

JEWELRY

David Yurman, SCAD join forces for tech-forward holiday project

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The brand's "Create Joy, Give David Yurman" year-end campaign employs extended reality (XR), a first for the brand. Image courtesy of David Yurman

By ZACH JAMES

U.S. jeweler David Yurman is tapping tomorrow's talent, granting audiences the gift of creative marketing this season.

For "Create Joy, Give David Yurman," digital tools provided by Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) took the lead on a holiday campaign that employs extended reality (XR), a first for the brand. A combination of CGI and motion camera tracking captures the festive visuals as the luxury label and the university students take a step into the future of luxury.

"The 'Create Joy, Give David Yurman' holiday campaign appears to target a somewhat older demographic, ranging from mid-30s to late 40s, encompassing both older Millennials and younger Gen Xers," said Gregg L. Witt, senior brand builder and marketing strategist at [ThinkWithWitt.com](https://www.thinkwithwitt.com), San Diego.

"While the campaign is impeccably well-produced and features immersive XR technology, it does come across as somewhat staged, lacking the authenticity that typically resonates with younger Millennials and older Gen Z consumers," Mr. Witt said. "The overall feel of the campaign leans towards traditional push advertising rather than immersive content experiences, further indicating its alignment with an older consumer segment."

Mr. Witt is not affiliated with David Yurman, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Sparkling snow

The brand's latest offering presents traditional products through a tech-tinged lens.

Forging computer-generated environments for the 60-second film, which highlights hero jewelry collections, "Create Joy, Give David Yurman" features visions of family and fun. Views of city buildings that peak through the home's windows frame the video's main scenes.

David Yurman presents its 2023 holiday campaign

The cast opens boxes featuring this year's cream and fawn-colored gift packaging. They grab bags enclosed in branded ribbon and wrapping paper as piano chords playing "O Christmas Tree" fill the viewer's speakers.

Starburst Studs and DY Madison Chain Bracelets appear in close-up shots. In another excerpt, winter flurries and Sculpted Cable selections are central.

Several additional designer picks, including the Petite Pav women's line, and Spiritual Beads and Tags & Chains assortment for men, are featured throughout the content.

While the advertisement looks to be achieved completely in-camera, requiring few visual effects, the entire project was shot on a soundstage at SCADpro, the school's in-house innovation hub.



SCAD students were present in every aspect of production for the holiday campaign. Image courtesy of David Yurman

Students relied upon a number of techniques to pull off the feat, the footage making use of LED volume technology, allowing the marketers to meld online and offline worlds for fully immersive effects.

While it looks like assets were recorded amid a Manhattan skyscraper apartment, or near David Yurman's New York City headquarters, the effort instead is merely a set, built by renowned fashion production designer Stefan Beckman within the confines of a screen-filled room.

LED volume technology has been used in quite a few Hollywood blockbusters and television shows in recent years, now making its way into the world of luxury marketing, potentially signaling a shift in how campaigns are handled going forward.

The brand offers a behind-the-scenes look at the creation process behind the campaign

"It is evident that more luxury houses are increasingly embracing the use of film marketing materials enhanced with heavy visual effects and XR technologies," said Mr. Witt.

"This shift is driven by a growing trend in the luxury industry towards immersive experiences that enhance the consumer journey and interaction with their brands," he continued. "Many luxury brands are now focusing on functional social augmented reality (AR)/XR experiences that allow consumers to seamlessly transition from social media, in-store, or online platforms to try on products and explore behind-the-scenes content; brands like Louis Vuitton and Moët Hennessy have been at the forefront of experimenting with XR technology since 2019, offering event-based AR experiences using app technology.

"In essence, luxury brands are leveraging these technologies not only for entertainment but also to create a deeper emotional connection with consumers."



New technologies are changing how luxury markets its products. Image courtesy of David Yurman

SCAD students were given free-range with this emerging tech to create the campaign. From storyboards to the final release, undergraduates had a hand in creating every aspect of the digital content.

“Our campaign is focused on taking viewers on an adventure through Manhattan at the most magical time of the year, using a fusion of creativity and technology that pushes our artistic boundaries set by David, Sybil and Evan Yurman,” said Carolyn Dawkins, chief marketing officer at David Yurman, in a statement.

“With the power of XR real-time technologies and software found in LED Volume, such as Disguise and Unreal Engine, there is no limit to how our consumers can experience the world of David Yurman.”

Educational purpose

SCAD and David Yurman have maintained a partnership since 2021.

That year saw the launch of the David Yurman Endowed Scholarship for Jewelry Design, earmarked for those enrolled in the private art institution’s School of Fashion. Since beginning this continued collaboration, the luxury brand has donated more than \$1 million worth of gemstones from the brand’s private collection for use within the university’s jewelry design program, the largest in the U.S.

SCAD maintains ties to many esteemed industry entities such as Austrian crystal and jewelry designer Swarovski, with which it recently teamed up in support of emerging designers ([see story](#)). However, the academy’s connection to David Yurman stands out.

Majoring in everything from film and television production to visual effects, advertising and brand management, a total of 40 of the school’s attendees were involved with the campaign, each granted the opportunity to enhance their professional portfolios well ahead of graduation.



This year’s cream and fawn-colored gift packaging plays a central role throughout campaign assets. Image credit: David Yurman

Shots were rendered in real-time with the computer graphics program Unreal Engine, a program French fashion label Balmain ([see story](#)) has gained familiarity with. The industry-standard technology enabled a first-time engagement with XR motion tracking cameras on the brand end, seeing to it that SCAD’s students temporarily became teachers for “Create Joy, Give David Yurman.”

“SCAD is delighted to continue its synergistic relationship with leading luxury brand David Yurman and this latest SCADpro collaboration,” said Paul Stonick, vice president of SCADpro, in a statement.

“SCAD produces the world’s most inventive creative talent and SCADpro is the stepping-stone into their creative professions,” Mr. Stonick said. “Our students are transforming the world by leveraging powerful technologies and tools to push the boundaries of artistry.

“We are proud to see our cutting-edge LED volume, fueled by our creative students, showcased in this magical holiday campaign.”



David Yurman and SCAD's partnership could serve as a blueprint for other maisons going forward. Image courtesy of David Yurman

Last week, French luxury conglomerate LVMH announced its partnership with Stanford University's Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence Institute (HAI) to seek new ways AI can enhance its business ([see story](#)). U.S. fashion group Ralph Lauren has also recently engaged with higher education, housing The Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Prevention at The University of Southern California's (USC) Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center ([see story](#)).

"The collaborations between luxury maisons and prestigious academic institutions, such as USC and Stanford HAI, have a substantial impact on academia's presence in the luxury space," said Mr. Witt.

"In the short term, these partnerships establish a foundation for future consumers; by co-creating with students from esteemed schools, luxury brands engage the younger generation, often from higher-income backgrounds, expanding their core audience and increasing brand awareness," he said. "The involvement of fresh perspectives and innovative ideas from these collaborations enhances creativity and strategy at a more affordable cost.

"Furthermore, these partnerships act as a form of talent pipeline for luxury brands; engaging with academia in recurring projects ensures a steady flow of creative minds into the luxury ecosystem, contributing to long-term innovation and success."

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