image credit: Gucci

By ZACH JAMES

Italian fashion label Gucci is showcasing its multi-faceted, gamut-running efforts in an eight-room display of the brand's past, present and future.

Opened June 15, the Gucci Visions exhibition seeks to give visitors a look into the heart of the maison. Taking over the Gucci Garden flagship storefront in Florence, Italy, the luxury staple will showcase eight aspects of its 102-year legacy.

Historical showcase
The interactive presentation grants visitors a panoramic view of the company, from its founding to its digital efforts.

Paying tribute to all of the maison's creative directors, the Gucci Garden, a three-story, 14th-century Florentine storefront and exhibition space, has been transformed into what Gucci calls an ode to the brand's "ever-present spirit of adventure and ingenuity."
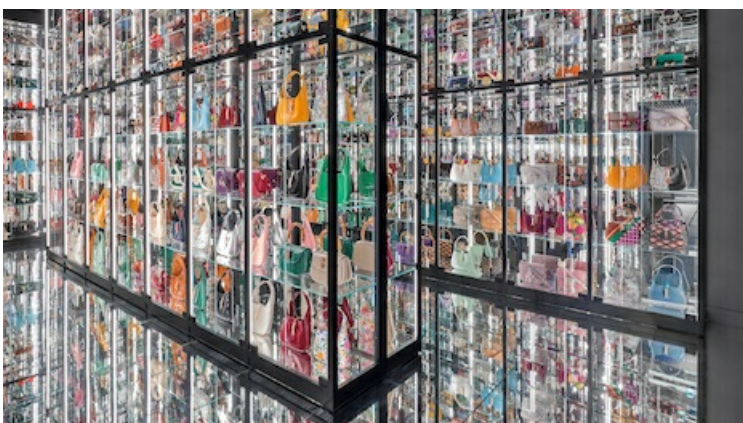
Many different versions of the three iconic handbags are showcased and mirrored in the "Icon" display. Image credit: Gucci

The palazzo was recently home to another celebratory exhibition, Gucci Cosmos (see story), which is currently still housed within the fashion house's founding city.

Opening with a segmented timeline of the label's milestones, it whisks guests up multiple flights of stairs, slowly revealing more of Gucci's story. Visitors are then able to go through the displays in any order they prefer, adding a note of personalization to the event.

The "Travel" room is a luggage showcase reaching back to the brand's founding year of 1921. Celebrating voyages, the array is organized as a retro-futuristic train station, complete with vintage bags behind its glass walls, including rare items such as a calfskin toiletries holder from the 1940s, suitcases from the 1950s through the 1970s and a piece from the 2022 Gucci Savoy collection.

"Icons" spotlights the Bamboo 1947, Horsebit 1955 and Jackie 1961 handbags.

The "Fashion" room is the home to many looks from the minds of designers throughout the decades. Image credit: Gucci

Featuring a series of hand-picked fits from the Gucci Archive, the "Fashion" room is quite possibly the centerpiece of the entire show. The work of designers such as Frida Giannini and Alessandro Michele is celebrated, in particular, the 2014 reenvisioned mini-dress from Ms. Giannini, and the 2021 red velvet suit from Mr. Michele.

Future-minded
While the majority of the rooms look back on the label's history with nostalgia, a select few choose to look forward.

"Metaverse" focuses on the future, delving into Gucci's most recent digital endeavors, with a showcase featuring Web3, a space the brand is no stranger to. Recently, it partnered with the Chinese virtual character Marsper, bringing them to life (see story).

Featuring a state-of-the-art gaming chair, Metaverse takes guests through gaming initiatives, such as the Gucci Town Hall in creative sandbox adventure Roblox and two excursions into Gucci Vault in Land and Otherside Relics in "The Sandbox."

"Flora," home to a mixture of past of present design philosophies, melds the overarching theme of Gucci Visions. Image credit: Gucci

Taking inspiration from the 1966 Vittorio Accornero de Testa illustration commission, the "Flora" room takes a design first used for a scarf and blows it up to life-size with modern principles.

Though not contemporary in subject, like Metaverse, the kaleidoscope effect, achieved via digitized columns and mirrors, arguably leans just as heavily on burgeoning technology. The psychedelic visuals of the room also contribute to an otherworldliness not invoked by other parts of the exhibition, making it a standout in nature.

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