

RETAIL

Tapping into power of personality, Holt Renfrew recruits influencers

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Launched this week, the campaign spotlights spontaneity and varied personalities. Image credit: Holt Renfrew

By ZACH JAMES

Canadian department store chain Holt Renfrew is looking to internet content creators to uplift their new seasonal marketing endeavor.

The retailer's "Let's Fun!" spring 2024 beauty campaign stars five influencers, all of whom are based in Canada and represent a diverse spectrum of backgrounds. Spotlighting these varied talents, the group shows off their picks from luxury maisons' latest cosmetics, apparel and jewelry collections in a short film and promotional images.

"They're definitely targeting Gen Y and Gen Z consumers with money," said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR Research](#), Miami.

"People willing to look different, think outside the box and (as the campaign says), make wearing makeup and apparel that's fun; especially makeup, which is generally not thought of as a fun exercise," Ms. Rosenblum said. "It shows them that people like them who they also respect, are already using those products (of all kinds), and being really creative with them.

"I suspect they're also trying to avoid the department store blues' which is pretty epidemic in the U.S."

Ms. Rosenblum is not affiliated with Holt Renfrew, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Sense of self

Launched this week, the campaign focuses on spontaneity and sparkle, all in an effort to find the fun to be had within the luxury category.

Starring influencers Krishna Patel, Emy-Jade Greaves, Jessica Joo, Michael Brooks and Samantha Borges, the group appears both together and separately in a variety of creatively put-together looks, each unique to the respective wearers. Spanning beauty, fashion and jewelry, the outfits bring together the content creators' top picks from the store's latest seasonal drops, all of which are put together under the given tastemaker's section on the [Let's Fun! homepage](#).

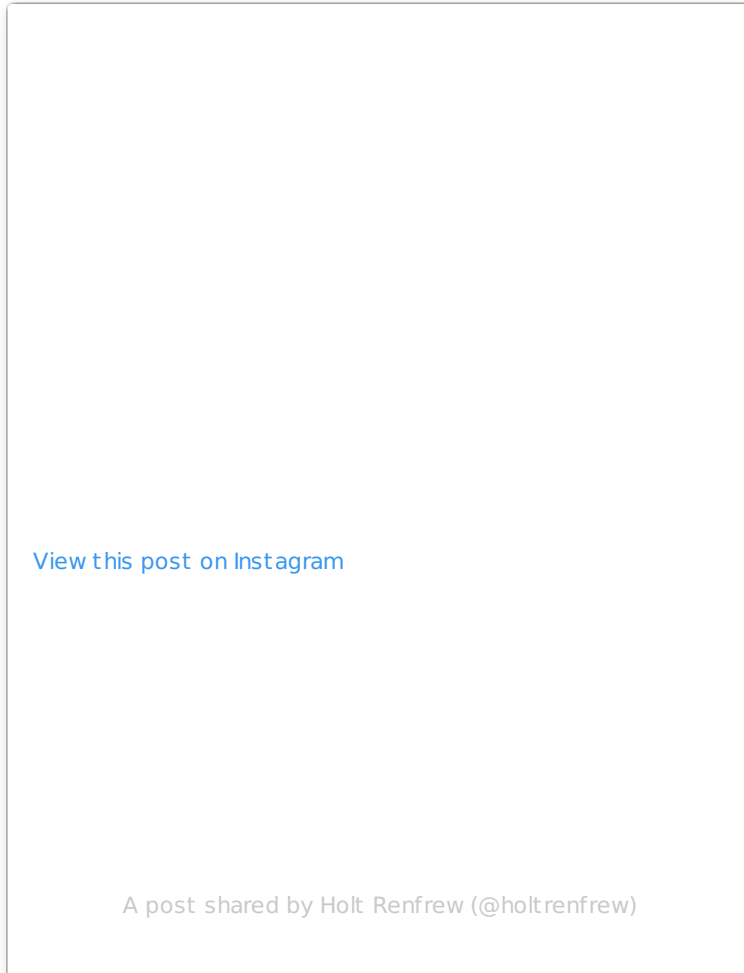
Holt Renfrew presents its spring 2024 initiative

Products and apparel from Dior, Givenchy, Tom Ford, Gucci, Guerlain, Boucheron, Bottega Veneta, Swarovski and more appear within the lookbook and short film. To coincide with the release of the Let's Fun initiative, the retailer also released a

series of YouTube shorts in the style of the spotlighted influencers, each video showcasing the diverse picks of the young group.

The film features the group of influencers having fun on the set of the campaign, taking selfies, playfully posing and reiterating the Let's Fun title. It also takes a nostalgic approach to its presentation, as the visuals appear to be shot on film using various types of cameras and lenses to achieve an old-school look.

Though uploaded in high definition, the video is formatted in the full-screen aspect ratio formerly utilized for VHS tapes and standard-definition television broadcasts, granting it another touch of 1990s- and 2000s-era content.



French fashion house Chanel went for a similar vibe with its latest handbag push, instead opting for a remembrance of 1960s culture and filmmaking ([see story](#)).

Behind-the-scenes imagery is a major part of Holt Renfrew's spring 2024 push, melding traditional marketing shots with more candid looks. This more authentic approach has been prevalent throughout the wide-ranging luxury industry in recent months, with British spirits distributor Diageo ([see story](#)) and Chanel Beauty ([see story](#)) being the latest to utilize the technique.

Next generation

Each of the included influencers' reach varies, with the smallest of the bunch having just under 100,000 followers the largest among them, Ms. Joo, better known by her user name Jooshica, has an audience of more than 1.1 million.

Featuring both established and up-and-coming names could prove to future-proof the marketing, or have it serve as a jumping-off point for future endeavors with social media talents. While others throughout the high-end space have embraced non-traditional campaign faces ([see story](#)), retailers have been slow to adapt.



The stars are pictured both alone, together and in small groups. Image credit: Holt Renfrew

“They’re definitely trying to beat Ulta (and, I suppose, Sephora, who only have [81] stores in Canada) to the punch,” said Ms. Rosenblum.

As millennials and Gen Z become more dominant consumer bases in the luxury segment ([see story](#)), an increased number of brands will cater to their desires, such as increased diversity in campaign casts, ESG measures and an air of authenticity to the initiatives at hand. Holt Renfrew is taking a multitude of those requests into account with its spring 2024 push.

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