

# INTERFLUX

SPRING 2024

## Byte-Sized Beauty

PG. 06

A peek into Rihanna's remote VR Launch Party for Fenty Skin

## The 808s Orchestra

PG. 18

Covering Red Bull's trap symphonic experience breaking boundaries of Metro Boomin's music

## Indulgence Uncorked

The haunting behind the scenes of Prison Wine's Prison Ball and the pushing limits of experiential event marketing

PG. 41

PG. 30

FERRAGAMO

# Physical to Phygital



PG. 37

## Walk This Way: Imagineering's Latest Opus

Disney's newest vision for digital treadmill. Are you ready player one?

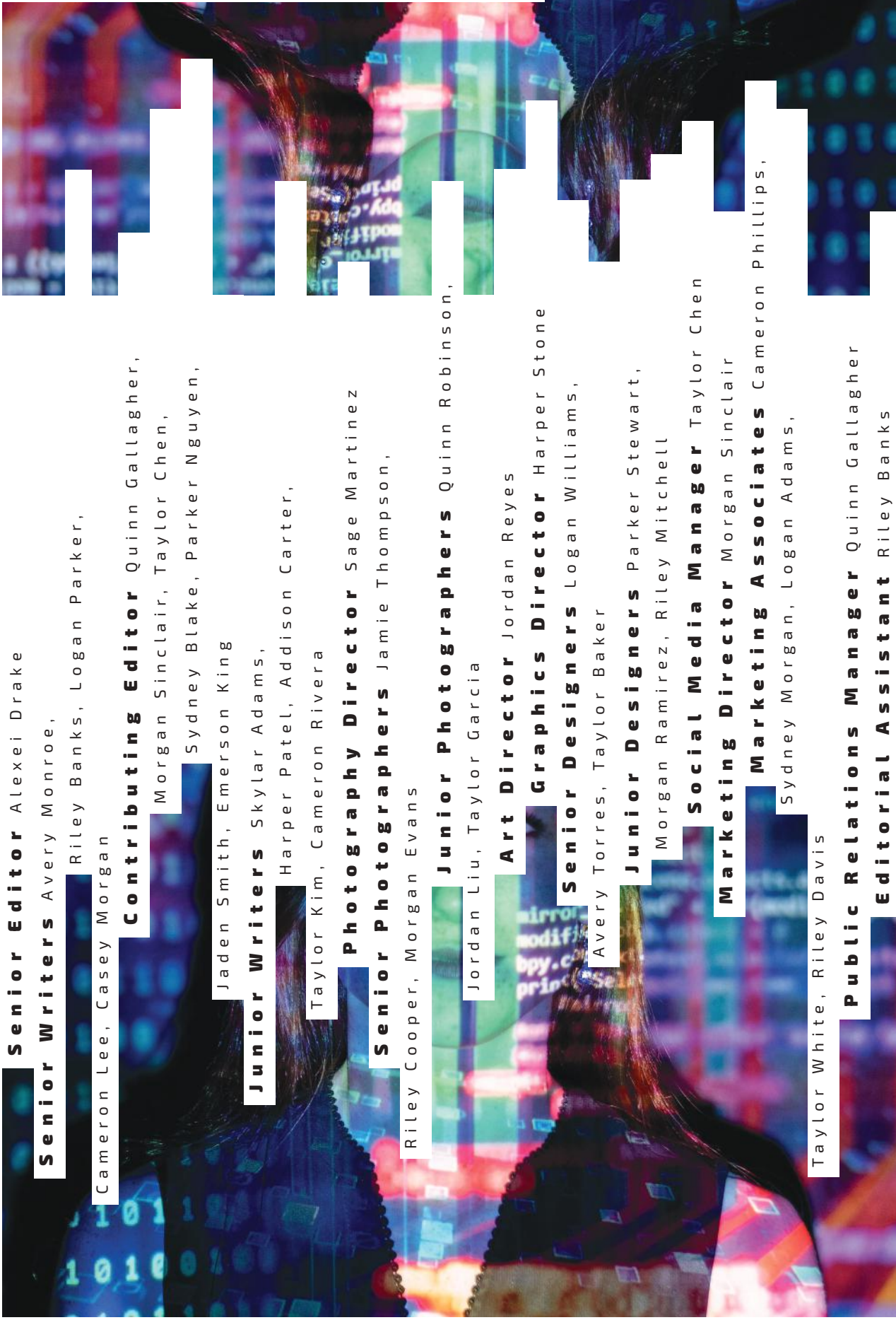
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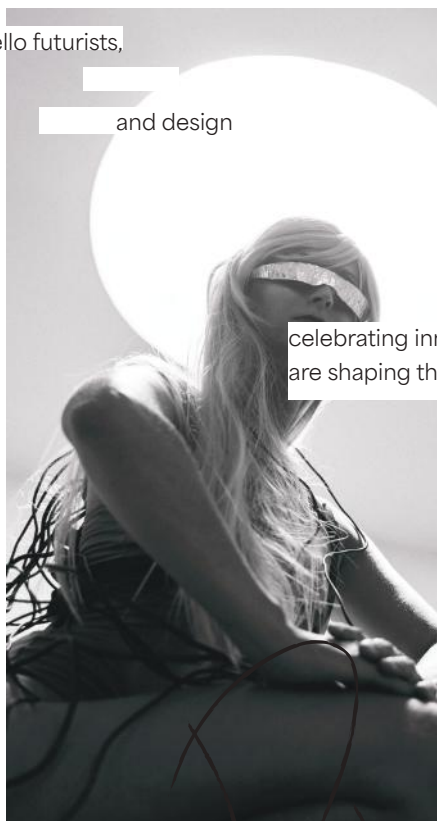
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# EDITOR'S LETTER

Hello futurists,

and design



I have the distinct privilege of leading us on a journey into the uncharted territory of creative technology and experiential design. Here, we revel in pushing boundaries,

celebrating innovation, and unearthing the hidden gems - the disruptive forces that are shaping the future of how we experience the world around us.

This issue is a testament to that pioneering spirit. From immersive realities that redefine entertainment to interactive installations that blur the lines between the physical and the digital, we've assembled a collection of stories that showcase the transformative potential of creative technology. We delve into the minds of visionaries who are not afraid to challenge the status quo.

We explore groundbreaking projects that redefine our understanding of storytelling, engagement, and the very nature of human interaction.

But more than just showcasing innovation, we aim to inspire. We believe in the power of fostering connections between like-minded individuals, fostering a community of passionate creators and enthusiastic explorers.

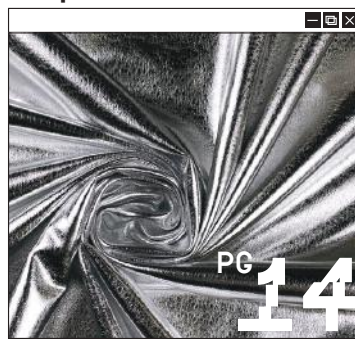
So, whether you're a seasoned veteran navigating the ever-evolving landscape of creative tech or a curious newcomer eager to embark on this exciting journey, we welcome you with open arms.

