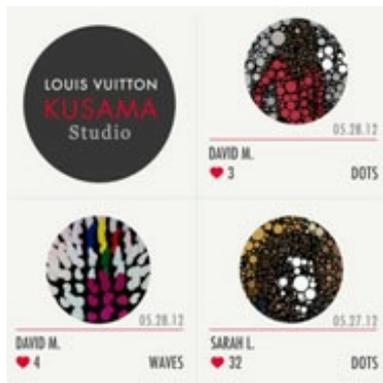


MOBILE

Louis Vuitton pushes Kusama collection via augmented reality app

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By TRICIA CARR

Louis Vuitton is raising awareness for its handbag collaboration with Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama with a mobile application that uses augmented reality, photo sharing and push notifications.

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Luxury Daily

The Louis Vuitton Kusama Studio iPhone app lets users take photos of their surroundings, transform them with effects that mimic Ms. Kusama's artwork and share them via a public gallery and social media. Interestingly enough, the app does not include information on or images of the collection itself.

"The strategy appears to be about the intersection of simplicity, innovation and ultimately finding ways to convey the underlying brand and design elements derived from Kusama's artwork," said John Puterbaugh, founder/CEO of [Nellymoser Inc.](#), Boston.

"By taking photos and having them interpreted via themes used in the Infinitely Kusama collection, we see them literally augment and transform our photos into Kusama's lens," he said.

"Louis Vuitton is innovative, social and are endeavoring to provide an outlet and voice to the brand via mobile."

Mr. Puterbaugh is not affiliated with Louis Vuitton, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Louis Vuitton did not respond before press deadline.

Yayoi Kusama began as an avant-garde painter in Tokyo in the 1950s. She became a figure in New York's contemporary art scene in the 1960s. Her style is a cross between pop art, surrealism and minimalism.

Kusama's reality

Louis Vuitton is leveraging its handbag collaboration with Ms. Kusama in the Louis Vuitton Kusama Studio app, but the app does not show items from the collection.

Rather, it allows users to manipulate photos with effects called Visions that Ms. Kusama has used in her artwork.

The app lets users imagine a person or object covered with dots or reinterpreted as abstract waves, per the label. It is available for free in [Apple's App Store](#).

When users enter the app for the first time, it asks for permission to send push notifications.

The landing page of the app shows the public gallery of animated digital artwork created in the app. Each image is labeled with a user's first name and last initial.



App homepage

Users can “like” their favorite images in the public gallery.

