

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Bulgari pairs painters with purses for contemporary project

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Tapping three contemporary painters, the maison is decorating Serpenti Baia bags with their work, each limited piece unlocking an experience via an attached NFT. Image credit: Bulgari

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Roman jeweler Bulgari is expanding upon a historic icon's creative possibilities.

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Tapping three contemporary painters, the maison is decorating Serpenti Baia bags with their work, each limited piece unlocking an experience via an attached NFT. With the resulting Serpenti Forever capsule collection and technologically-driven offerings, Bulgari situates the 1948 snake design in modernity while simultaneously demonstrating its versatility.

Canvas, tote

Asking three artists to bring their paintings to Serpenti Baia designs, Bulgari's fresh take on the purses infuses the bags with a new level of creativity.

The work of Chinese artist Zhou Li, Korean painter Sunwoo Kim and French-British visual artist Sophie Kitching is central to the new capsule drop, each of them highly focused on nature in imagery, colors and theme.

Witness the fusion of art and innovation as [#SerpentiForever](#) turns into the creative canvas of artist [#SophieKitching](#) for a limited series of exclusive handbags, the Nocturne and Invisible Green offering access to an experience via NFT for the [#SerpentiInArti](#) project. [#Bulgari](#)

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Unveiled during the brand's Serpenti in Art event during the Paris Haute Couture week, the release is not only a nod to the icon's 75th anniversary but a collaborative practice in artistic experimentation.

Each creator was asked to use Serpenti to inspire two paintings, each imparted upon a separate bag for the capsule collection.

Ms. Kitching chose to highlight the cohesive contradictions of snakes, such as their ability to shed skin in metamorphosis. Inspired by opposites such as light and dark, day and night, inside and outside, her paintings for the project are grounded in dualities.



The French-British artist's playful style comes through in the purses that now are adorned with her work. Image credit: Bulgari

The top handle "Opposing Forces" bag features movement-evoking strokes, a multicolored snakehead closure, botanical imagery, and calf leather that comes in either black or white.

Bringing her abstract genre to the table, Ms. Li's artwork for the duo of "Ocean and Forest" bags uses cool colors, watery shapes and golden touches.

The ethereal worlds are captured on the Bulgari purses, embroidered with glittering threads, a variety of textures, brass handles, gemstones, geometric elements and golden mirror finishes.

Inspired by the beauty of the ocean and forest, Chinese artist [#ZhouLi](#) uses the distinctive language of her lyrical abstract paintings to add a richness to her Serpenti interpretations revealed at our Serpenti in Art event. <https://t.co/07C4jRLKCr> [#Serpenti](#) [#SerpentiInArt pic.twitter.com/Bx71aUkCRx](https://pic.twitter.com/Bx71aUkCRx)

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Mr. Kim's "Day and Night" plays with his signature depictions of dodo birds.

According to the artist, the creatures symbolize the search for freedom and happiness. His Serpenti Forever top handle bag is decorated with this musing, the artwork filled with midnight blue skies, sparkling stars, lush plant life and, of course, the winged species.



Mr. Kim's richly-painted landscapes unite an extinct animal with a modern artistic style, similar to the marriage happening between the vintage Serpenti icon and contemporary art for this slot. Image credit: Bulgari

The artists are given the spotlight in their own videos on Bulgari's YouTube channel. Each of them offers exclusive access to their studios, professional insights and unique perspectives on the action at hand for watching consumers.

Though the trio's approaches and styles vary, each of them reiterates the central icon's nature-driven foundation.

Rather than Serpenti being merely a symbol or a shape isolated from reality, the consistent illustrations of the natural

world on the part of each artist anchor the design in a sense of place, reminding consumers that Serpenti is in fact a snake, a resident of the wild places housed within the calfskin leather of these six purses.

Ms. Kitching's concepts are informed by her surroundings

This highly engaging campaign ups the immersive factor on a digital level, appealing to young consumers and the overall push in luxury to modernize.

Future framing

This is not the first time that Bulgari has given Serpenti a contemporary context.

In November 2022, the brand collaborated with a Turkish American media artist to craft an installation inspired by a Serpenti collection ([see story](#)). The virtual creation bolstered a new physical release.

That is not to say that Bulgari is solely looking forward when it comes to the icon.

Celebrating the 75th anniversary of Serpenti, the maison took to the Spanish city of Madrid for an exhibition and programming centered on history. Spanish model Nieves Alvarez led the accompanying campaign, taking consumers on a tour of the city, stopping at centuries-old sites ([see story](#)).

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