Join us as we explore the frontiers of experience. Let's delve into the unexpected, celebrate the

[devon@interflux.com](mailto:devon@interflux.com)



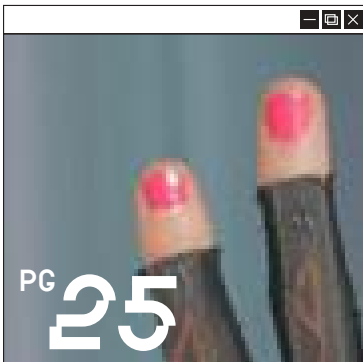
*Beyond The Loom*



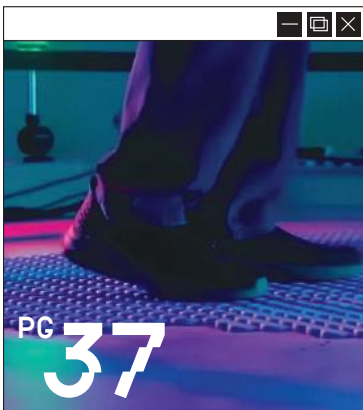
|    |                                      |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| 06 | Byte-Sized Beauty                    |
| 14 | Beyond The Loom                      |
| 18 | The 808s Orchestra                   |
| 25 | Palms of Notes                       |
| 30 | Ferragamo Physical to Phygital       |
| 37 | Walk This Way: Imagineering's Latest |
| 41 | Indulgence Uncorked                  |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

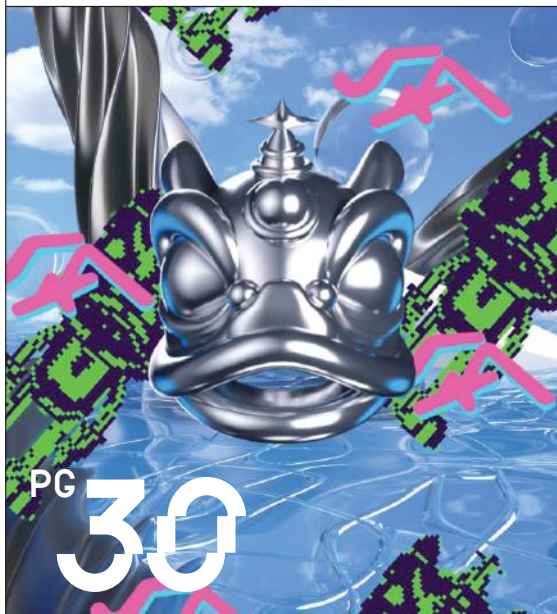
## *Palm of Notes*



*Walk  
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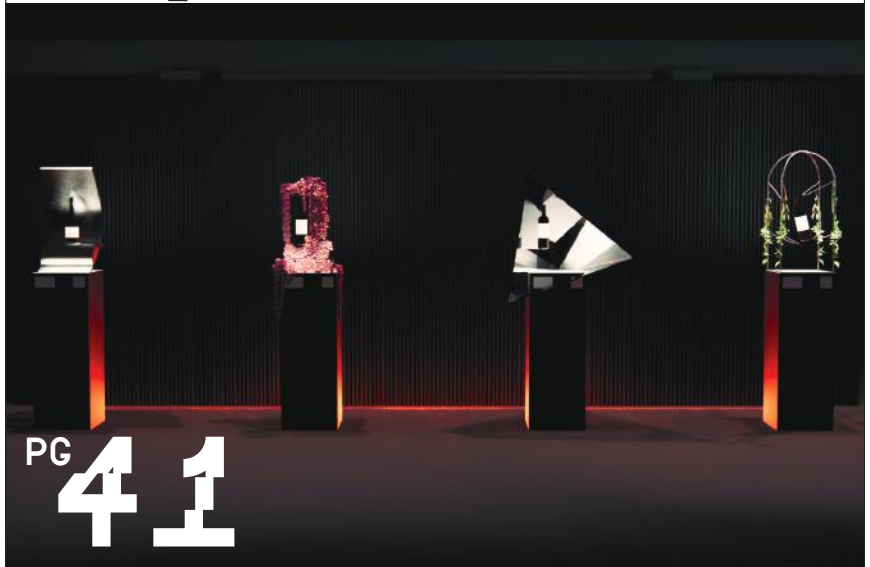


## *Ferragamo Physical to Phygital*



PG  
**30**

## *Indulgence Uncorked*



PG  
**41**

Houston We Have A Conference 48

Goodbye Screens, Hello World: The Pro-gress of Computing 53

The Gamification of Everything 58

Haptic Dreams 60

Smellscape Revolution 64

Ethics of Immersion 67

Augmented Reality Architects: Building the Future Foundations 71





# BYTE-SIZED BEAUTY

By Riley Banks

Rihanna recently unofficially launched Fenty Skin, a groundbreaking universal skincare brand for all. She's pioneering the marketing game yet again. If that wasn't enough, her and her team hosted an interactive digital launch party that might've just changed the game forever. Things Rih did: that!



PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
JNPRODUCTIONS

The creative vision and execution of this entire project were seamless in enhancing the user experience and really including the consumers within a space that they usually wouldn't be. One thing (above many) that the Fenty team has been able to achieve since Day One is building a brand identity that really resonates with consumers and makes them feel seen. You can chat with the Fenty Skin team on Twitter in real time, be a part of the skincare conversations and almost always get your burning questions answered. Even as a massive conglomerate, they've mastered the ability to make consumer-company interactions feel like one-on-one conversations with your girls that would never steer you wrong. See where I'm going with this?

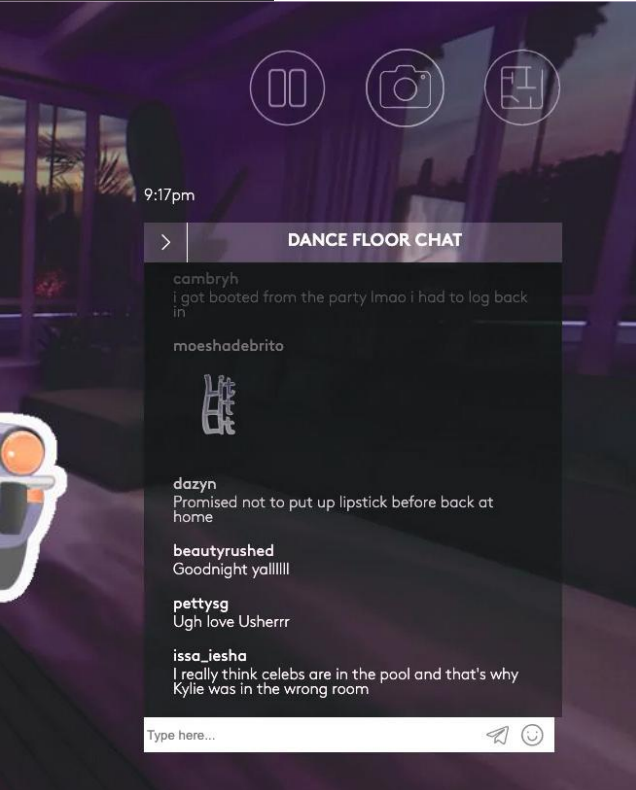
#### Marketing Reimagined

From a digital strategy perspective, Fenty yet again sets the tone for all other brands to follow. By cultivating a virtual reality, consumers have the

opportunity to party with Rihanna and actually be a part of the history. In the uncertain times of COVID19, being able to seamlessly and safely celebrate the launch without missing a beat is just another part of the digital revolution being televised. Where most

The Fenty Brand, though young, feels like that  
**one friend that  
always hypes you up**  
and has your back and you never have to  
question their loyalty no matter how  
popular they get.





Fenty Skin VR Launch Party chatroom where guests can interact with each other and celebrities alike!

## Virtual Party

So anyway, back to the party! Do y'all remember the days of playing the Sims on a desktop computer or creating an online persona on sites like IMVU? I know y'all are familiar with Grand Theft Auto! Well listen, Fenty Skin's digital Launch Party last night merged all of this virtual nostalgia and brought it in with a bang, 2020 style. The Fenty Skin team gave us all the feels of our 2010 online presence with an amazing summer launch party in a way that's never been done before. From the cocktail bar to the dance.

# Let's read the rooms, shall we?

## Entrance

As soon as you pull up to the party, you hear the music jumping from outside and the good vibes pouring in. Security lets you into the door and then let's you wander off to explore. Make sure to be on your A-game though because who knows, you might even run into Rihanna.

## Fenty Skin Spa

What really screams skincare more than a spa? The Spa Room was so good, it made you forget you were at a house party! The spa was peaceful and had all of the Fenty Skin Start'rs to put them to action and see what the benefits are really all about.

