

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Gucci centers historical conversations on Bamboo 1947 bag

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The activation debuted on Aug. 2. Image courtesy of Gucci

By ZACH JAMES

Italian fashion label Gucci is saluting its regional lineage with a new artistic opening.

The Gucci Ginza Gallery in Tokyo is now home to “Bamboo 1947: Then and Now. Celebrating 60 years of Gucci in Japan,” the free exhibition launched late last week. Its debut comes as the island nation delivered stand-out growth for the maison in the first half of the year, standing apart as larger markets struggle to regain sales momentum following an industry-wide slowdown.

“A powerful presence in Tokyo and Japan, the third largest luxury market and trendsetting hub, is mission-critical for influencing international markets and maintaining relevance in the luxury sector,” said Allen Adamson, cofounder and managing partner of **Metaforce**, New York.

“The 60th anniversary of Gucci’s introduction of the simple yet sophisticated iconic bag is the perfect heritage to generate local buzz and build the brand.”

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

Local legends

Housed on the top levels of the brand’s Ginza flagship, “Bamboo 1947: Then and Now” highlights various aspects of a design that dates back to the end of World War II.

Heritage centers the sixth floor of the space, which is now home to approximately 400 purses created using the Bamboo 1947 blueprint. The first of the bags on display was produced in 1959; the latest entries are products of current Gucci creative director Sabato De Sarno.

Gucci presents “Bamboo 1947: Then and Now”

Alongside the range of archival pieces, the immersive showcase houses a range of past collaborative releases executed in tandem with Japanese talents. This area of the exhibition aims to immerse visitors into the decades of history the handbag and country share.

The maison maintains vital ties to Japan. As of the end of 2023, Gucci directly operated 72 stores or boutiques within the country.

Japan was also the only region where the brand saw positive revenue growth during the first half of 2024 ([see story](#)).

The seventh floor showcases a new selection of Bamboo 1947 handbags, each reinterpreted by Japanese artisans who work across multiple disciplines.

Seven contemporary and traditional artists, including goldsmith Morihito Katsura and his apprentice Naoka Ai, lacquerer Ai Tokeshi, ceramist Hirotsune Nakazuto, photographer Daido Moriyama and painters Yui Yaegashi and Nami Yokoyama, contributed to this component of the project.



The collaboration marks Ms. Tokeshi's first time working with leather as a canvas. Image courtesy of Gucci

Each of the talents was hand-selected by Mr. De Sarno; the group was provided with a total of 60 vintage Bamboo 1947 bags from the 1980s and 1990s to repurpose into their respective art pieces. The showcased items aim to merge classical Italian design with new and traditional Japanese craftsmanship from a variety of angles and viewpoints.

To coincide with the launch of the exhibition, set to run through Sept. 23, 2024, Gucci released a series of short films online, granting a behind-the-scenes look at the production and design processes for each of the artists included in the ongoing public display.

Past and future

Alongside Gucci's celebration of heritage within its house, as well as Japanese art, it also looking to the future with a soon-to-launch digital offering.

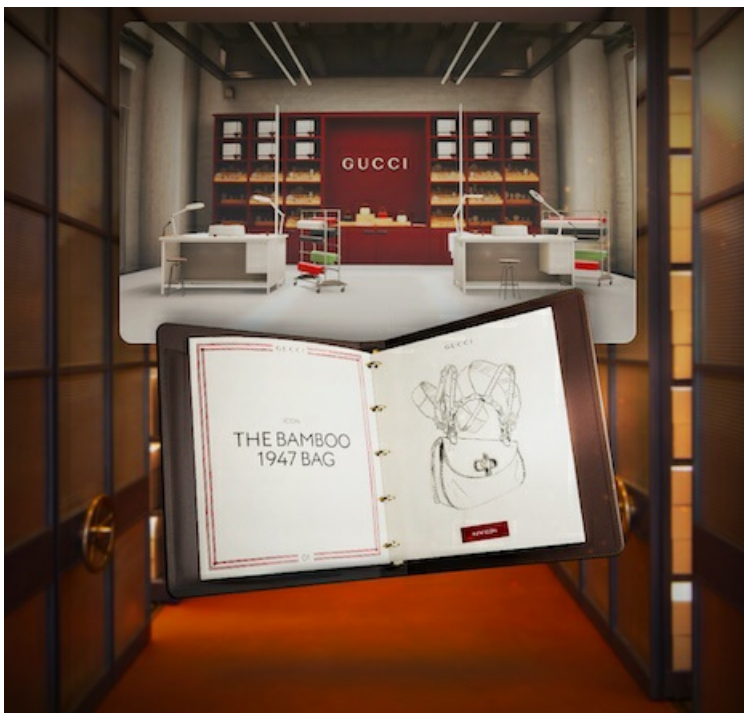


Mr. Nakazato's take on the Bamboo 1947 bag features a hand-sculpted ceramic handle. Image courtesy of Gucci

"Gucci Icons," a new augmented reality experience, will go live in the Gucci app on the Apple Vision Pro headset on Aug. 7. Through the software, users will be able to interact with a variety of signature items from the maison, including the Bamboo 1947 bag in a three-dimensional space.

While experiencing the photorealistic representation of the high-end pieces, users can choose the backdrop to be their own home, the Gucci Archive or other places meaningful to the brand's long and storied heritage. Headset-wearers will also be able to engage with narratives surrounding the showcased products, with aspects of design and craftsmanship highlighted through the immersive visuals.

Gucci is far from the only luxury label embracing the Apple Vision Pro, with other companies taking different approaches to utilizing the futuristic technology.



The feature will be released later this week. Image courtesy of Gucci

When the hardware launched earlier this year, online luxury retailer Mytheresa was quick to embrace it, releasing a curated 3D showroom that allows consumers to buy products from Loewe, Valentino and Saint Laurent, among others, in augmented

reality ([see story](#)). German automaker Porsche took a different approach, utilizing the headset to prepare its production staff with virtual production training modules ([see story](#)).

"Few consumers have experienced the Apple Vision Pro, which adds a high-tech spin to a product introduced when televisions were still science fiction," said Mr. Adamson

"This activation combines Gucci's rich Japanese heritage and adds a top spin of innovation, blending tradition with technology."