

Barneys' Holiday Production

By SHARON EDELSON

BARNEYS NEW YORK will be Baz Dazzled for Christmas.

That's Baz as in Baz Luhrmann, the director of such visually lush films as "Moulin Rouge," "Romeo + Juliet" and "The Great Gatsby." Luhrmann and his wife, Academy Award-winning costume and set designer Catherine Martin, are collaborating with the retailer to create singular experiences using their unique visual language. The Baz Dazzled holiday program is a multiplatform initiative that will include the Madison Avenue flagship's windows, facade, in-store displays, products, gift cards and print and digital advertising.

The Luhrmann and Martin collaboration is the latest in a series of annual Barneys' holiday extravaganzas that have included partnerships with Jay Z, Lady Gaga and Disney.

Barneys, Luhrmann and Martin conceived of a holiday world filled with fantastical characters, woodland creatures, snow owls and candy canes. Birds sport antlers and backward baseball caps, snowflakes and mushrooms

are bejeweled with diamonds, elves carry boom boxes and squirrels use gold spray paint to "tag" the scene.

And that's just the crest Luhrmann and Martin created. It carries the motto, "A Life Lived in Fear Is a Life Half Lived" and will appear on shopping bags, gift cards and displays. The crest is the starting point for everything; its artwork will be brought to life in the windows.

"We're entering a whole different world of theater film, costume design and performance," said Dennis Freedman, Barneys' creative director. "I hope people are going to be thrilled to see these woodland creatures come

alive. We're working on extraordinary live performances in our windows. Because Catherine is a great costume and set designer, we're creating unique costumes for some of the performances. You're going to enter the world of theater and film through the eyes of Barneys." The windows will have a six-week run.

"The idea was to take traditional holiday iconography and ironically turn it on its head, to embrace the joy of the holiday season, the comfort and familiarity we find with these well-worn images, but nevertheless inject them with an inclusive, irreverent perspective that allows the audience to enter into this holi-



A limited-edition handcrafted Champagne sabre engraved with the words, "Truth. Beauty. Freedom. Love."

and Martin's company, is the general theme of the windows, but Freedman said it shouldn't be taken too literally. "All of those themes are filtered through the eye and DNA of Barneys," he said, referring to the retailer's wit and subversive humor.

Technology was integrated into the windows, so there will be action around the clock, including during periods when there aren't live performances. "With the idea of the windows coming to life, we'll have kinetic movement and change," said Freedman. "We're trying to do something we've never attempted before on this scale."

Freedman recalled past live performances in Barneys' windows, such as Daphne Guinness getting dressed for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute gala in 2011, saying it was "a very rudimentary beginning. We've been able to develop that idea in new and different ways."

To create the windows, Luhrmann said he and his wife are using "storytelling, written narrative, drawings, historical references, discussion, music, site visits, computer renderings and visualizations. These are all things that we do in order to find inspiration,

but also to be able to explore the practicalities and the actualities of the windows and the interaction they will have with the audience."

"Barneys New York has a long history of unexpected and imaginative holiday programs, and working with Baz and Catherine continues this tradition," said Mark Lee, Barneys New York chief executive officer.

"We're always trying to think of how windows can move forward and be something other than a set piece," said Freedman. "They're a way of defining who we are. When we work with Baz and Martin, we start to get into their way of thinking and they start to get into ours."

The theme will take over the Barneys' Madison Avenue exterior. "We're attempting the most ambitious facade we've ever done," he said. "This is going farther than anything."

Barneys in 2011 transformed its two-story facade into a portal for Gaga's Workshop, covering the main entrance with a larger-than-life abstract image of Lady Gaga with the entry to the main door through her mouth. When Barneys teamed with Disney in 2012, an animated short "Electric Holiday" was looped on LED tiles on the facade.

Holiday products developed for Chelsea Passage include tabletop decor, ornaments, stockings and toys. There's also a limited-edition handcrafted Champagne sabre engraved with the credo; a backgammon set; children's fairy princess and owl costumes, and a hand-painted tent. "They are products we are very proud of," Freedman said. "We worked with the best vendors. The products that have the humor and playfulness, but they're beautifully executed."

Barneys will donate 25 percent of sales from all Baz Dazzled holiday products to Room to Read, a global organization that seeks to transform the lives of millions of children in developing countries by focusing on literacy and gender equality in education.

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A hand-painted tent and fairy princess and owl costumes from the holiday collection.



The Baz Dazzled crest will appear on shopping bags, gift cards and store displays.

day spirit with good humor," said Luhrmann. "The Barneys' holiday campaign is by its nature a piece of live theater, and so for us the challenge and adventure is to create theater in a retail environment. A lot of the technique and processes are identical [to making a film] and, of course, Barneys has a very distinguished and edgy history of window display and we want to embrace that."

