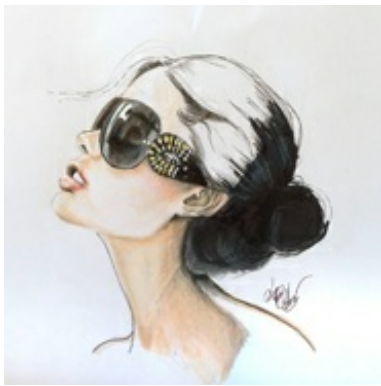


INTERNET

Armani, Valentino look to fashion illustrations to showcase products

January 13, 2014



By SARAH JONES

Fashion illustrations, once the cornerstone of print ad campaigns for apparel brands, are making a comeback in digital form on social media courtesy of a number of fashion brands.

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Luxury Daily

Italian fashion houses Armani and Valentino enlisted artists to sketch a featured product for them, and then posted the drawings to their Facebook pages as an album. Since this type of fashion imagery is not as common in the age of Instagram, the photo sets stand out on social media.

"The art of illustration is very counter to the prevailing smartphone-driven culture, which is more about virtual instant gratification and less about the 'authenticity of the moment,' which the manual nature of the illustration process embraces," said Michael Miraflor, vice president of strategy at [Zenith Media](#), New York.

"Illustrations therefore suggest an air of authenticity that will increase the cache of the Armani and Valentino product, respectively, in the eyes of the discerning consumer," he said.

Mr. Miraflor is not affiliated with Armani or Valentino, but agreed to comment as an

industry expert.

Armani and Valentino were unable to comment directly.

Freehand fashion

Armani chose to showcase its new Kajal sunglasses, which have oversize frames featuring belled arms with gems. Many of the nine artists chosen focused on the rhinestone detailed sides of the glasses.

Armani posted a photo set to its Facebook to let its fans know about the project.



Emporio Armani KAJAL illustrations (16 photos)

KAJAL, the newest sunglass collection by Emporio Armani. Drawing inspiration from the catwalk, 9 illustrators reinterpret the sunglass according to their own personal style through design, sketch and graphic works to re-introduce the must-have sunglass for the season.



Facebook post by Armani

While some of the artists stuck to a traditional model, some put the sunglasses in inventive poses. Lucio Palmieri drew two different pieces showing birds wearing the frames with a bedazzled hat, and Domenico Principato created a graphic design illustration with the frames in the clouds.



Design by Domenico Principato for Armani

One sketch by Annabelle King pairs the sunglasses with flowers and a fairy-sized woman, who perches on the shades.



Illustration for Armani by Annabelle King

While Armani's illustrations varied greatly in style and color palette, Valentino's artists stuck to a pale pink color scheme for their designs featuring the brand's Valentina Acqua Floreale fragrance bottle.

Decade Diary drew two pictures—a bottle flanked by flowers and an airy portrait of the fragrance's model, Freja Beha Erichsen. Birdy and Me blew up the bottle and showed Ms.

Erichsen leaning up against it.



Illustration by Birdy and Me for Valentino

In its Facebook post featuring the illustrations, Valentino asked fans to pick their favorite of the five shown, and some fans commented, giving their opinion.

Valentino
22 hours ago

A POETIC TAKE ON VALENTINA ACQUA FLOREALE (5 photos)

We asked a group of talented fashion illustrators to interpret the Valentina Acqua Floreale bottle through their drawings. Here a look at their pure artistic talent: a poetic take on femininity with a touch of fantasy. Which one is your favorite?
<http://en.parfums.valentino.com/>



Facebook post from Valentino

As of press time, the posts from both brands featuring the photo sets had received approximately 2,000 likes.

Artistic input

Having an artist, or group of artists, show their interpretation of a luxury brand's product is a way to elevate it to art itself.

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

The free "Esprit Dior, Miss Dior" exhibit was dedicated to the heritage of the brand's first fragrance created in 1947 to accompany designer Christian Dior's "New Look" collection. The exhibit highlighted 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](#)).

Art can encourage fans to talk, generating a conversation around the brand, which is suited to social media.

For example, Precision-cut crystal maker Swarovski enticed foot traffic in its London stores with an in-store art exhibit designed with contributions from the brand's social media fans to capitalize on the attention the city received due to the 2012 Olympics.

Consumers who visit the Swarovski flagship store on Regent Street saw a live transformation of the store windows by illustrative team Good Wives and Warriors as part of the Iconic London campaign. The reason for the campaign was to offer a city-exclusive preview of the fall/winter 2012 collection, which was available only in the eight stores in London at the time ([see story](#)).

The Swarovski event worked in the opposite direction, taking social media content to create a physical piece of art, whereas Armani's and Valentino's Facebook posts took paper drawings and turned them into digital content, but both bring attention to the brands involved.

These illustrations focus on entry level products, so they will likely reach aspirational consumers.

"It certainly does not hurt that the recognition and collection of art as a hobby to aspirational consumers – who are likely to be in the market for modest price point products such as fragrance or sunglasses – is having its moment in the fashion culture zeitgeist," Mr. Miraflor said.

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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