## Cocktail Bar

The cocktail bar was such a vibe with signature cocktails and CYO recipes to download at your leisure. The 'Barbados Cherry Spritz' was my personal favorite. If you aren't 21 you wouldn't be able to get into the bar, not even at the virtual party. Drink responsibly!

## Dance Floor

This is where the action was happening! The DJ had a fly mix on the ones and twos and everybody was dancing and having the time of their lives with guests like Lil Nas X.

## Pool

The pool was the last stop for the party and was off limits until the end. The Fenty Skin product placement was lit in the yard.

## Photo Booth

The selfie cam was one of my favorite touches and definitely something I had to partake in because let's be honest... if you didn't take any selfies did the party even happen?

brands are seeing a setback, Fenty is seeing opportunity – in fact, that's been their mantra all along since the launch of Fenty Beauty. Fenty prides itself on inclusivity rather than exclusivity and it definitely feels like your group of ride or die friends. We can anticipate seeing brands take note of the shift and make their best attempt to duplicate or mirror this VR experience. Fenty is in the lead, as usual, of kicking off our new normal.

Overall, Fenty Skin is out here doing the damn thing and changing the game like Fenty always does. Allowing everyday people to be involved in the launch party reminds us yet again of their commitment to universal excellence. I'm willing to bet that brands are going to jump on the bandwagon of maximizing virtual launches almost immediately. We partied all night and we had the time of our lives, a good skin care routine with the Fenty Skin Start'rs is exactly what we need for that post-party pick me up. The best part is, if you didn't grab your Fenty Skin with the early access link, you definitely had an opportunity to grab them while you were at the party. It's going to be an interesting and exciting experience watching brands take note of the digital marketing shift and follow suit. Make sure to grab your Fenty Skin products exclusively at Fentyskin.com this Friday, 7/31. Happy self caring!

The award-winning singer-songwriter turned beauty mogul hosted an event like no other at her home in honour of her new skincare line.

Nothing beats a digital surprise like an impromptu live 'hangout' with one of your favorite celebrities...

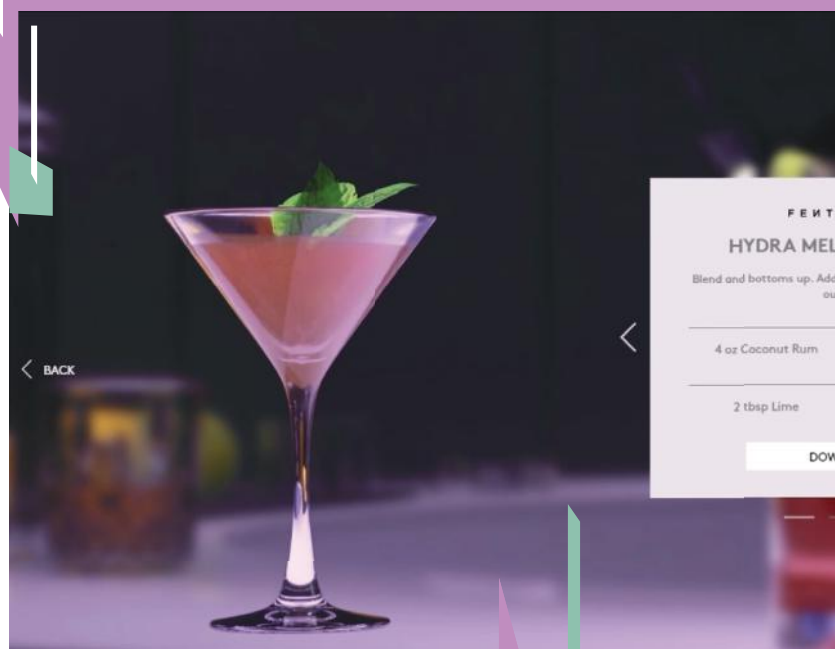
Rihanna caught fans off-guard this past weekend as they were welcomed to virtually enter the Fenty

Skin house in honour of the skincare line's launch. Naturally, no one was expecting the singer-songwriter to make a virtual appearance - but, of course, she couldn't resist surprising her fans.

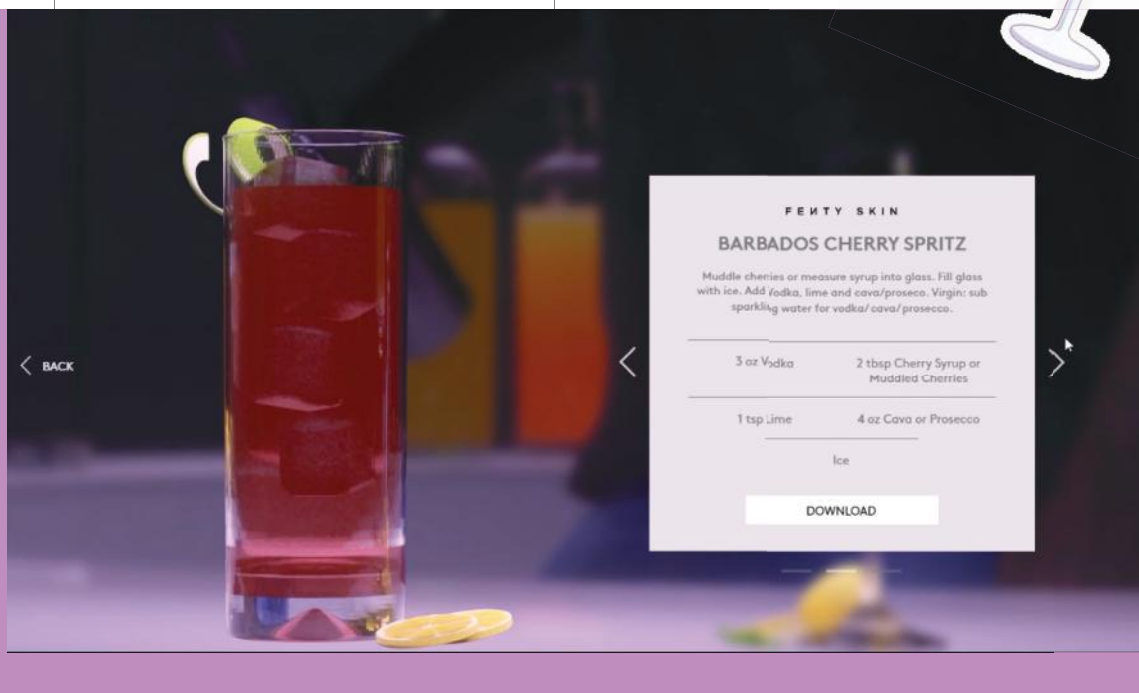
Inside the virtual Fenty House Fenty Skin Ambassador Sean Garrette chatted to Rihanna at the spa and then later guided the guests in helping them discover the various products.

from the Total Cleans'r Remove it all Cleanser to the Fat water Pore-Refining Toner Serum and, lastly, the Hydra Vizor Invisible Moisturizer Broad Spectrum SPF 30 Sunscreen (known as the

Fenty uses its clever copywriting to keep the cocktails fun whilst connecting back to the event's skincare promotion



Enjoy the party's drinks with access to cocktails using ingredients in the common household.





PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
JNPRODUCTIONS

Virtual bartender demonstrating the mixology of  
Fenty's cocktail recipe offerings.

Through AR filters and experiences, attendees were able to **virtually try on**

Fenty Skin's products, allowing them to see how each product would look and feel on their own skin before making a purchase.

Within the Fenty House guests could discover fun facts about the products through 'treasures' hidden in the garden around the virtual hot tub and explore content from skincare experts in the sink's mirror.

Virtual partygoers could also connect and livestream themselves from the living room or dance floor, as if they were dancing together in real life - even rapper Lil' Nas X joined in before chatting with Rihanna about music, skincare and much more.