"Truth. Beauty. Freedom. Love," the credo of Luhrmann

Lululemon Starts Asian Push

By WWD STAFF

BELING — Lululemon Athletica Inc.'s new general manager for Asia said this year and next will lay the groundwork for the yogewear company's global expansion plans as the brand tries to tap into China's growing interest in the sector.

Hong Kong-based Ken Lee, taking on a brand-new role at the company, will spearhead Lululemon's Asian expansion push. The brand already has seven "showrooms" in Asia — four in Hong Kong, two in Singapore and one in Shanghai — where staff interact with customers, stage events and sell a limited range of the brand's merchandise, including apparel and mats. Lee said the response has been so strong that the brand is looking to open its first full-fledged store in Asia, either in Hong Kong or Singapore, possibly as soon as the end of this year. The company is also working on rolling out a Chinese-language Web site by mid-2015. After the Chinese site's launch, Lee hopes to set up a shop in Alibaba's Tmall.

"International expansion is relatively new to our company. We're

reinventing ourselves to be a truly global company," Lee said of the Canadian company's four-year international strategy. "We [have] 300 stores in North America and [the] only store we have outside North America is London."

Lee said there are feasibility studies under way for Japan and South Korea but the company's focus is setting up shop in China. He declined to give sales figures, but said that Lululemon's China sales have the potential to double those of the brand in America, adding that the profile of the company's typical customer in China is a professional woman aged 25 to 40.

Lee, who joined Lululemon in February after past stints at Fossil, Coach and Adidas, said the yogewear brand will open a second showroom in Shanghai inside the Shanghai Centre on West Nanjing Road this month. The company is preparing to launch a showroom in Beijing sometime next year as well.

"Sales are not the main goal [of the showroom], it's just to test the waters for our product, our culture," said the executive, a triathlete himself.

"This company is not a super-aggressive company, trying to open 2,000 stores in two years.

We want to make sure that we do something right, do something right for the community."

Lee said Asian customers are responding to the showrooms and their staff. The company invited 100 people to an event earlier this year at the ION Orchard Road mall in Singapore and 1,000 people showed up, he recalled.

The showrooms offer a limited selection of items including T-shirts, tank tops, shorts and yoga pants, and the lack of a full assortment has caused some disappointment to customers who visit the showrooms, Lee admitted. However, customers can order the full collection online from the brand's U.S. or Hong Kong Web sites.

Unofficial estimates suggest 10 million people are practicing yoga in China, according to Matthew Crabbe of Mintel Group Ltd., a global market research company.

Yan said China's yoga industry is growing three times faster than the U.S. and she is optimistic that foreign labels such as Lululemon will do well if their marketing is done right.

"Before, I feel the yoga clothes [offered in China] were too much like fitness club, there was no difference. But now, since two years,



they've gotten really beautiful," Yan said, explaining when she first started her studio a decade ago, practitioners would often wear gym clothes or traditional Chinese garments for Tai Chi.

"Members who are 40 years old, they don't care about [fashion], they just want to be comfortable, but those who are 26 to 35, they're very fashionable," said Yan.

Lululemon faces plenty of competition in China from both international giants like Nike and Adidas and local Chinese sports brands. Chinese athletic brand Hosa considers itself one of the leading yogewear players in China. Chinese sportswear giant Li Ning, named after its founder, a former Olympic gymnast, launched a yoga line in 2009 and

teamed with designer Vivienne Tam to create a one-off spring 2012 yoga collection. Pure, one of Hong Kong's largest and oldest yoga studios, opened a branch in Shanghai in October, bringing its recently launched yoga line to Mainland China. Meanwhile, Taiwanese brand Easygogo moved into the Mainland Chinese market in 2008.

But Lee said he believes the Lululemon product, which mixes premium fabrics, beautiful designs and function, will stand out among the giants. He said the company is considering tailoring products to Asian tastes in terms of colorful fabrics and fashion-forward designs. He added that the company has ramped up quality-control inspections and measures to cater to particularly discriminating Asian consumers.

On the quality note, Lululemon has faced a tumultuous time, most notably with the recall of a range of see-through yoga pants that caused its stock price to plummet, a switch in its top executives and damaged the reputation of its founder, Chip Wilson.

Lee said the company is dealing with its past mistakes but is hopeful that the new team, installed in November, which includes chief executive officer Laurent Potdevin, chief product officer Tara Poseley and himself, will be able to steer the ship forward.