

PITTI UOMO PREVIEW
WWD

Fashion. Beauty. Business.



Higher and Higher

Brunello Cucinelli topped its already-raised sales forecast for last year with a 29.1 percent increase.

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Entering the Fray

Moda Operandi has joined the e-commerce beauty race with an initial offering focused on skin care.

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Native New Yorker Heron Preston will show during New York Fashion Week for the first time come February.

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Sports Day

Martine Rose, whose design is seen here, is staging her first show outside of the U.K. as Pitti Uomo's guest designer, and plans to bring her signature blend of sport, street and tailoring twists to Florence, a city that sparked her imagination, and inspired what promises to be an out-of-the-ordinary runway show. *For more on Rose's plans, and Pitti, which runs from Tuesday to Friday, see pages 7 to 22.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY VIRGINIE KHATEEB

BUSINESS

Holiday Hangover Hits Retail

- Updates, plus reports from the annual ICR conference, offered a mixed to negative take on the holidays and caution signs for 2023.

BY EVAN CLARK AND DAVID MOIN

Fashion retailers are bringing the fourth quarter in for a bumpy landing.

While major players gathered at the 25th annual ICR retail conference in Orlando, Florida, on Monday, many weighed in for the first time on holiday sales and year-end earnings forecasts.

The result was decidedly mixed, skewing toward down given the economy and a trickier consumer.

Lululemon Athletica Inc., for instance, said that fourth-quarter sales are tracking up 25 percent or better, but warned that gross margins would be much weaker than forecast.

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EXCLUSIVE

Colm Dillane Working on LV's Next Men's Lineup

- The American designer is part of a collective of talents for the Jan. 19 Louis Vuitton show. It also includes French filmmakers Michel and Olivier Gondry.

BY MILES SOCHA

Smells like team spirit — and feels like an entirely new way of conceiving a fashion spectacle: Louis Vuitton's men's show in Paris on Jan. 19 will involve filmmakers Michel and Olivier Gondry; stylist Ibrahim "Ib" Kamara; scenographer Lina Kutsovskaya, a world-famous music star whose name is still under wraps — and KidSuper founder Colm Dillane, who has been secretly embedded in the design studio these past few months.

"It's about chemistry," said Michael Burke, Vuitton's chairman and chief executive officer, revealing the various talents contributing to the upcoming fall 2023 display during Paris men's fashion week, which runs from Jan. 17 to 22. "The participants in the collective, they take it to the next level."

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Colm Dillane Working on LV's Next Men's Lineup

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Here and below: Still from the prelude film by Michel and Olivier Gondry for the Louis Vuitton men's fall 2023 show.



Colm Dillane, founder of KidSuper

Vuitton has already sprinkled in performance elements – dancers, a live orchestra, a marching band and rapper Kendrick Lamar – to the men's shows it has mounted since the November 2021 passing of its artistic director Virgil Abloh, riffing on a prolific and influential designer who left oodles of ideas and concepts.

"This time, 'there are no specific influences from Virgil,'" Burke said. "This is from scratch, but his fundamental ethos, his vision, was based on values that we perpetuate: inclusivity, authenticity and transparency."

To the latter point, Burke noted that Vuitton's multimedia men's displays exalted the latter value, making Abloh's inspirations come to life on the runway.

"The show has to suck you in and make you part of it – that's why [we have] the marching band, that's why the orchestra," the executive explained in a telephone interview. "That's how you create engagement today. It's less cerebral; it's more emotional."

While fashion designers frequently cite musicians, choreographers, sport figures and filmmakers as references, "it's the physical participation that's new," Burke said. "It just makes it more relatable. It makes it more Instagrammable. It's the live performance aspect that drives reaction.... You show your inspiration in a way that's very engaging."

The initial impetus for the upcoming show, Burke said, came from him, the communication department and the design studio, who brainstormed the guest talents, invited them to meet and then "let them take it to the next level."

All parties expected the Gondry brothers and Dillane to click based on their mutual love of stop-motion animation, "sunshine-y spirit" and a quirky, sometimes child-like aesthetic that is "very happy, and very up, but not innocent," as Burke put it. "When you think back to 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind' and think what designer goes with that, you think of Colm.... They didn't know each other, but I was sure they would get along."

Asked about the selection of Dillane to participate in the Vuitton men's studio, Burke described him as an iconoclast and

a known talent, the winner of the Karl Lagerfeld runner-up prize at the 2021 LVMH Prize for Young Fashion Designers. "He's his own person, he has his own vision, and he's very, very audacious," Burke enthused.