In one Zoom meeting, users could receive a live "appearance rating" by performance art group The Bumbys, who wore their signature masked look and typed the message on a typewriter; attendees received a PDF of the typewritten message. In another room, guests could have their Zoom portrait captured by fashion photographer Hunter Abrams, who gave guidance on how to pose before snapping screenshots. There was also a DJed party room featuring drag star Shangela to enhance the vibe.

A DJed dance party was also featured at Fenty Skin's VR experience, where attendees were able to click around a video game-style interface to enter different "rooms," including a



"bar" that generated custom cocktail recipes, a "spa" with product info and shopping links, and a "living room" that featured livestreams with Rihanna and celebrity guests including Lil Nas X. The hashtag #FentySkinLaunchParty became a trending topic on Twitter thanks to the hype.

The 32-year-old Anti superstar and entrepreneur struck a pose at the virtual pre-launch party for her Fenty Skin brand on Wednesday night.

The "Work" superstar showed off her flawless skin in a series of photos from the virtual event on her Instagram.

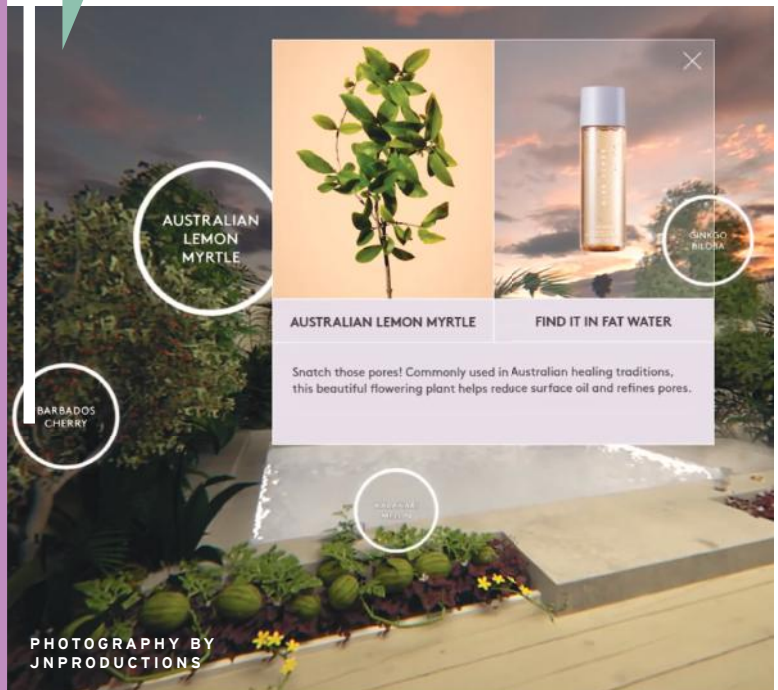
She also opened up about her own skin insecurities at the event: "Whether it's starting with acne when I was a teenager, and then the acne treatments that led me to really blotchy skin and stripped my skin of all the good stuff that I already had in it, it was a tough journey to get it back here," she confessed.

Rihanna, the multi-talented artist and entrepreneur, has once again set the beauty industry abuzz with the launch of her highly anticipated Fenty Skin line.

**This virtual extravaganza redefined the traditional launch event, blending technology, entertainment, and beauty in a seamless fusion that captivated audiences worldwide.**



Invitees enjoyed the virtual spa with a scavenger hunt-like interaction that revealed all the key ingredients and features of each skincare product.





PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
QUINN ROBINSON

# Beyond The Loom

By Logan Parker

The Future of Fabric

Using a novel fabrication process, MIT researchers have produced smart textiles that snugly conform to the body so they can sense the wearer's postures.

By incorporating a special type of plastic yarn and using heat to slightly melt it – a process called thermoforming – the researchers were able to greatly improve the precision of pressure sensors woven into multilayered knit textiles, which they call 3DKnITS.

They used this process to create a “smart” shoe and mat, and then built a hardware and software system to measure and interpret data from the pressure sensors in real time. The machine-learning system predicted motions and yoga poses performed by an individual standing on the smart textile mat with about 99 percent accuracy.

Their fabrication process, which takes advantage of digital knitting technology, enables rapid prototyping and can be easily scaled up for large-scale manufacturing, says Irmandy Wicaksono, a research assistant in the MIT Media Lab and lead author of a paper presenting 3DKnITS.

The technique could have many applications, especially in health care and rehabilitation. For example, it could be used to produce smart shoes that track the gait of someone who is learning to walk again after an injury, or socks that monitor pressure on a diabetic patient's foot to prevent the formation of ulcers.

“With digital knitting, you have this freedom to design your own patterns and also integrate sensors within the structure itself, so it becomes seamless and comfortable, and you can develop it based on the shape of your body,” Wicaksono says.

He wrote the paper with MIT undergraduate students Peter G. Hwang, Samir Droubi, and Allison N. Serio through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program; Franny Xi Wu, a recent graduate of the Wellesley College; Wei Yan, assistant professor at the Nanyang Technological University; and senior author Joseph A. Paradiso, the Alexander W. Dreyfoos Professor and director of the Responsive Environments group within the Media Lab. The research will be presented at the IEEE Engineering in Medicine and Biology Society Conference.

“Some of the early pioneering work on smart fabrics happened at the Media Lab in the late '90s. The materials, embeddable electronics, and fabrication machines have advanced enormously since then,” Paradiso says. “It's a

great time to see our research returning to this area, for example through projects like Irmandy's – they point at an exciting future where sensing and functions diffuse more fluidly into materials and open up enormous possibilities.” To produce a smart textile, the researchers use a digital knitting machine that weaves together layers of fabric with rows of standard and functional yarn. The multilayer knit textile is composed of two layers of conductive yarn knit sandwiched around a piezoresistive knit, which changes its resistance when squeezed. Following a pattern, the machine stitches this functional yarn throughout the textile in horizontal and vertical rows. Where the functional fibers intersect, they create a pressure sensor, Wicaksono explains.

But yarn is soft and pliable, so the layers shift and rub against each other when the wearer moves. This generates noise and causes variability that make the pressure sensors much less accurate.



Reveal of smart fabrics first runway fashion week appearance in Paris.

Wicaksono came up with a solution to this problem while working in a knitting factory in Shenzhen, China, where he spent a month learning to program and maintain digital knitting machines. He watched workers making sneakers using thermoplastic yarns that would start to melt when heated above 70 degrees Celsius.

"The thermoforming really solves the noise issue because it hardens the multilayer textile into one layer by essentially squeezing and melting the whole fabric together, which improves the accuracy. That thermoforming also allows us to create 3D forms, like a sock or shoe, that actually fit the precise size and shape of the user," he says.

Once he perfected the fabrication process, Wicaksono needed a system to accurately process pressure sensor data. Since the fabric is knit as a grid, he crafted a wireless circuit that scans through rows and columns on the textile and measures the resistance at each point. He designed this circuit to overcome artifacts caused by "ghosting" ambiguities, which occur when the user exerts pressure.

Inspired by deep-learning techniques for image classification, Wicaksono devised a system that displays pressure sensor data as a heat map. Those images are fed to a machine-learning model, which is trained to detect the posture, pose, or motion of the user based on the heat map image.

#### ANALYZING ACTIVITIES

Once the model was trained, it could classify the user's activity on the smart mat (walking, running, doing push-ups, etc.) with 99.6 percent accuracy and could recognize seven yoga poses with 98.7 percent accuracy.

They also used a circular knitting machine to create a form-fitted smart textile shoe with 96 pressure sensing points spread across the entire 3D textile. They used the shoe to measure pressure exerted on different parts of the foot when the wearer kicked.

