

# WWD



### Virgil Sues

Virgil Abloh's Off-White has sued Wish over alleged fakes being sold on the web site.

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### Talent Stream

Shanghai Fashion Week saw a crop of new names and brisk business.

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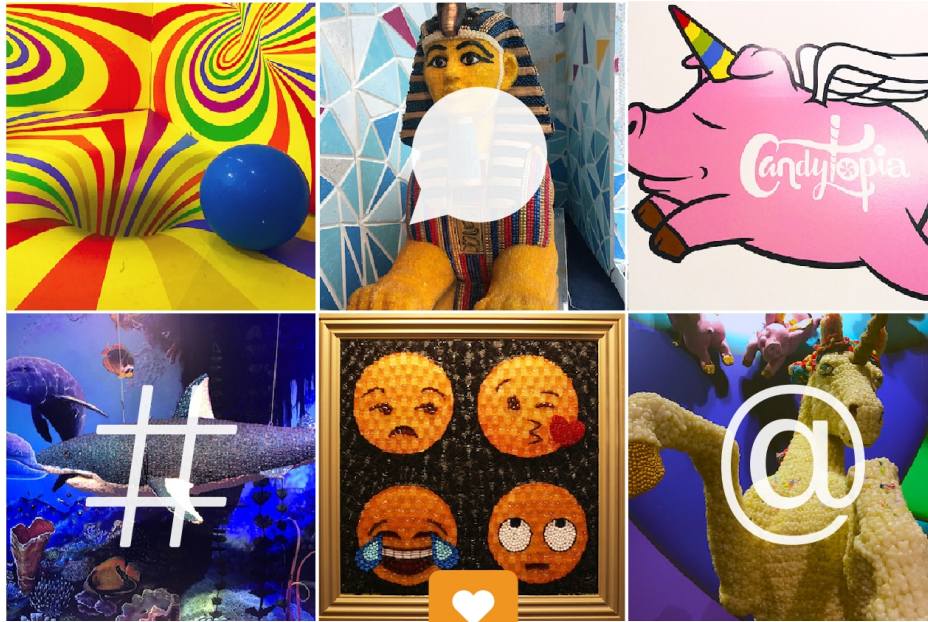


### J.Lo's Makeup Move

Jennifer Lopez is introducing a makeup line with the Poland-based Inglot brand.

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Fashion. Beauty. Business.



## GIF With Purchase

Retailers are going to great lengths to create Instagrammable moments and backdrops as a way to attract shoppers, and inspire purchases. Candytopia, part of the Santa Monica Place mall and shown here, is generating traffic, posts galore – and probably some cavities. *For the full story, see pages 10 and 11.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KATIE JONES



### FASHION

## Fashion's Free-for-All: Goodbye, Seasons

- Cult Russian streetwear designer Gosha Rubchinskiy counts among the new converts that are eschewing a fashion week calendar for something different.

BY KATYA FOREMAN WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ARIA HUGHES, LISA LOCKWOOD AND ANVAR SIDOROV

PARIS – Seasons are so last season. Just ask cult Russian streetwear designer Gosha Rubchinskiy who, in an Instagram post on Wednesday, revealed plans to halt seasonal collections, with a new yet-to-be-disclosed concept in the works.

He's the latest high-profile defector from the traditional spring-fall collection cadence as fashion weeks splinter,

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### BUSINESS

## Will Trump's China Tariffs Stall Made in The USA?

- Experts say the tariffs could stall Made in the USA, and will spark a domino effect, which might hike up end-prices on household items.

BY ELIZABETH DOUPNIK AND ARTHUR ZACZKIEWICZ

Choppy waters are ahead for the "Made in USA" movement. Under President Trump's proposed China tariffs, American brands that locally produce goods could see higher price tags on Chinese-made cut-and-sew equipment, which are integral to the manufacturing process.

While industry stakeholders are pleased that the Trump Administration did not impose tariffs on Chinese imports of footwear and apparel, there is concern that tariffs on the Chinese-made equipment will throw a sabot in the works of the "Made in America" trend. Moreover, some are concerned that tariffs on steel and other products will hurt overall consumer spending as a broad number of products and services can see higher end-user

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The "marshmallow tsunami" installation at Candytopia at Santa Monica Place.

**BUSINESS**

# Retailers Get Serious About Business With Instagram

- The social media site is no longer seen as a barrier, but as a "new opportunity for businesses to connect with customers when inspiration strikes."

BY SHARON EDELSON WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM NATALIE THEODOSI, JOELLE DIDERICH AND ALESSANDRA TURRA

**Back in the dark ages** – that is, before the rise of social media – stores typically banned photography to discourage competitors from stealing proprietary information or copying their original designs.

Today, shoppers can't take out their iPhone 8s and Samsung Galaxy S8s fast enough for retailers.

What started as a platform for Millennials' food porn has evolved into a key mechanism for stoking consumers' desires, and getting the word out. With more than 800 million monthly active users – more than double that of Twitter and three times as many as Facebook Messenger – Instagram has been credited with inspiring one in three users to make a purchase after seeing a post about a product.