Asked if the show later this month could be a trial balloon for Dillane to become the permanent men's creative director, Burke replied without pausing: "I think the 19th will tell us that," adding, "I think it's a little early."

He stressed there is no set timeline to name Abloh's successor. Among other names frequently floated for the plum fashion job are London-based designers Martine Rose, Grace Wales Bonner and Samuel Ross, as reported.

Burke stressed that he didn't want to do a collaboration with the KidSuper founder and described his involvement as being "embedded" in the studio.

"We didn't want to do a guest appearance. We wanted something deeper. We wanted him completely immersed in the studio – and let the sparks fly."

Dillane and his Brooklyn, New York-based collective burst onto the fashion scene in 2020 with a stop-motion short film made using modified Barbie dolls dressed in miniature versions of KidSuper's streetwear designs.

He has worked on co-branded product with Spaghettios, Modelo, Jägermeister and Puma, and has a collaboration with Tommy Hilfger brewing for 2024.

His fall 2023 KidSuper show on Jan. 21 promises special appearances by Mike Tyson and three American standup comedians.

On Monday, Dillane marveled about his leap from a "14-year-old T-shirt designer in Brooklyn" to designing a collection for the world's biggest luxury brand.

"The Karl Lagerfeld prize already felt like I was making it. But this whole KidSuper story has been surreal," he told WWD. "What I love about it is I did not skip any steps, I did not have any inside connections and here we are. It is a testament to hard work, good ideas and a testament to Louis Vuitton's willingness to take a chance on someone. I tried to make the most of the opportunity and I hope it shines through in the collection."

To be sure, he relished having access to "the best craftsmanship in the world."

"I love their desire to make interesting products and seeing the speed at which they operate," he explained. "There is freedom and risk-taking within the design team which I was not expecting and it was really fun to collaborate with them."

Despite Vuitton's scale as the biggest luxury brand, Dillane said the studio works "with the same mindset, freedom and experimentation as a much smaller brand. I think this allows us to be nimble, have fun and come up with the best ideas."

"I have always had big ideas, but this opportunity allowed me to dream even bigger than ever," he added.

In an interview with WWD last year, Dillane described his fashion brand as a canvas for his art-making. "If I draw this, you're not going to buy my painting, but you're potentially going to buy a T-shirt. So that's how I got into it," he said, also describing a process different from other designers. "I love the video process so much and am inspired by what a person would wear for a scene."

To be sure, Vuitton enlisted some additional heavy-hitters to conceive the set for the fall 2023 show, with the Gondry brothers teaming with Kutsoskaya for the scenography.

Michel Gondry started out making music videos for the likes of Daft Punk, Foo Fighters, Radiohead, Björk, Beck, The Chemical Brothers, Kylie Minogue and

The White Stripes, ultimately applying his whimsical, fantasy-fueled visual style to feature films including "The Science of Sleep" and "The Green Hornet."

Gondry often works as a duo with his brother Olivier, and the pair also directed a prelude film for the Vuitton show.

Meanwhile, both Kamara and Kutsoskaya are longtime collaborators of Virgil Abloh.

Kamara, a fashion editor prized for his rich visual storytelling, styled Abloh's shows for the Off-White brand and Vuitton menswear, in addition to his role as editor in chief of Dazed magazine. Last April, he was appointed art and image director of Off-White.

Kutsoskaya, whose résumé includes stints in advertising and brand image at Sephora and Barneys New York, and magazine design at Vogue, Teen Vogue and Nylon, is the founder of Be Good Studios, an American agency that has done creative direction of events and campaigns for the likes of Valentino, Savage X Fenty and Miu Miu, in addition to Vuitton.

In the interview, Burke said it's long been the case that successful fashion shows involve scores of creative contributors, even if only the creative director trundles out at the end to take the bow.

"It's a collaboration of many, many people that participate in the success.... I think there's more collaboration going on today than there was in the past, but often it's under the radar," he said. "We're just being a little bit more inclusive and open about it."

Vuitton's fashion shows are livestreamed on multiple social channels and boast massive audiences, with a men's spinoff show in Aranya, China, last September attracting more than 278 million viewers online.

Burke noted that Vuitton shows that are part of Paris Fashion Week "are not so much about reach as the shows we do in other countries. In Paris, the shows are more about the creativity, the industry and the marketplace. So they're not supposed to achieve the same thing."

In addition, Paris shows compete with dozens of other brand presentations every day, whereas destination shows allow a single brand's voice to break through.