Now that the researchers have demonstrated the success of their fabrication technique, Wicaksono plans to refine the circuit and machine learning model. Currently, the model must be calibrated to each individual before it can classify actions, which is a time-consuming process. Removing that calibration step would make 3DKnITS easier to use. The researchers also want to conduct tests on smart shoes outside the lab to see how environmental conditions like temperature and humidity impact the accuracy of sensors.

"It's always amazing to see technology advance in ways that are so meaningful. It is incredible to think that the clothing we wear, an arm sleeve or a sock, can be created in ways that its three-dimensional structure can be used for sensing," says Eric Berkson, assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery at Harvard Medical School and sports medicine orthopaedic surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital, who was not involved in this research.

## 1 TEMPERATURE-REGULATING FABRICS

Imagine clothing that adjusts its insulation according to your body temperature. Whether you're braving the chilly morning air or enduring a scorching summer day, these fabrics keep you comfortably cool or warm. Perfect for athletes, commuters, or anyone seeking constant comfort, these garments ensure you're always at the ideal temperature without bulky layers or excessive sweating.

## 2 BIOMETRIC MONITORING CLOTHING

Biometric sensors seamlessly integrated into fabrics track vital signs like heart rate, respiration, and even stress levels. From fitness enthusiasts optimizing their workouts to individuals managing chronic conditions, these smart garments offer continuous health insights without the need for additional devices. Stay ahead of your health goals while going about your daily routine with ease and discretion.

## 3 ADAPTIVE CAMOUFLAGE FABRICS

Ever wish you could blend seamlessly into your surroundings like a chameleon? With adaptive camouflage fabrics, now you can. Inspired by nature's camouflage masters, these textiles change color and pattern in response to the environment. Whether you're hiking in the woods, exploring urban landscapes, or simply want to stand out at the next rave, these futuristic fabrics offer style, functionality, and a touch of sci-fi flair.

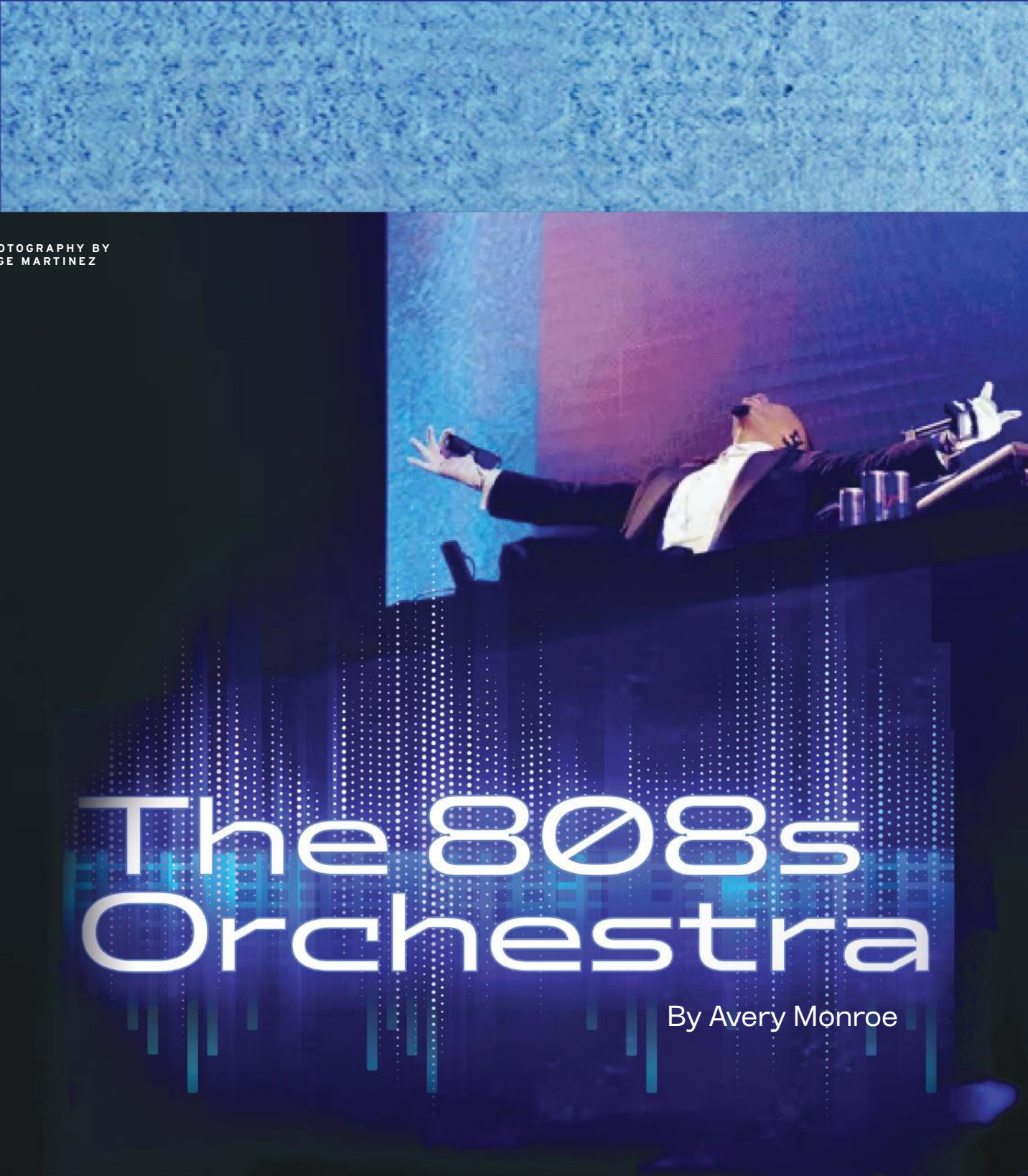
## 4 ENERGY HARVESTING TEXTILES

What if your clothing could power your devices on the go? Energy-harvesting textiles do just that, harnessing ambient energy from your movements to charge your gadgets. Whether you're hiking in the wilderness, commuting in the city, or simply going about your day, these innovative fabrics keep your devices juiced up without the need for bulky power banks or inconvenient charging stations. Embrace the freedom of untethered connectivity with energy-harvesting textiles revolutionizing the way you stay charged.

# WHAT SMART FABRICS MEANS FOR YOU

Experiment capture of durability and flexibility of spray-on smart fabric at Wicaksono Consortium

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
WICAKSONO CONSORTIUM



PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
SAGE MARTINEZ

# The 808s Orchestra

By Avery Monroe



As the lights dimmed, Metro Boomin appeared. The opening notes of Future's "Wicked" began to echo through the Dolby Theater, but something was different. The sounds of violins and drums took center stage as Metro Boomin stood on an elevated stage above an entire orchestra. As a part of the Red Bull Symphonic series, Metro Boomin and the Symphonic Orchestra come together to reintroduce his iconic hip hop beats in a classical style.

Within the 90 minute show, fans struggled to stay seated when tracks like “Jumpman” and “Bad and Boujee” were being reimagined right before their very eyes. His hard hitting trap beats still carried the same impact, but were simply imagined in a new context. This new context allowed Metro Boomin to share a new sonic experience of the songs that his fans have turned into hits.

As maestro Anthony Parnter led the orchestra, Metro Boomin interacted with the crowd, added in elements of hip hop, and even brought out a few special guests. A 15 person choir joined John Legend to sing the vocals of “Father Stretch My Hands” and “On Time,” while NAV and Swae Lee performed “Calling” and Roisee sang “Am I Dreaming” live for the very first time. This blend of a modern artist and a classical sound brings listeners a new experience beyond simply seeing one of their favorite artists perform

How do you seamlessly blend the connective tissue between hip-hop and classical? Easily, if you’re Metro Boomin. On Thursday night,

The orchestra opens with Red Bull’s lights flashing on in the concert hall and all are shocked at the unlikely genre collaboration



PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
SAGE MARTINEZ



the Atlanta producer partnered with Red Bull Symphonic to translate his music into widescreen at Los Angeles' Dolby Theatre, playing master of ceremonies during a precisely 90-minute set that featured a 43-piece ensemble counting strings, brass and a harp to boot.

