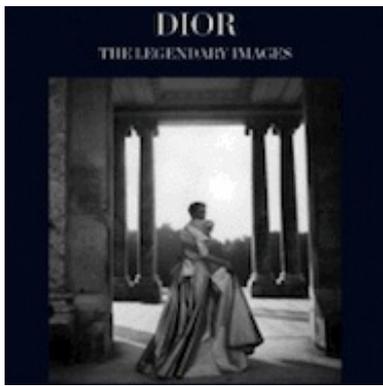


EVENTS/CAUSES

Dior educates on fashion photography in new exhibit, book

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Dior: The Legendary Images book cover

By SARAH JONES

French couture house Christian Dior is delving into its photogenic history with an exhibit and tome focused on the iconic images that shaped the label.

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"Dior: The Legendary Images" the exhibit opened May 3 at the Musée Christian Dior at Granville, France, while the book will be published a month later. Hosting an exhibit gives aspirational fans of a brand the opportunity to share in a part of the brand at an affordable price point.

"It is important for heritage houses to continually present its history as a reminder to those who are avid followers, to quickly educate recent followers and to showcase where they sit within time and the history at large," Kimmie Smith, accessory expert and co-founder/creative director of [Accessory2](#), New York.

"It also allows interested individuals to see how many hands have been involved within the house whether it's designers, celeb photographers or other participants with the brand," she said. "In this way, Dior is saying that with the use of internal and external influences, this is why the house is what it is and the exchange of both is needed for longevity."

"Ultimately the brand is showcasing that it is bigger than just those within its growing house and that it continues to maintain its core values while adopting other elements to maintain its iconography. In addition the brand solidifies that it represents culture, fashion as well as art."

Ms. Smith is not affiliated with Dior but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Dior did not respond by press deadline.

Photo op

Dior publicized its museum exhibit and book through its social channels, reaching its most engaged online fans. The brand shared a gallery of photographs that spanned the early days of Christian Dior's fashion career to contemporary images of the house's current creative director Raf Simons' interpretations of the house's codes.



Photo from Dior: The Legendary Images

The exhibit will host a similar history lesson of photography, with images taken by notable photography greats such as Richard Avedon, Irving Penn, Helmut Newton, Guy Bourdin, Ines Van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, Tim Walker, Willy Vanderperre, Patrick Demarchelier.

Two hundred photographs are displayed beside 60 Haute Couture gowns.

Important points in Dior's history were made possible through photography. Pat English's photos taken at the first Dior fashion show helped the designer grow to popularity with his New Look.

Advertising images are also included, with Natalie Portman's Miss Dior and Robert Pattinson's Dior Homme campaign photos featured.



Miss Dior campaign image with Natalie Portman

Musée Christian Dior is housed in Christian Dior's childhood home, giving brand loyalists another reason to travel to see the show.

Dior's related book bearing the same name as the exhibit, which was written by fashion historian Florence Muller, will be published June 3 by Rizzoli. Having the book published simultaneously will expand the audience of the exhibit, as those not able to travel to France can purchase the volume.

"The book accompaniment allows people to have a physical access to the brand regardless of the discretionary income available," Ms. Smith said. "For those that are not able to see the exhibit, they are able to still 'participate' and show support for the brand while those that can do so, still have a keepsake."

The exhibit will run until Sept. 21.

History lesson

Dior has hosted a number of exhibits recently to further educate fans on its heritage.

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

"Esprit Dior, Miss Dior," a free 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](#)).

Dior also partnered with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Shanghai, China, in an exhibit titled "Esprit Dior" to display brand history in relation to art, fashion, society and culture.

The Esprit Dior exhibit, running Sept.13 through Nov. 10, explored the haute couture fashions created by Dior throughout its history alongside contemporary works of art by Chinese artists. Showing the connection between cultures allows a brand to engage consumers that may be unfamiliar with the brand ([see story](#)).

For a brand with a rich heritage to pull from, exhibits are a great way to focus in on one aspect of the house's history.

"Exhibits for brands is a great way to always maintain current, future and fringe customer bases," Ms. Smith said. "It is important for brands to present a niche focus so that the brand's grandeur can be funneled to a smaller area in order to understand why that component is so different than competitor houses/labels, etc. within their tier.

"The landscape for a number of brands is that they must engage within a variety of ways whether it's editorials, advertorials, trade shows, runway shows, private trunk shows and now the exhibits," she said. "By creating additional touch points around exhibits, they ensure that their message is not lost and they gain a greater following regardless of where the physical event is.

"They are able to gauge the interest based on the viral nature of the content as well as sales that they can track for merchandise that supports it, such as [Dior's] book with Rizzoli."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/fr5j2HYiEA0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/fr5j2HYiEA0)

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