

RETAIL

Heritage brands deck out window displays for holiday season

November 20, 2023



Eyeing gift-giving shoppers, a variety of prestige companies have set up window displays in their retail storefronts. Image credit: Selfridges

By ZACH JAMES

As the gift-giving season draws nearer, more luxury names are attempting to increase foot traffic in-store.

Multiple entities, from retailers to individual fashion houses, are pushing holiday window displays live, to the delight of audiences around the globe. As luxury conglomerates look to regain prominence in a time of subdued sales, the importance of fourth-quarter fiscal performances remains an area of attention, the tactic seeking to win shoppers over at the end of the year.

“Window displays are always the triggers of fantasy; not just for the stores that put them together, but also for the population at large,” said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR Research](#), Miami.

“I don’t think window displays drive immediate sales,” Ms. Rosenblum said. “They drive brand equity and value.

“In the holiday season, they drive joy, smiles and a [generally] better feeling among those who see them.”

Window shopping

A number of storefronts have been decked out by luxury merchandisers so far this season.

At the start of the month, British department store Selfridges used the theme “Showtime” to debut outdoor activations across its network.



The sets are to have taken 50 crew members a total of more than 100 hours to complete. Image credit: Selfridges

The retailer has transformed each of its windows into a stage complete with props, lighting and actors, enlisting an ensemble of 10 characters to perform. Selfridges' cast includes a Santa Claus character, as well as a "Christmas Tree Diva" and a "Stand-up Comedy Snowman."

A multitude of creatives including British designer and artist Max Allen, who has worked with Selfridges on previous Christmas activations helped bring the concepts to life. Each element of the set, from the costumes to the stage and the painted works, was handcrafted in North London.

The series slots in under the department store's annual holiday program, which also includes its Christmas Shop this year's offering is said to be the company's largest ever ([see story](#)).

CASA LOEWE Madrid's festive windows.

Visit our vibrant store windows around the world, inspired by Suna Fujita's naturalist motifs within our Holidays collection.

Find out more: <https://t.co/oOe6Z9luNV> #LOEWE pic.twitter.com/wh5EShZ7gM

LOEWE (@LoeweOfficial) November 16, 2023

A number of brands have also revealed holiday window displays at select boutique locations.

Spanish fashion label Loewe, for instance, is drawing upon its "Holidays" collection, one which taps collaborator and Japanese artist Suna Fujita, who specializes in ceramics. The display is not outwardly festive, instead employing items from the assemblage it promotes.

Wine-colored curtains drape around a nearly completely wooden set, with plushes, purses and penguins dotted around the activation. Italian fashion house Valentino similarly sacks traditional holiday color schemes, instead opting to use its signature "PP Pink" shade.

Valentino makes the holidays unforgettable at Harrods.

Visit London's iconic department store to discover a towering tree outfitted in #PinkPP along with dazzling windows and a new selection of holiday looks. [#ValentinoParisANightsTale](#)

Valentino (@MaisonValentino) November 17, 2023

The brand's latest pieces, featured in a recent ad effort starring English model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley ([see story](#)), accompany limited-time holiday experiences and Christmas Tree installations, currently on view at British department store Harrods locations in different countries.

A primary display is set at the retailer's London flagship, with magenta hues overtaking certain windows, as well as the exterior and interior of the premise. In Shanghai, Harrods hosts an alike expression, complete with a bright pink three-wheeled cart, among other details.

At Harrods in Shanghai, the season of giving brings indulgent #PinkPP hues and an unforgettable offering of gifts. Visit the department store to discover the latest pieces along with limited-time holiday experiences now.

Valentino (@MaisonValentino) November 17, 2023

U.S. retailer Neiman Marcus is currently showcasing its store-wide dedication to holiday cheer ([see story](#)) with a dedicated campaign that invites shoppers aboard the “Neiman’s Express.”

This year, the store is celebrating its 97th annual “Christmas Book” initiative: first published in 1926, the catalog-style delivery features dressing inspiration and counting women’s ready-to-wear, footwear, fine jewelry, handbags and men’s suiting categories among its contents.

On the other hand, Neiman Marcus balances older hallmarks such as “Fantasy Gifts,” a set of exclusive one-of-a-kind experiences, by making updates in 2023. These introductions take the form of new partnerships and curated trips from the likes of Baccarat, Cadillac, Chopard, Ralph Lauren and the Walt Disney Animation Studios.

In another twist on yearly formulas, French fashion house Dior and U.S. retailer Saks have come together for a large-scale, first-time festive activation that takes hold of the retailer’s online and in-store shopping spots ([see story](#)).

Festive financials

As luxury labels roll out their marketing strategies for the ever-important holiday season, retail is at the top of the list for most maisons to push amidst an overall slowdown in the sector.

In-store shopping is the largest earner for most luxury corporations and brands, with French fashion and leather goods house Hermès ([see story](#)) and Swiss luxury conglomerate Richemont ([see story](#)) stating retail as their largest source of revenue for the year in their most recent financial statements. Luxury pushing in-store purchases above all else with holiday window displays being an avenue to harp on this segment is the natural outcome as companies look to improve their fiscal year fortunes.



The 2023 Neiman Marcus holiday campaign stars Canadian model Jessica Stam. Image credit: Neiman Marcus

Despite this, relying solely on eye-catching activations will not result in increased sales, but will instead improve public interest, especially among aspirational buyers who have largely pulled away from luxury spending due to the ongoing financial uncertainty.

“Think of them as brand builders and confidence builders, not just for luxury buyers, but also for the middle class,” said Ms. Rosenblum.

“The crowd says I want something that looks like that, whether they are buying from that store or another,” she said. “Those window displays are a big part of the holiday spirit.

“No one would ever say that the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parades as sales drivers; they’re vibe builders.”