Over the past decade, Metro has become one of hip-hop's production titans by evolving his cinematic sound through a string of releases, from his 2018 debut studio album "Not All Heroes Wear Capes" to this year's "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" soundtrack. Throughout his career, which dates back to early work with Gucci Mane and Future, his dark, menacing productions have expanded and bloomed, swirling stringed instruments and samples into often cold and sniping beats. The foundation had already been laid – Metro just needed the resources to bring it to life.

It makes sense, then, that the 30-year-old collaborated with Red Bull Symphonic for the one-night-only concert, transforming some of his biggest hits into delectable and – pardon the pun – booming hybrids. The event seamlessly closed the gap between hip-hop

and orchestral music, featuring a victory lap of hits and guests that included Swae Lee, Nav and John Legend.

The night was initially conceived when Red Bull approached Metro with the idea. It was an instant yes from Metro, whose theatrical

flair has brought him to Coachella and into the Marvel-verse. "Music is music," Metro told Variety prior to the performance. "I've always looked at it that way. Everything, every song is a certain tempo and it's in a certain key. I don't care what Metro's set was as full-bodied as it was meticulous, which comes as no surprise. Perfection is de rigueur for Metro, whose attention to detail has made him a pioneering figure in the southern rap scene. His discography is dotted with full-length collaborations with 21 Savage and Big Sean as well as solo ventures, each as sprawling and defined as the next. And his track record shows for it. Since 2016, he's

either toplined or been featured on 52 tracks on the Billboard Hot 100, and has graced the chart as a producer with at least 115 entries including two No. 1s (The Weeknd's "Heartless" and Migos' "Bad and Boujee" featuring Lil Uzi Vert). He's worked with nearly every A-listener in hip-hop including Travis Scott, Kanye West and Drake, with plans, he says, to release a full-length album with Future.

**(They're working on it, but no release date was given, of course: "Come on bro, you know I'm not going to tell you that.")**

His approach to production suggests he knows exactly what goes where, and the set was all the better for it. For the event, Metro, dressed in a plain tux and sporting sunglasses and white gloves, stood poised behind decks atop a towering podium that overlooked the orchestra. Beneath him, conductor Anthony Parnter and the Symphonic Orchestra filled out the tracks, marking Red Bull's second U.S. installment of the series following Rick Ross' inaugural 2022 performance.

To begin, the orchestra took the stage with Parnter as its guide as a robotic voice introduced the evening. "Red Bull Symphonic is based on the unprecedented collaboration between a modern-style artist and a full-scale symphonic orchestra," said the voice.

**"The duality of these two genres will blend in perfect harmony in a magnificent sonic journey. The concept of duality is rooted in the very essence of a hero, like a coin with two distinct faces."**

A hero navigates the world with a captivating complexity. At the core of this duality, a relentless battle rages between the noble hero and the lurking



PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
SAGE MARTINEZ

Metro Boomin's  
first listen to  
orchestral  
compositions of  
his setlist

villain as he grapples with the choices that shape his destiny. Are you ready? Our journey is about to begin.”

The set included 29 songs, building as a crescendo throughout. It kicked off with Future’s “Wicked” off the rapper’s 2016 mixtape “Purple Reign,” and continued with a parade of familiars for the audience including Travis Scott and Young Thug’s “Sky Fall,” Future’s “Mask Off” and Big Sean’s “Bounce Back.” As the night continued, the hits became more familiar to the audience, and by the time “Bad and Boujee” and Metro’s “Spider-Verse” hit “Creepin” with 21 and The Weeknd rolled out, attendees were jumping out of their seats – not exactly what one would expect at an orchestral show.

For the most part, Metro kept his emceeing to a minimum, consistently promising the audience that he’d keep going until the lights came on (even though, of course, he ended right on the



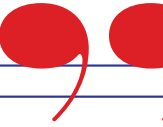
dot). Seeing as Metro’s career has been entirely collaborative, he delivered on what was expected, bringing out some key guests. Singer Roisee came out for an A\$AP Rocky-less rendition of “Am I Dreaming” off the “Spider-Verse” soundtrack, while Swae Lee and Nav



*The horns crashing against the strings added a sense of suspense and emotive flourish*



*Tonight is a celebration.  
We celebrate music, we  
celebrate culture, we  
celebrate y'all*



graced the stage for “Calling – Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse.” One of the more fleshed-out appearances came from John Legend who, backed by a choir and a piano, sang the sample from West’s “Father Stretch My Hands, Pt. 1” that Metro co-produced. “It’s a beautiful night,” exclaimed Legend. “It’s an honor to celebrate my brother tonight, Metro.”

The orchestra itself often felt like an accouterment to the blasting tracks through the sound system, but Metro and Parnter found exacting moments to let them shine. The horns crashing against the strings added a sense of suspense and emotive flourish to Chris Brown’s chorus from West’s “Waves,” while violins created a luring air of danger on 21 and Offset’s “Ric Flair Drip.” Witnessing how scrupulous the performance had been scored and designed was impressive. After a breathless hour-and-a-half, the Jay-Z sample from Metro’s “Superhero



Metro Boomin's  
behind the  
scenes interview  
pre-Symphonic  
Concert Showcase

(Heroes & Villains)” signaled the end of the night: “Dark Knight feeling, die and be a hero / Or live long enough to see yourself become a villain,” he said, with Metro descending from his post and taking a bow with Parnter. To those words, he may be the villain, but no S-t’s so beautiful,” Metro Boomin beamed during his Red Bull Symphonic concert at Los Angeles’ Dolby Theatre Thursday night.

His one-night-only experience marks the West Coast premiere of the Red Bull Symphonic, which showcases a collaboration between a modern artist and a classical musical director, together with a full-scale symphonic orchestra. It made its U.S. debut last November, when Rick Ross teamed up with conductor Maestro Jason Rodgers and the 50-piece, all-Black Orchestra Noir in Atlanta.

But this time around, the hip-hop super-producer partnered with conductor Anthony Parnter (Encanto, Star Wars: The Mandalorian, Creed II, Black Panther: Wakanda Forever) and the Symphonic Orchestra to reimagine many of his biggest hits, including Future’s “Mask Off,” Migos and Lil Uzi Vert’s “Bad and Boujee,” Post Malone and Quavo’s “Congratulations,” Kanye West’s “Father Stretch My Hands, Pt. 1” and his own “Creepin” alongside The Weeknd and 21 Savage. Considering his star-studded list of collaborators, Metro treated attendees with surprise guests John Legend, Swae Lee, Nav and Roisee to perform songs from his 2022 Billboard 200-topping album Heroes & Villains, and the 2023 Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse soundtrack.

It’s rare to see Metro’s DJ controller not be the



PHOTOGRAPH BY  
ALIYAH TREYS



Metro Boomin' takes a stand after final encore stage.

main instrument of his show, but the 43-piece ensemble elevated the cinematic, orchestral elements embedded in his production's DNA. And while the Symphonic Orchestra adhered to every one of Parnter's precise, nimble hand gestures, the black tux-clad hitmaker still ran the show from behind the booth (and sometimes from standing on top of it), his white-gloved hands waving through the air. Metro's recent ascent into rarefied air as a producer-turned-superstar artist has allowed him to continue headlining major gigs and building out his own sonic, heroic world on new stages across the world.

"Tonight is a celebration. We celebrate music, we celebrate culture, we celebrate y'all for listening to this music and making it what it is," Metro told his devout fans.

Check out Billboard's five biggest highlights from Metro Boomin's Red Bull Symphonic concert below, as well as exclusive behind-the-scenes and performance photos.

