

ADVERTISING

Bang & Olufsen expands potential audience via Pepsi capsule collection

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Visual artist Zosen for the Live for Now capsule collection

By JEN KING

In anticipation of the FIFA World Cup, Danish audio and video company Bang & Olufsen is looking to introduce its B&O Play headphone series to a new audience through a globally-distributed capsule collection.

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Luxury Daily

The "Live for Now" capsule collection is in collaboration with a series of artists, retail partners and Pepsi, an unlikely partner for the high-end consumer electronics brand. Bang & Olufsen acknowledged the uncommon partnership by linking its own codes to the "capturing the excitement of the moment" ideology of Pepsi's Live for Now campaign.

"In summer 2014, fans will come together to experience and celebrate the energy and spirit of the game of soccer, and B&O Play will now be a part of that history," said Kathy Thornton-Bias, president of [Bang & Olufsen America Inc.](#), Deerfield, IL.

"We are happy to be affiliated with such a project, where our Live for Now edition/collection of headphones will be available to new audiences and retailers who are involved in the project," she said.

Living in the moment

The Live for Now capsule collection is a first for Pepsi's larger, worldwide soccer campaign, "The Art of Football." The campaign is described as a link between the art and sporting world.

Pepsi sourced 6 international artists to design the clothing, electronics, accessories and skateboard decks included in the Live for Now capsule. Pepsi recruited British "doodle bomber" Hattie Stewart, Argentinian artist Jaz, Brazilian illustrator and artist Ricardo AKN, Spanish visual artist Zosen, visual artist Merijn Hos from the Netherlands and Argentinian artist Ever.



The capsule collection for Live for Now features apparel, electronics and skateboards

Bang & Olufsen worked with four of the artists listed above to create a limited-edition collection of its Form 2i and BeoPlay H6 headphones. The designs are meant to capture the sport of soccer, the inspiration of art and the creativity of fashion.

Hattie Stewart, who recently announced a partnership with U.S. fashion label Marc Jacobs, worked with Bang & Olufsen on the designs for the Form 2i. The Form 2i, in blue, features Ms. Stewart's signature "comic book-esque" doodles on the underside of the headband.



Hattie Stewart's Form 2i for Live for Now

The black Form 2i headphones feature the artwork of Dutch illustrator Merijn Hos. Mr. Hos works as a commercial illustrator and works on his own projects, exhibitions and independent publishing as well.



Merijn Hos' Form 2i for Live for Now

Zosen worked on the white Form 2i headphones. The Argentine visual artist hosts graffiti shops in Barcelona, has work on the streets and in galleries around the world and is also the co-founder of an apparel label, Animal Bandido.



Zosen's Form 2i for Live for Now

Bang & Olufsen likely selected the Form 2i as the main aspect of the collection due to its iconic status. The headphone is part of New York's MoMa's permanent collection and has been on the market longer than any other brand's.

"The limited edition Live for Now Form 2i is a variation of our very first headphone launched in the 1980's, which is on display at MoMA – its timeless, sleek design is classic and has resonated with consumers for decades, which is a rarity in the constantly evolving consume electronic industry," Ms. Kathy Thornton-Bias.

BeoPlay's H6 headphones were also updated for the collection. Available only in blue, Brazilian illustrator, photographer and artist Ricardo AKN worked on the limited-edition pair.



Ricardo AKN's H6 headphones for Live for Now

The entire collection can be purchased at retail partners, department store chain Bloomingdale's, Paris' Colette and Liberty in London. The Live for Now Form Ai headphones can be purchased for an entry-level price of \$149 while the H6 headphone model retails for \$399.

To further enhance the Live for Now collection, Bang & Olufsen created a portal on its Web site. In addition to learning about the capsule, enthusiasts can view a promotional video where the apparel and headphones are worn, link to the Bang & Olufsen's Instagram or Facebook accounts, find a nearby boutique and download a brand playlist from Spotify.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/bO4FepEyRCs](https://www.youtube.com/embed/bO4FepEyRCs)

Live for Now capsule collection

A sound collaboration

Bang & Olufsen has partnered with outside partners to promote the Form 2i headphones to a new audience in the recent past.

Danish audio and video company Bang & Olufsen partnered with retailer Opening Ceremony to increase awareness for its B&O Play Form Ai headphone collection.

"The Sound of Fashion" partnership was founded on the similarity between how the brands approach music, design and fashion. The limited edition OC Form 2i headphones,

as seen in the video starring hip-house artist Maluca Mala, featured the Opening Ceremony logo on the headband ([see story](#)).

Partnering with a mass brand has its risks, but can be beneficial if approached properly by the higher-ended partner.

For example, maintaining brand image, quality of products and customer service are the main factors that department store chain Neiman Marcus had to keep in mind to avoid brand dilution when it partnered with mass merchandiser Target.

As with any partnership, there was a chance that Neiman Marcus would dilute itself, but there are ways that a brand can still maintain its luxury status, build loyalty and attract new customers ([see story](#)).

Well-curated partnerships do not risk the possibility of brand dilution.

"Under the partnership, we are participating in a high profile multi-dimensional campaign covering art, lifestyle and sports," Ms. Kathy Thornton-Bias said. "The Pepsi Live for Now capsule collection features a range of products across categories, including fashion apparel and accessories, electronics and skateboards created in partnership with a mix of both iconic and cutting-edge international design."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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