

IN-STORE

Printemps partners with Prada to infuse holiday windows with “A Joyful Obsession”

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By SARAH JONES

French department store Printemps enlisted Italian fashion house Prada to give its Paris location's holiday windows a high-fashion touch.

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The display, entitled “A Joyful Obsession,” is a colorful creation that is classically Christmas with visual elements that evoke the Prada brand, including a bold black and white checkerboard pattern and teddy bears. The windows allow Prada to acquaint more people with the brand's image and aesthetic in a memorable, joyous way.

"In this case, the strategy of the program goes far beyond choosing which brand to collaborate with on the window displays," said Dave Rodgerson, a Toronto-based retail analyst and consultant.

"Working closely with one designer allows the store to dedicate its resources in a significant way to benefit from the investment made by Prada," Mr. Rodgerson said.

"Such a collaboration would not have the same impact if it were spread across a large number of design houses, as there would be very little consistency in the message that both parties are trying to convey."

Mr. Rodgerson is not affiliated with Prada or Printemps, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Printemps was unable to comment before press deadline, while Prada declined to comment.

High-fashion façade

Eleven of Printemps's windows along boulevard Haussmann, unveiled Nov. 7, feature a colorful array of Christmas themes as interpreted by Prada.

In one window pane, large metallic ornaments, some with Prada accessories inside, form a backdrop for a mannequin in a red jacket. Another window with a striking red, black and white color scheme contains gift boxes of all sizes made of Prada's saffiano leather, with color-coordinated accessories throughout.

A separate window features a gingerbread house-style miniature model of the Printemps flagship with animated dancing teddy bears holding either letters to spell out Prada or candy canes. In another pane, teddy bears are at work sewing with oversize needles and a mannequin in an evening dress with a Prada handbag reclines front and center.



Prada's Printemps holiday window display

The Prada touch doesn't stop outside. The entryway of the retailer was also transformed to look like the historic Prada store in Milan.

The checkerboard pattern fills the floor, and mannequins sit on pedestals wearing Prada with accessories the brand designed exclusively for Printemps. A giant advent calendar features full-size mannequins in its windows.



The interior of Printemps Paris

As part of the collaboration, Prada designed an exclusive collection with apparel, handbags, accessories and footwear. The brand also created gift items for the store, such as candles, advent calendars and teddy bears wearing turbans similar to those seen on the runway in the brand's Spring 2007 show.

As a way to let consumers shopping at every price point get in on the action, consumers can purchase Printemps gift cards with a Prada design.

Department store designs

This is not the first time Printemps has joined forces with a designer to bring high fashion to its windows. The store has previously tapped Dior, Chanel and Lanvin to put their touches on its holiday display.

Other stores have brought in designers to make exclusive collections for them to get consumers to visit their stores.

For example, London department store Harrods increased foot traffic through the expansion of its luxury accessories department with The Handbag Narratives that rewarded consumers with exclusive views and offers.

The Handbag Narratives showcased more than 20 luxury designers in the exhibition and several of the handbags were exclusively crafted for the department store's customers. The event used the power of narrative to further entice consumers to visit the store ([see story](#)).

Printemps is not the only retailer to let other brands take over its windows.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars targeted affluent Harrods shoppers with window displays at the London department store to celebrate the British debut of the Wraith vehicle.

This display marked the first time that the British automaker put its vehicles on display in a retailer's windows. The display likely gave both brands additional exposure since automakers typically do not advertise in retail windows ([see story](#)).

This collaboration is likely to be beneficial for both brands.

"This is a wonderful partnership that gives Printemps exclusive access to luxury products designed by Prada," Mr. Rodgerson said.

"In return, the designer is able to capture a great deal of attention in a manner that befits their style in 11 high-profile windows on boulevard Haussmann in Paris during the busiest shopping period of the season," he said.

Final take

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