

EVENTS/CAUSES

Gucci Museo travels to Brazil in time for World Cup

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Closeup of a mannequin on display at Gucci's "Forever Now" exhibit in São Paulo

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion house Gucci has brought its museum across the Atlantic Ocean for the first time with an exhibit at the JK Iguatemi mall in São Paulo.

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The temporary "Forever Now" display, which will be up for three weeks, will showcase archival pieces on loan from the permanent Gucci Museo in Florence. The timing of the exhibit allows Gucci to benefit from increased traffic to Brazil for the FIFA World Cup, guaranteeing an audience for its mini museum.

"I feel that Gucci's strategy for hosting this museum exhibit in São Paulo is derived from two massive cultural developments in Brazil which luxury marketers must capitalize on," said Michael Chatfield, strategy director at [The O Group](#), New York.

"First, events like the World Cup in 2014 and the Rio Olympics in 2016 will put Brazil in the global spotlight for consumers and brands for the next several years," he said. "Second, the luxury market in Brazil, specifically São Paulo, is surging.

"It's also very strategic for Gucci to host the exhibit at JK Iguatemi. More than a mall, it's become a luxury epicenter in São Paulo, responsible for introducing many luxury brands

to Brazilian shoppers. It's an ideal location to engage affluent consumers in Latin America."

Mr. Chatfield is not affiliated with Gucci but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Gucci was unable to comment before press deadline.

Common themes

"Forever Now," which opened May 29 on the third floor of JK Iguatemi, is an adaptation of Gucci Museo, borrowing pieces from the main museum.

The name of the exhibit is a reference to the house's idea of looking to its heritage while also focusing on the future, a philosophy the brand's creative director Frida Giannini wanted to highlight in the Gucci Museo built in 2011 ([see story](#)).



Exterior of Gucci Museo in Florence

Drawing on a travel theme, there will be a display of trunks, suitcases and accessories for tourists. The jet-setters helped to spread awareness of the brand on an international level from the 1950s to 1970s.

Luggage also inspired house founder Guccio Gucci's early work, since the designer had previously been a porter at the Savoy Hotel in London.



Gucci Museo "Forever Now" exhibit

Like the larger museum, this exhibit will also feature the label's iconic Bamboo handbags, which were first seen in 1947, an answer to rationing during World War II. When other materials were scarce, bamboo could still be imported from Japan.

Also highlighted is the Flora motif, a floral pattern that can be traced to 1966. Rodolfo Gucci wanted to create a special item for Grace Kelly's visit to the brand's Via Monte Napoleone boutique, and enlisted artist Vittorio Accornero to create a print for a scarf.



Rendering of the Flora display

Gucci has since reinterpreted Flora for each season, making it a consistent presence in the brand's designs.

The history of the label's horsebit loafer, another constant that just turned 60 years old, will be told in a narrative display. Gucci's driving shoe was seen on leading men in the 1950s and 1960s, and was added to the permanent archive of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1985.



Gucci horsebit loafers

A number of loafers from over the years will accompany the history.

Honoring Gucci's presence on red carpets, a special section showcases the Gucci

Première couture gowns designed by Ms. Giannini, while another displays the custom suits made for male celebrities.



Gucci Museo "Forever Now" display

Along with the museum pieces, there is a gift shop. Gucci also has a permanent boutique within the upscale fashion mall.

"Forever Now" will be up through June 22.

Gucci has shared photos of the exhibit and Ms. Giannini's trip to Brazil, which included a meeting with three charities that will benefit from the house's Chime for Change initiative.

JK Iguatemi has promoted the exhibit on its own Web site, capturing the private preview and cocktail party for the opening on video and sharing it on YouTube.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/Vbi8jcOKiZ0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Vbi8jcOKiZ0)

Gucci Museo comes to JK Iguatemi: Iguatemi Views

"Constraining the exhibit to only three weeks aligns with the luxury branding principle of exclusivity – it's a rare, limited edition in itself," Mr. Chatfield said. "That being said, I feel that the three-week installation will make a big impact, considering the prolific use of

social media in Brazil.

"I believe Gucci's ambition is that influential consumers will check-in, photograph, and share their experience on social networks to provide the buzz factor for the unique installation," he said. "Usage data indicates the immense popularity of Facebook and emergence of Twitter and Instagram in Brazil, which is a big opportunity for luxury brands like Gucci, seeking to amplify their message and engage consumers in innovative ways."

Expanding audience

Gucci has previously widened the audience of its museum with a Web site.

The Italian fashion label created a digital hub for its bricks-and-mortar museum to expand the audience of its art and fashion displays.

Gucci translated the Gucci Museo experience into a dedicated Web site that features images of the exhibitions as well as information about the house's history. By keeping this Web site separate from Gucci's main site, the brand has created a singular place to learn about the atelier's heritage through digital content, spreading awareness and building loyalty ([see story](#)).

For luxury brands, exhibits help to justify the price point for merchandise, providing the story behind the label. However, this is likely only to reach an audience already interested in the brand.

From collaborative art installations to displaying iconic pieces of jewelry, nearly every brand has curated a museum exhibit to showcase their heritage and identity from their own perspective.

By curating an exhibit a brand can bolster its identity through storytelling that reveals specific aspects of its history to consumers. Using education and creative exhibit installations may help reaffirm its position in the luxury market and elevate its standing in the mind of enthusiasts ([see story](#)).

This exhibit will allow Gucci to share its story with its fans, while also finding new potential consumers in the foot traffic of the mall.

"With this exhibit, I believe that Gucci is trying to reach a consumer that every luxury marketer has their eyes on: the globally-minded, influential affluent in Latin America," Mr. Chatfield said. "Brazilian consumers are very brand-conscious, informed, and connected to the international luxury marketplace."

"There is a rich influence of European culture and style in São Paulo, which aligns beautifully with what Gucci hopes to achieve in telling their legendary story of Italian heritage to a new audience," he said. "Like many luxury brands seeking to contemporize and innovate, Gucci is trying to make a statement that the 93-year-old brand has only just begun its journey."

"They're hoping that the emerging Brazilian luxury consumer will embrace the authenticity of the brand's story. Core to luxury branding are the principles of heritage and authentic

storytelling.

"As the brand expands to Latin America, it's important that the story of its origin and the massive impact Gucci has had on global fashion are conveyed in a relevant and modern way. They hope that new consumers will respect Gucci's tradition, while also being able to emotionally connect and relate to the brand in the present day."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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