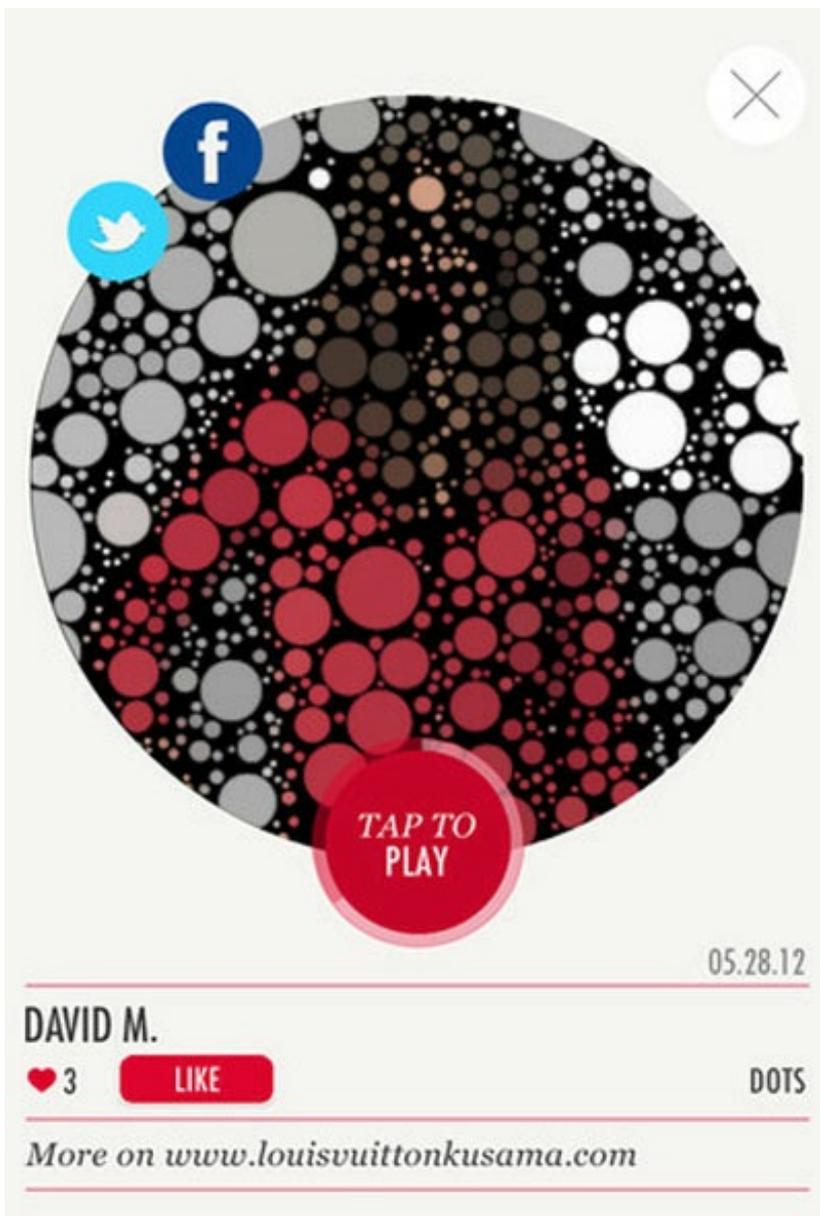
By clicking on the camera icon on the bottom of the screen, users can take a picture with the phone’s camera or choose an image from the library to manipulate.



Sample photo

The effects currently available are dots and waves.

After images are created, users can share them to the public gallery, a private area within the app, Facebook, Twitter and the Louis Vuitton Kusama collection Web site at <http://www.louisvuittonkusama.com>.



Sample edited photo

Meanwhile, Louis Vuitton created a video that it shared on its [YouTube](#) page that shows how the app works.

Presenting the Louis Vuitton Kusama Studio iPhone Application video

“The Kusama App augments and transforms the picture itself rather than overlaying and

providing additional information about the picture,” Mr. Puterbaugh said.

“Technologically, it is not doing anything new.

“It is analyzing a photo, extracting some key features and then using them to provide an outline that is filled using several patterns,” he said.

“While I am sure that some will be critical of the app, I think it succeeds given that is very easy to use and share your creations, and it fundamentally conveys the key underlying brand vision.”

What is real?

A few luxury brands are using augmented reality to engage consumers.

For example, German fashion label Hugo Boss launched its largest digital campaign for its Black collection that included a 3D augmented reality installation that links to an exclusive section of the campaign in print and out-of-home advertising.

Consumers could download the Hugo Boss iPhone app to access content ([see story](#)).

In addition, British label Stella McCartney introduced L.I.L.Y, its first fragrance in almost a decade through a mobile app, Web effort and partnership with London-based department store Selfridges that included augmented reality.

The Aurasma augmented reality app, which was what Stella McCartney used in its installation, lets consumers use their smartphones or Selfridges-provided iPads to access mobile content ([see story](#)).

Louis Vuitton is likely using mobile augmented reality to stay ahead of the crowd with its use of modern technologies.

“We are starting to see brands take augmented reality more seriously and reinterpret it on their own terms,” Mr. Puterbaugh said.

“For the past 10 years, augmented reality was simply a novelty and for the most part tied to desktops,” he said. “Now, given that smartphones have better capabilities such as processors, memory, cameras and screen resolution, you can truly augment media in some interesting ways.

“Now, we are seeing a wider range of augmented experiences including both print, for example on magazine covers, and photos, as in the case of the Louis Vuitton app, as well as videos and scenes.”

Final Take

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