In an effort to make their stores more Insta-friendly, retailers are incorporating photography, art, site-specific installations – anything on which the eye can feast, and cameras can train.

Macerich-operated shopping mall Santa Monica Place recently unveiled an eye-popping – and mouthwatering – spectacle in Candytopia, a 16,000-square-foot saccharine-fueled orgy of exhibitions and larger-than-life installations such as flying unicorn pigs and a marshmallow tsunami. There are versions of an Andy Warhol Marilyn Monroe screen print and Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" made from jelly beans, in addition to a candy lounge and candy sampling.

"Immersive environments throughout

the exhibit, each one incredibly colorful, original and fun, makes [Candytopia] perfect for Instagram, Snapchat and other social platforms that let people share their experiences with friends," said Ken Volk, chief marketing officer of Macerich, adding that the pop-up's limited run instills in consumers a sense of urgency.

Nitin Passi, who in December unveiled a Missguided store at Westfield Stratford in the U.K., a mall known for having the highest footfall in the country for Millennials, admitted that it might have gone overboard with its array of eye candy. With a huge pink monster truck, life-size mannequins, flashy dollar signs, pink wallpaper with palm-tree prints and flamingo sculptures, the store is designed to scream out to social media followers.

"It's not just about selling as much as possible," said Passi. "When I created our store, I wanted to make it into the most



A candy version of an artwork at Candytopia.



Visitors pointed their cameras at the golden sun, a temporary installation on the facade of the Louis Vuitton flagship on Place Vendôme.

Instagrammed store ever. I think we may have gone a bit too far with the space. I could fit 20 extra racks where the monster truck is, but we're going to have it travel to each new store we open."

But what's a little excess among 2.8 million followers? As long as Missguided keeps on giving customers what they want, there should be few complaints. Its latest venture is Madison Beer x Missguided, a collaboration between the retailer and sexy young American singer who rocks the brand's postfeminist style with a capsule collection.

Smaller retailers don't always have the same leeway. If a brand isn't following Instagram etiquette – say, by firing off too many posts per day, abusing hashtags or posting overly long videos (Stories) – they'll hear about it in the comments section.

Not that that's stopping small retailers from trying to grab a share of the Instagram riches. Take Phluid Project, a new gender-free retailer in Manhattan's NoLIta neighborhood, which has designated areas for viewing art throughout the store, a photo studio to capture and upload customers wearing Phluid products, and a secret room with changing backdrops made for Instagram.

Angela Missoni eventually tuned into the photogenic nature of the Italian brand's vibrant zigzag and space-dyed knits.

"I realized that when I designed the Missoni showroom in Milan 12 years ago, that it had to be very plain and clean because we have a lot of color in our products," she recalled.

Not anymore: "I put a lot of color and graphics into every little space – restrooms and the inside of elevators. I know that people take pictures of inside the elevators," she said.

"This is a very popular spot for selfies," proclaimed Louis Vuitton chairman and chief executive officer Michael Burke last fall, pointing to a portrait of Louis Vuitton and then to a life-sized golden statue of King Louis XIV standing at the foot of the staircase in Vuitton's new flagship on Place Vendôme in Paris.

A golden sun, whose rays wrapped around the building's façade in tandem with the opening, was also proving to be an equally popular backdrop.

The boutique, straddling two mansions, was designed by architect Peter Marino, whose calling cards include dramatic staircases. His design for the Dior store in Seoul, for example, features a spiral glass and steel staircase that's won international awards. "Whenever I build a beautiful staircase, I always find people at the bottom taking photos," he said.

Department stores are also hip to the trend. Saks Fifth Avenue, for example, has incorporated "visual moments" throughout its flagship's beauty floor, which is being relocated from the ground to the second floor and will reopen in May, "to make it easier and more exciting for our customers to generate content," according to a spokeswoman.

Brands have had to shift store concepts to encourage more photography.

Karl Lagerfeld's original units were very sleek in black-and-white, emitting cool. "We have evolved in terms of giving it a bit more of that warm home feeling of how Karl lives and works," said ceo Pier Paolo Righi. "Our new store format plays a lot with Instagrammable moments and places, so we really have dedicated spaces where you, as a consumer, can clearly connect with that Karl world and make it seen."

Consumers at Jeffrey New York's Meatpacking District flagship often ask founder Jeffrey Kalinsky to pose for selfies. "It's important to have an Instagrammable moment in the store," he said. "Barneys New York in Chelsea has that staircase, which makes such a beautiful photo – and you see that photo on Instagram."

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"Do I think my current store has an Instagrammable moment?" Kalinsky asked rhetorically. "Yes, the fountain, for sure. I need one in every single store and the more spectacular the better."

Tracey Lomrantz Lester, senior brand director at Intermix, said Instagram has become a preeminent channel.