With Metro's production already sitting at the intersection of classical and hip-hop, Parnter and the Symphonic Orchestra knew how to draw out the refined elements of his music

without losing its swagger. The violinists bopped their heads while accentuating the eerie, pensive strings on "Wicked" (from Future's 2016 album EVOL) before transitioning into mischievous violin staccatos for the Weeknd-assisted "Low Life" from the same album. Metro shouted out violinist Peter Lee Johnson's scene-stealing outro during "Trance" (which Johnson has writing credits on) that extended the track's (dare we say) trance-inducing production. Meanwhile, opera singer Alexys Tiscareno added melodramatic flare to the transition (without the Homelander sample from The Boys) between "On Time" and "Superhero (Heroes & Villains)," the latter of which was amplified with live horns.

**With Metro's production already sitting at the intersection of classical and hip-hop, Parnter and the Symphonic Orchestra knew how to draw out the refined elements of his music without losing its swagger.**

# WALM OF NOTER WALM OF NOTER PALM OF NOTES

By Tara Schlitz



PHOTOGRAPH FROM MI.MU



PHOTOGRAPH FROM MI.MU

**W**ith a flick of her wrist, the drum beat begins. The familiar deep sound of the tom-tom drum echoes around the makeshift studio. This is a musical performance with a twist.

For a start, the “studio” is actually a converted barn deep in the English countryside. The woman playing the “instrument” is Grammy Award-winning musician Imogen Heap. And the drum she’s beating doesn’t exist.



Pioneering the fusion of wearable tech and music, Heap is in a completely different octave thanks to what she calls her Mi.Mu Gloves – gloves that put the power to create an entire musical composition right at her fingertips.

“In the past the only way that I could interact with the computer (to make music) was by using a mouse and a keyboard and this is very two-dimensional,” explains the musical trendsetter.

“I wanted to be able to have something which ... was directly from (the) brain – to quickly be able to manipulate sound just by intuitive gestures.”

While visiting MIT’s Media Lab in 2009, Heap met Elly Jessop, an engineer developing her own musical gloves using gestural data. Heap’s mind exploded with ideas and she soon set about putting together a team of musicians, makers, hackers and technologists to bring her ideas to life.

Fast forward five years and the dream is finally becoming a reality. Known for her distinctive fusion of soft acoustic sounds, electronica and tech, the British-born artist hopes the gloves will also help bring her music to fans in a more tangible way.

“The gloves help me embody those sounds which are hidden inside the computer, for me to physicalize them and bring them out

“**MUSIC AND MOVEMENT HAVE FOREVER HAD A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP. BUT WITH THESE GLOVES, HEAP HOPES TO TAKE HER STAGE PERFORMANCES A STEP FURTHER.**”

so that I can play them and the audience members will understand what I am doing – rather than fiddling around on a keyboard and mouse which is not very clear – I could just be doing.

#### HOW IT WORKS

Each glove is loaded with a myriad of sensors, buzzers and buttons that all send a chorus of information wirelessly back to computer software. It then interprets each gesture and produces sounds.

“It has sensors in the fingers that sense the bend of your finger, all of them, including the thumb, some motion sensors like accelerometers, gyroscopes, magnetometers,” explains Kelly Snook, a Mi.Mu engineer, who has been working on the gloves project since its conception almost six years ago.

“It takes all the information about your hand and the posture that you are making – where your hand is positioned and how fast you are moving it – and it sends all that information to the computer and then allows you to, on the computer, tell your music software what to do with each gesture.”

She adds: "It has little buzzers in your wrist that ... (vibrate) when you've done something or you are in this "Movement for me is key," she says. "I have a body and I have a mind and in my mind I have music. And it's a very shapely, sculptural thing that's going on."

"With the gloves I've almost got infinite mobility and so many different ways that different actions can cross over each other and therefore make something I wouldn't have thought of - I can almost jam with myself," she laughs.

"So movement and playing with music with my hands, almost like a potter, is now becoming a reality with these gloves that I've been developing with my team."

Musical revolution?

The gloves are already making waves among technologists and musicmakers eager to get their hands on them. Initially, the project looked to Kickstarter for crowdsourced funding, and while they didn't make their target, the campaign introduced the team to a group of like-minded engineers and hackers, who still wanted to help fund the bespoke gestural gloves. They now collaborate with the team by providing data and feedback from use of their own pair.

"We found 15 people who were willing to invest quite a lot of money at this early stage and help us develop them further. (They) have their own gloves and they range from people interested in robotics, to music therapy, to storytelling, to musicians, to sound engineers and animators - all kinds of different people," says Heap.

And the gloves look set for international stardom as they've even caught the attention of pint-sized pop princess Ariana Grande, who recently spent some time with Heap and ordered her own gloves to bring on tour next year, according to the thrilled Mi.Mu team.

The team is quick to point out the idea isn't particularly new - gestural music devices

have been around for decades. But they hope they can spur the musical innovation forward.

"Snook says: "We are not the first to do this, nor will we be the last. We've just been really passionate about doing it for music and doing it on stage and breaking down the barriers between the audience and the performer and making it much more intuitive the way the performer can communicate what they are doing electronically."

"Similar to when the electric guitar came on the scene, music really changed because of that one liberating instrument and so what's exciting to me about the glove project is the way that we could be seeing that complete shift in music making and performance."

Heap adds: "The gloves have certainly changed the way I make music. I'm not going to say it's going to change the world. It's

Up-close look of the Mi.Mu gloves tested and working



certainly part of a big movement of wearable tech and I really hope that we can move forward the game."

The MiMU Gloves are the brainchild of musician Imogen Heap. Since 2010, the MiMU team and Imogen have worked towards new expressive ways of composing and performing music.

The first glove prototypes were forged in the



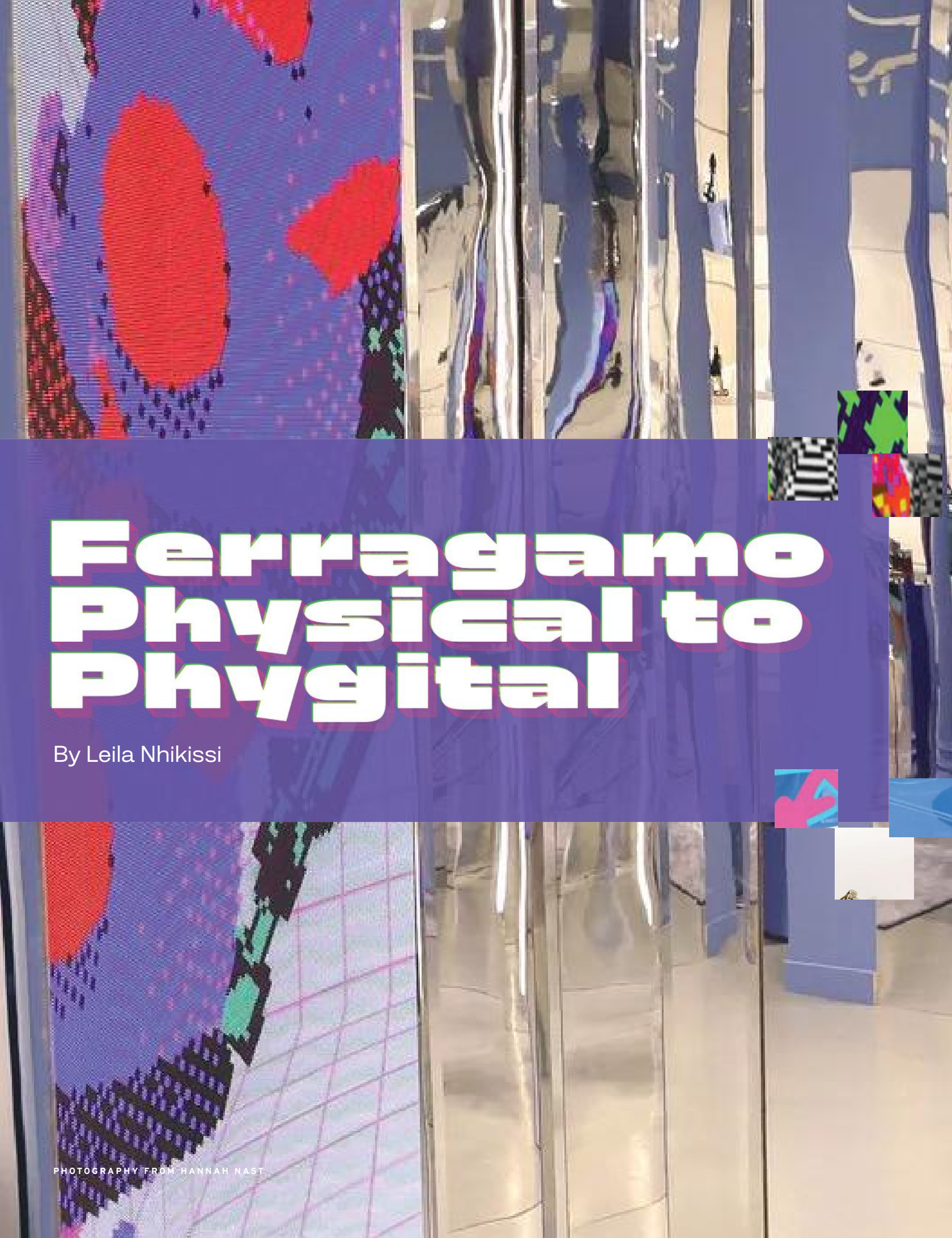
Kris Halpin photoshoot demonstrating the visual feeling of the gloves producing musical notes



