

EVENTS/ CAUSES

Swarovski supports fashion designers to show dedication to craft

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By SARAH JONES

Precision cut-crystal maker Swarovski has hand-picked a number of fashion designers to show at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York as part of its Swarovski Collective.

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In addition to providing financial support to the designers, the brand will give them crystals to use in their designs. Swarovski is able to showcase its own creativity through this project, as well as show its good citizenship within the fashion industry.

"Swarovski has perfectly positioned itself in the heart of fashion," said Rony Zeidan, president and creative director of **RO New York**. "When Nadja Swarovski began piloting the program, she forever changed the perception of Swarovski away from crystal figurines, to it being a key player in fashion.

"The formula is clear," he said. "Swarovski has always supplied designers with the very best quality and most creative crystals available. From couturiers around the world to the broadest apparel brands, Swarovski is used because the brand is a token of quality and luxury.

"The relationship between Swarovski and fashion grows closer every year, so it is natural that the brand continues to support the hottest designers for exposure and co branding

purposes."

Mr. Zeidan is not affiliated with Swarovski, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Swarovski did not respond by press deadline.

Creative concept

The Swarovski Collective designers for the fall/winter 2014 Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week include Rodarte, Prabal Gurung, SUNO, Wes Gordon, all of whom have previously worked with the brand. Designer Brandon Sun is also presenting as part of the collective for the first time.



Prabal Gurung spring 2014 Swarovski Collective

According to a brand statement, these designers were chosen for their “creative flair and ability to demonstrate exquisite craftsmanship with crystal.”

Nadja Swarovski founded this program in 1999 after a collaboration with Alexander McQueen and Isabella Blow, then fashion editor of the Sunday Times.

Ms. Swarovski says that giving crystals to these designers results in creative experiments, as the designers incorporate the material into their fashions, per a branded statement.

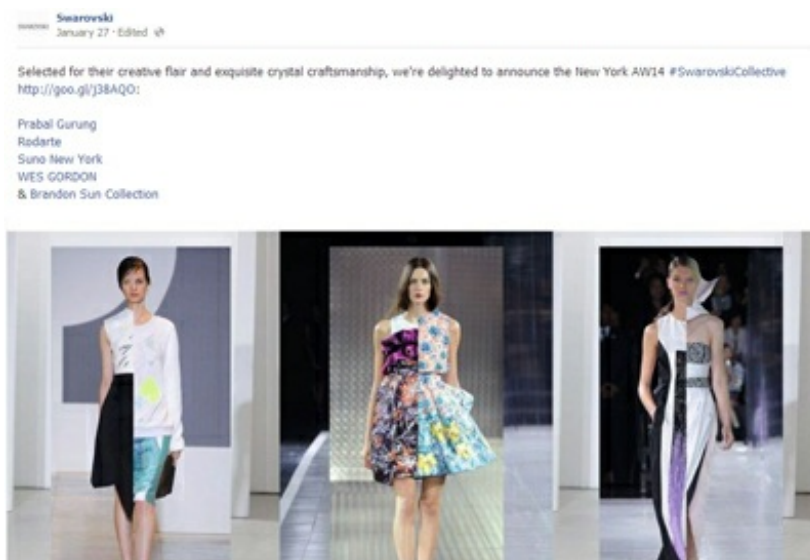
The application form for the fall/winter 2014 program tells applicants that if chosen they

will benefit from Swarovski's support and publicity during the season. Applicants must explain their desire to work with crystal and show how Swarovski would help them create their designs.

If chosen, the partnership rules dictate that crystals must appear in a minimum of five looks in the designer's collection.

To generate publicity, the designer also agrees to coordinate social media and PR with Swarovski, and to create content, the crystal brand will film both in the designer's studio and at the show. Swarovski mentions its 3.6 million social media followers that it can offer a smaller brand.

Swarovski began its social media campaign by unveiling the label's chosen for this season's Collective on its Facebook page.



Facebook post from Swarovski

In addition to social media, the brand will select one piece from the Collective to be included in the Swarovski Archive. The designers' looks will also be featured in Swarovski's magazine Salt and in the brand's look book.

In addition to the media placement, the designers will have a presence in the Swarovski showroom during the brand's press days, and the crystal brand will give them retail support with in-store events or exhibits.

In previous years the Collective has included fashion brands Victor & Rolf, Proenza Schouler, Givenchy and Giambattista Valli.

Swarovski has shown its dedication to fashion design through its underwriting of the Council of Fashion Designers of America awards. Awards bearing the Swarovski brand name are handed out to one designer from three categories: women's wear, menswear and accessories.

Collective designers Max Osterweis and Erin Beatty for SUNO and Mr. Gurung have both received the Swarovski Fashion Award for women's wear at the CFDA awards.

Cultivating talent

LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton introduced a new annual international design competition to uncover new talent and assist them in starting their fashion careers, proving the conglomerate's influential position in the fashion industry.

The prize consists of a grant and a mentorship from an LVMH team for a year to develop the winner's company. By creating this contest, LVMH is able to show on a global scale that it is foremost in discovering and nurturing creative minds, as well as point to the creativity of its own designers ([see story](#)).

Also, Hotel company Dorchester Collection continued to champion young talent by shortlisting four designers in the fourth annual Dorchester Collection Fashion Prize that was opened up to applicants from all countries where the brand is located.

The shortlisted designers include Barbara Casasola, Fyodor Golan, Emilia Wickstead and Huishan Zhang, each of whom will stage a runway show Oct. 29 at The Dorchester, London. Bringing together two frontiers of the luxury industry allows the hotel brand to attract new consumers and display its understanding of luxury's status as a holistic rather than fragmented worldview ([see story](#)).

Swarovski has some opportunities to further promote this collaboration.

"Co branding and supporting fashion designers is a great way to bring the Swarovski name to the top of minds of consumers who are already exposed to the brand, for example; the name sake jewelry collection, the crystal figurines and ornaments, as well as fashion crystals used by apparel and designer brands," Mr. Zeidan said.

"Swarovski should make stronger efforts in a very impactful way, perhaps by creating microsites online, that would show the behind the scenes angles of collaborations and fashion shows, as well as cross promoting the products of each brand, exposing them to their respective clientele," he said.

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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