

EVENTS/CAUSES

Dior shrinks iconic couture pieces for traveling exhibit

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Le Petit Théâtre Dior exhibit at Dior's Chengdu, China flagship

By SARAH JONES

French couture fashion house Dior is highlighting legendary pieces from its archive with a traveling exhibit.

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Luxury Daily

"Le Petit Théâtre Dior," which recreates couture garments in miniature form, opened at its first stop, the label's Chengdu, China flagship store, on May 31. Using tiny versions of garments will likely appeal to consumer sentiment, as well as adding a novelty to the display.

"[This is] certainly more cost effective and appeals to the little girl in all or most of us," said Marie Driscoll, CEO and chief consultant of Driscoll Advisors, New York.

"Moreover, it is easier to transport and it's new for this generation," she said.

"In store will drive store traffic and has the potential to elevate the brand beyond luxury fashion to art. The traffic will be constrained by the size of the shop, which could create lines outside the store."

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

Dior did not respond by press deadline.

Cute couture

Dior introduced the exhibit on its online magazine DiorMag.

In the article, Dior tells consumers that the name of the exhibit is a reference to “Le Petit Théâtre de la Mode,” a 1945 display of miniature dresses from the couturiers of the time, including Lucien Lelong, who Christian Dior was working for at the time. This particular reincarnation of the World War II-era exhibit will travel the globe, bringing the “Dior spirit” to an international audience.



Le Petit Théâtre Dior exhibit

Each of the 60 dresses that went into the twelve installations was recreated from the original with a detailed eye.

The following day, Dior delved into the work that went into making the tiny couture garments, with a second DiorMag article complete with videos.

One video focuses on the making of the Miss Dior replica. A seamstress at Dior’s atelier in Paris studies the full-size gown from the house’s spring 1949 haute couture collection, and then begins to pin and sew onto a diminutive dress form.



Video still from Dior

Next the video travels to the Atelier de Fleurs Lemarié, where fabric flower cutouts are

constructed through a multi-step process. These are then sewn onto a netting that covers the existing base layer.



Video still from Dior

A similar video shows the making of Robe Mexique, a brown tulle a-line gown embroidered with sequins.

The grey set pieces that house the gowns are themed. For instance, the Miss Dior gown sits in the middle of a flower that opens and closes, and which is surrounded by tiny perfume bottles for the fragrance of the same name.



Le Petit Théâtre Dior exhibit

Another installation shows gowns, including a pastel creation by current creative director Raf Simons, as the product in lipstick tubes. Also referencing the recent past, the gold dress actress Charlize Theron models in the J'adore Dior fragrance commercial has also been recreated.

The mannequins in the Grand Bal Dior perform a waltz accompanied by timed music.



Le Petit Théâtre Dior exhibit

Le Petit Théâtre Dior will be on display in Chengdu until June 20.

Looking back

Dior currently has another retrospective on display at its brand museum.

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

“Dior: The Legendary Images” the exhibit opened May 3 at the Musée Christian Dior at Granville, France, while the book was 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 ([see story](#)).

Also, the 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](#)).

The in-store nature of this particular exhibit will help to reach consumers who might not make a special trip to a museum for a retrospective.

"[This will] remind today's luxury shoppers of the heritage and roots of the brand," Ms. Driscoll said. "It will also support the romance of the brand story, and it displays the iconic silhouettes that made the Dior maison famous."

Final Take

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