nurturing space of Imogen Heap's musical experimentations, and tested on stage in real live performances.

However since 2014 a small group of pioneer musicians have been using early versions of the MiMU Gloves across the world for a wide range of different artistic projects. These include vocalists, classical pianists, beat boxers, guitarists, artists controlling live visual projections and Ariana Grande on her tour.

The MiMU team has built on these years of experience with real artists to deliver the most advance wearable technology for music, designed by musicians for musicians.



# Ferragamo Physical to Phygital

By Leila Nhikissi

PHOTOGRAPHY FROM HANNAH NAST



Experiential retail, meet Web3. Luxury Italian brand Salvatore Ferragamo's new concept store in New York's Soho neighborhood is giving away free NFTs to customers alongside exclusive products, made-to-order and customization services. Visitors can immerse themselves in their own NFT at the futuristic outpost.

The concept was designed to make NFTs accessible and smooth for both Web3 loyalists and the crypto-curious, says North America CEO Daniella Vitale, in a store environment backdropped by periwinkle walls and regal columns.

The store, which opens today in an area known for its youthful energy, offers a glimpse into how luxury is experimenting and testing Web3 offerings to attract a new, younger audience. For one, it's playful and exploratory: the NFTs are accessed via an elaborate mirrored booth in which a large curved screen displays the colourful, animated artwork by digital artist Shxpir (pronounced Shakespeare), created in partnership with multidisciplinary studio De-Yan, which has produced immersive projects for Louis Vuitton and Dior. Visitors can customise the artwork with various elements, such as a silver chain and abstract shapes and patterns via touch screen and pose for a video in the booth with the art, which is minted on the spot as an NFT on Ethereum via OpenSea. Visitors must enter an email address to receive the social-friendly video and to claim the NFT in their wallet. The store is limiting the inaugural collection to 256 NFTs to start but is open to expanding the concept further, Vitale says.

For now, the partnership with Shxpir also includes a small capsule collection of tees and sweatshirts featuring the artwork, starting at \$350, with proceeds going toward New York LGBTQ organisation, The Center.

It's Ferragamo's first step into Web3, joining the tide of other luxury houses, including Gucci and Balmain, who are testing out the waters and following the addition of new CEO Marco Gobbetti, who joined in January with ambitions to modernise and re-energise the brand. Brands and retailers have been increasingly experimenting with how to incorporate NFTs in the physical

experience, with Selfridges displaying and selling NFTs in its London store and Fred Segal displaying NFT collections in Los Angeles. Philipp Plein has just opened a new store in London, replete with an NFT gallery and crypto transactions.

Ferragamo has also pulled physical products into the store's tech experience. Touch screens allow visitors to customise and purchase gender-neutral 6R3ENE sneakers for \$1,150. As visitors mix and match colourways, the shoes are rendered in a photo-realistic, three-dimensional hologram screen. After the order is placed, the shoes are manufactured and sent in a couple of months.

The sneaker offering will cater to sneaker-friendly Web3 communities. Puma recently announced a partnership with virtual world 10KTF that will include sneaker customisation and digital twins, while Nike-owned Rtfkt's Cryptokicks are

**“Fashion fans still crave the physical.”**

Ferragamo's pop-up store presents you this intro NFT phycedelic warp-core screen



customisable NFT sneakers that collectors can “forge” into physical sneakers. Vitale anticipates that product personalisation and on-demand manufacturing might expand to other product categories, adding that Soho's experimental, youthful ethos provided an apt venue for testing these new concepts.

The new Ferragamo store was unveiled at the end of conference NFT.NYC, during which a number of other brands expanded or introduced Web3 projects that combined the digital with the physical via NFTs. At

In this new age of technology customers had the change to customize their shoes and see it 3D printed live.



Sneak peak of campaign shoot with Russian model Taz Luhrmann



Diesel's Soho location, just nearby Ferragamo's, guests received stickers with Bored Apes wearing recent Diesel designs, and some guests were holders of Diesel's digital sneaker NFTs, issued in partnership with Neuno. Gucci, meanwhile, hosted a gathering for holders of its NFTs, including those created with 10KTF and those created in partnership with "synthetic celebrity"

company SuperRare, which includes physical ceramic figurines.

Rebecca Minkoff, in partnership with Mavion.world, announced its latest NFT project, which includes physical, digital and experiential perks, including fashion week tickets. As Vitale noted during a preview of the Ferragamo store.

Ferragamo New Age Shoe Collection on display in Soho Store





Salvatore Ferragamo has opened a 2600 square foot concept store on Greene Street in the heart of New York's bustling Soho.

The modular hub taps into the experiential, hyper physical retail championed by Balenciaga, Jacquemus et al with an immersive state-of-the-art shopping experience.

A mirrored installation houses a participatory NFT project. Ferragamo's partnership with digital artist Shxpir is allowing 256 customers to co-create their own user generated NFT content against a selection of Shxpir designed backdrops. The resulting artwork captured on a high-spec black magic camera can be minted free of charge as an NFT.

Staff will be available to guide novices through the process of setting up an Ethereum wallet and downloading their NFT once it has been minted.

Such in-store customer orientation strategy – also adopted by Philipp Plein and Printemps – is a smart move and paves the way for future Web 3.0 and metaverse related projects.

Another Ferragamo Greene Street activation is a new custom sneaker program. Choosing from an array of colors and details, customers can personalize Ferragamo's latest unisex sneaker silhouette, watching the process unfold on a monitor via 3D hologram technology. Dubbed 6R3ENE – pronounced Greene – the shoe is exclusive to the store.

The Ferragamo store and installations alike have been designed by multidisciplinary studio DE-YAN behind the retail concepts of other brands from Louis Vuitton to Versace.



It might all seem a far cry from Salvatore Ferragamo's heritage – the 95 year-old luxury brand founded in Florence, Italy, is headquartered at an 11th century palazzo – but, says North America CEO Daniella Vitale who spearheaded the Greene Street concept, “while we are lucky to have it and it can certainly inform us, we cannot allow the heritage piece to define us.”

Vitale, whose pedigree takes in CEO roles at Barney's and Gucci North America, joined Ferragamo from Tiffany's in October 2021 and this is one of her first projects.

**“Particularly for a younger consumer, the retail experience is part of their social milieu so it's about how we can create those shareable moments..”**





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