"It's frequently the first touch point for the brand. We used to rely on e-mail or windows. We're now relying more than ever on Instagram to inspire and connect and even transact. It's helped create a digital footprint to drive traffic to stores," she said.

Intermix's creative retail lab, which opened next door to an existing unit on Manhattan's Gansevoort Street, is geared to Instagram experimentation. "The visual element has been one of the most important things in programming the lab," said Lomrantz Lester. "It's striking from the street and compels people to capture it on their phones. Consumers are encouraged to take photos in our stores. We feel our shoppers are the best brand ambassadors to share the store with their followers."

Intermix posts new arrivals daily and its spring campaign has a user-generated component. "A lot of new arrivals launch first on Instagram Stories, which is becoming a platform for conversion," Lomrantz Lester said. "It helps us with how we share information via email and the web. Instagram has been a game-changer for our business."

"We're very conscious that our customer is active on Instagram," agreed Christopher Tate, general manager of Zadig & Voltaire USA. "We think about that when we're considering how to engage with the customer. We're also really mindful of not overly digitizing the environment or making it feel gimmicky or tricky."

Zadig & Voltaire's Rue de Cambon store in Paris features a dedicated art gallery on the lower level, which has exhibited paintings by Richard Serra, Julian Schnabel and Adam McEwen. "It's really about engaging with consumers," Tate said. "We're looking for similar opportunities in the U.S. — freestanding gallery or pop-up galleries. I'm interested in doing more art installations that are affiliated with the brand."

"The art tends to be the centerpiece of what consumers are photographing," Tate said. "We just acquired a new Jenny Holtzer piece at auction that was in the original Helmut Lang store in SoHo. It will be one of the most photographed works."

Webster founder Laure Hériard Dubreuil didn't have Instagram in mind when she designed her inaugural store in Miami. Her idea was simply to make the store residential looking. "I think that's what's so appealing for Instagram," she said. "People want to share a personal experience, a lifestyle. The fact that there are so many different details makes it Instagram-friendly. It's different from being at a big store."

"Another thing is the fact that I love color," said Hériard Dubreuil. "My assortment is very colorful. I make amazing backdrops. I have vintage wallpapers and graphic and colorful prints. In my New York store, shoes are on the second floor, where tables are covered with colorful discs that look like Smarties candies, and the shoes look like candies. People are happy to take pictures in this area."

"I like the fact that people are making the Webster their own with their posts," she said. "It's like the relationship I have with all the brands. I'm making them my own by the way I buy, showcase and create different looks with the collections, and brands love that."

At the Shoptalk convention in Las Vegas in mid-March, Instagram told retailers that the platform can now go



Dan Flavin's "Untitled (To the citizens of the Swiss cantons)," 1987, fluorescent bulbs at Zadig & Voltaire's Madison Avenue store.



At Intermix's Meatpacking Outpost in Manhattan, customers are encouraged to test styles, take selfies and post and share.

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even further toward "turning intent into action and driving real business results" by allowing consumers to click through to a retailer's site.

"Through a set of product features like product tags, a shop tab on business profiles and an immersive view with more information and imagery, discovering products on Instagram is no longer a barrier, but a new opportunity for businesses to connect with customers when inspiration strikes," the company said.

Gabriel Paisner, a retail broker at Crown Acquisitions, pointed to Swedish brand Bershka, part of H&M, as an example of a brand with its pulse on Millennials.

"It offers free WiFi to customers. They know young people always want to be connected. They designed their store [on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue] in deference to Instagram — graphic, with bold bright colors. Retailers realize by adapting to the wants of consumers, they're able to forge deeper, longer-lasting relationships. We want experiences and interactive displays connected to our devices. It raises brand awareness."

But not all brands want to open their image to the public's interpretation.

At Supreme's Williamsburg store, for example, security guards warn shoppers to keep their phones firmly planted in their pockets. The policy was enforced at pop-ups in eight cities selling leather goods and clothing done in collaboration with Louis Vuitton. In London, where a capsule dropped on June 30, shoppers were allowed to spend 15 minutes in the store and could purchase up to six items. In keeping with Supreme's antitype hype, no photos were allowed.

While some observers attribute this to the brand's cool persona, others said Supreme wants to create an atmosphere at its stores where customers don't have to worry about being filmed by people they don't know. The brand couldn't be reached for comment.

Golf Wang, a men's store from Tyler, the Creator, located on Fairfax in Los Angeles, a vibrant space, is sprinkled with Instagram catnip, but it doesn't allow pictures to be taken inside. His team declined to comment on why these rules are in place.

Meanwhile, even Instagram's most ardent boosters hedge when asked how long consumers' infatuation with the platform will last.

"We want to meet customers where they are and be integrated into their lives," Zadig & Voltaire's Tate said. "We're all evolving and understanding social media more. It keeps changing so fast. At the moment, Instagram is the platform of choice for our customer, but I wouldn't be surprised if something else becomes more significant in the next year. You can't build strategies around these technologies. You have to build your strategy around you."