

EVENTS/ CAUSES

Guerlain fetes 160-year-old fragrance bottle with artist exhibition

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Guerlain's Bee bottle

By SARAH JONES

LVMH-owned cosmetics brand Guerlain is commemorating the 160th anniversary of its Bee fragrance bottle with an exhibit featuring nine art pieces inspired by the bottle housed in its boutique on the Champs-Élysées.

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Guerlain is allowing its fans around the world the opportunity to experience the exhibit, titled "Nect'Art," digitally by posting features on each of the artists to its Facebook page. By hosting this event, Guerlain is able to showcase its heritage and the company today, and grow its audience.

"Anniversaries mark important milestones of success that the company has not only survived but also thrived throughout the years," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#), New York.

"By hosting this exhibition, it increases direct touch points to their existing as well as potential clientele that traditional marketing strategies has yet to replace," she said.

"By leveraging the nine artists that they've incorporated into this endeavor, they are also able to connect with their networks and followings to increase as well as generate brand loyalty."

Ms. Strum is not affiliated with Guerlain, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Guerlain](#) did not respond by press deadline.

Royal history

The Bee bottle was designed by perfumer Pierre-François-Pascal Guerlain in 1853 to house the Eau de Cologne Impériale he created for Empress Eugénie. The empress received the bottle to celebrate her wedding to Napoléon III.

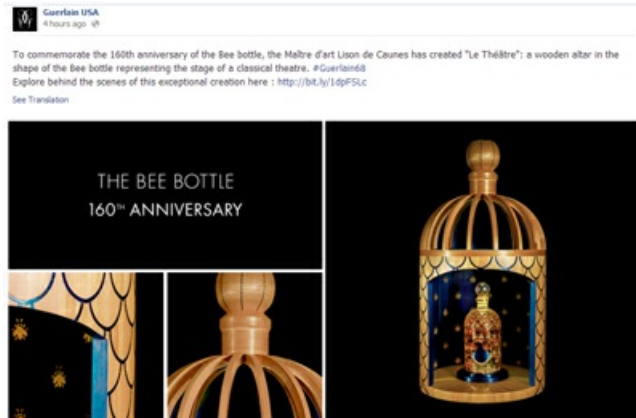
The bottle features 69 glass bees tipped with gold paint by hand, since the insect is a traditional symbol of the monarchy. Guerlain took inspiration for the bottle's shape from the Vendôme column.

Because of the Bee bottle, Guerlain was named perfumer by appointment to her imperial majesty. Over the years, the bottle design has held different perfumes, but the making of the bottle remains the same.

Guerlain asked nine Maître d'Art, or masters of art, to use the bottle as inspiration, and create a piece that would also

incorporate the bottle.

The first artist featured by Guerlain is Lison de Caunes, who created a cylindrical wooden stage for the bottle, complete with a curtain. The bottle sits inside on a small platform in the piece titled “Le Théâtre.”



Facebook post from Guerlain

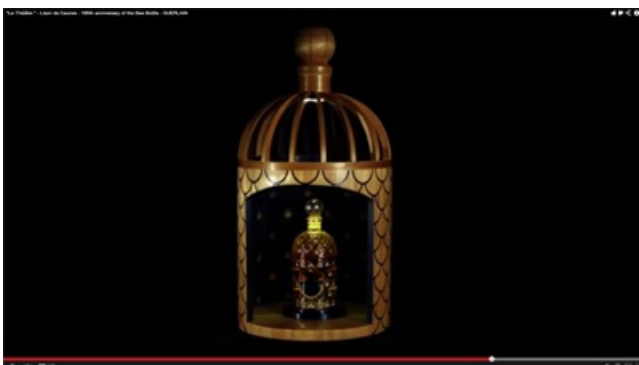
The artist took her intricate straw marquetry technique, which she usually uses to decorate furniture and wall coverings.

The Facebook post about Le Théâtre includes a link to a YouTube video, which details the production of the piece. De Caunes affixes pieces of straw, and then smooths them out to form the base of the stage.



Video still

The artist then attaches straw to the open dome-shaped top of the stage, trimming the edges carefully. As the end of the video, the viewer sees the completed piece with a Bee bottle inside.



Video still

Guerlain partnered with Institut National des Métiers d'Art, or the French National Institute of Arts and Crafts, on the exhibit, which began its run Dec. 10 and will be up until Feb. 17.

Other artists include Nelly Saunier, who works with feathers as her medium, and Sylvie Deschamps, who specializes in gold thread embroidery.

"The video provides brand enthusiasts, particularly those who fancy the Bee bottle, with a nice sense of its history," said John Casey, senior vice president of [Havas Public Relations](#), New York.

"Behind the scenes videos provide brand loyalists with added insight and history about a brand's products or

heritage," he said. "In this day and age of visual and video, behind the scenes videos, if done properly, have shareable value on social channels.

"For Guerlain, the video is likely to be one dimension among several to help celebrate the anniversary of the Bee bottle. At the very least, it should help spread appreciation for the product, and the brand, among the brand's core customers during the 160th anniversary of one of their marquee products."

Expanding an audience

French fashion house Christian Dior is aiming to further align its women's fragrance Miss Dior with international artists during a two-week exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris.

Opening Nov. 13, the free "Esprit Dior, Miss Dior" exhibit is dedicated to the heritage of the brand's first fragrance created in 1947 to accompany designer Christian Dior's "New Look" collection. The exhibit highlights the fragrance's inspirations through the work of 15 international female artists who were given "carte blanche" to explore Miss Dior's scent, bottle silhouette, its muses and history ([see story](#)).

Guerlain has previously incorporated technology to help its faraway fans feel included in an event.

For instance, the brand invited consumers to virtually step inside its newly renovated Parisian flagship boutique with a guided tour on Google+ Hangout on Air Nov. 22.

The space, located at 68 Champs-Élysées, opened its doors on Nov. 23 for the first time since its renovation, making the boutique the largest beauty store in the world ([see story](#)).

The Google+ hangout and this fragrance exhibit are helping to open the new boutique for a global audience, but the brand does have some opportunities to make the online version of the exhibition reach further.

"Their online content doesn't seem to emphasize the full artist incorporation through their current digital strategy and there is a lack of details regarding the exhibition," Ms. Strum said.

"Guerlain should be leveraging their digital clout to emphasize the full experience with brand textual content," she said. "They should focus more on conveying key moments of the pre/current/conclusion of the creation process to the actual exhibition with a stylistic flare."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York