

IN-STORE

Galleries Lafayette encourages in-store wandering with audio tour

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By SARAH JONES

Parisian department store Galleries Lafayette is offering its consumers an enhanced browsing experience with an audio tour created by poet and artist Megan Rooney.

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Ms. Rooney wrote a script that presents the store as a place to wander, crafting a story about a woman climbing a mountain. Through this listening experience, Galleries Lafayette is positioning itself as not just a store, but as a destination for contemplation.

"Megan Rooney elevates Galleries Lafayette by weaving the store into her poetry," said Chris Ramey, president of **Affluent Insights**, Miami, FL. "She becomes an apostle for the brand.

"Wandering manifests revenue," he said. "This is particularly the case when the store is an architectural gem."

Mr. Ramey is not affiliated with Galleries Lafayette but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Galleries Lafayette did not respond by press deadline.

Walking tour

Ms. Rooney's script, which she performed in English, was translated and brought to life in French by Magaly Tornay and is available on SoundCloud for users to stream on their smartphones as they walk through the store.

The audio piece, created as part of the department store's Lafayette Anticipation program, is titled, "Touching your face in painting by the river."



Megan Rooney at Galeries Lafayette

The story included in the audio recounts a woman's trip to Mount Athos, a place where no women are allowed to live. Told in a nonlinear format, the tale meditates on pleasure.

Galeries Lafayette's audio tour was accessible on MP3 players at the store during open hours March 27-29. The retailer also made the work available online, so consumers could experience it at home.

Pleasure Principles brought 15 artists to Paris for a week in February to research and reflect, and then created works around the theme. A month later they returned to Paris to present their works.

The program is being put on by Galeries Lafayette's corporate foundation that aims to democratize access to artistic creations.

Galeries Lafayette used social media to draw attention to this project.

The SoundCloud recordings can be accessed [here](#).

Audio enhanced

Releasing audio in an app form rather than only making it available at the site of an exhibit can expand the audience.

For instance, French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels enhanced the physical experience of its museum exhibit, "A Quest for Beauty: The Art of Van Cleef & Arpels," Oct. 27-Feb. 15 at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, CA, with a mobile audio application.

Van Cleef & Arpels' "A Quest for Beauty" mobile app acted as a curated tour that was designed to guide enthusiasts through the exhibit. Unlike traditional museum plaques, the app aimed to engage enthusiasts on more levels and allowed consumers unable to attend in person to still learn about Van Cleef & Arpels' designs ([see story](#)).

Other retailers have incorporated art into their sales floors as a way to elevate the shopping experience and associate their products with the works displayed.

For example, New York retailer Bergdorf Goodman unveiled a series of in-store art installations during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week to draw attention and foot traffic from fashion show attendees staying in the city.

Bergdorf's "Art Matters!" project was the result of a partnership with duo Grey Area, who, with the help of artists, transformed the retailer's windows and store interior. These installations around the store likely attracted art and fashion lovers alike, who then spread the word to their networks ([see story](#)).

This artistic endeavor will elevate the shopping experience for consumers.

"Privileged individuals value art and culture," Mr. Ramey said. "It's proof of their sophistication.

"Commerce can be crass when you can afford anything you want," he said. "This is integral to the appeal behind art and culture.

"Galeries Lafayette has created a brilliant program that will be very well received by their clients and best prospective customers."

Final Take

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