Off-White steps up pace of new store openings

By Dominique Muret - 15 November 2018

Nothing seems to be able to quell the voracious appetite of Virgil Abloh and his ready-to-wear label Off-White. The Ghanaian-born US designer, who grew up with the street and hip-hop culture of the ‘90s, is thriving on the success and the visibility he garnered after being appointed creative director of Louis Vuitton’s menswear last March, and is powering ahead with his own street couture label, extending its reach with a succession of monobrand store openings.

A few days ago, Off-White opened its first store in the Middle East, inside the Dubai Mall shopping centre in Dubai. It was followed by a new Chinese store, in the ancient imperial capital of Xi’an, whose opening was announced on Monday on the label’s Instagram account. At the end of September, Off-White landed in Bangkok, Thailand, opening a store in the Siam Paragon shopping mall with a local partner. In August, the label had set up shop in the Philippines, attracting the usual throng of aficionados for the store’s inauguration in Manila.

A guest speaker at the Vogue Fashion Festival staged in Paris last week, Abloh announced he is aiming to reach a total of 40 stores from next year. Off-White’s website currently lists 36 monobrand outlets, between just over 20 boutiques and several shop-in-shops in department stores like Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Selfridges in London, or the Galeries Lafayette in Paris.

In other words, Off-White’s target is ambitious but by no means unattainable, given the pace at which the label is growing, bolstered by a strong presence on social media. Off-White’s Instagram account has 5.6 million followers, and the label was hailed as the most sought-after label of the year by fashion e-aggregator Lyst. Not to mention the plethora of collaborations with countless brands and retailers, constantly fuelling media interest in the label.

Off-White features both menswear and womenswear. It was founded in 2012 and in 2014 it recorded a revenue of €2.6 million. Three years later, according to the figures published in 2017 by the label’s Italy-based company, sales skyrocketed to €56.5 million, up 75% over the €33.9 million of 2016.

Italian holding company New Guards Group, founded in Milan by Claudio Antonioli, Davide De Giglio and Marcelo
Burlon, has a stake of just over 53% in Off-White, as well as owning the labels Marcelo Burlon County of Milan, Palm Angels by Francesco Ragazzi, Heron Preston, Unravel Project, Alanui and A_plan_application.

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