LVMH creates secret company named Project Loud. A corporate structure to welcome Rihanna?

By Godfrey Deeny - 7 February 2019

LVMH has quietly created an under-the-radar company, apparently custom built to house their much-rumored plan to build a fully-fledged fashion house with superstar Rihanna. Its name: Project Loud.

The giant luxury conglomerate registered Project Loud as a shell company in Paris back in June 2017. However, on December 20, 2018, LVMH dramatically injected 60 million euros in fresh capital into the company, according to an official filing with the Tribunal de Commerce in Paris. In the previous filing, Project Loud had equity of just 37,000 euros.

Last month, reports emerged that LVMH was deep in negotiations to form a partnership with Rihanna, whose fifth studio album is entitled Loud.

Moreover, LVMH’s Project Loud is headquartered at 24 rue Jean Goujon, in the tony 8th arrondissement of Paris. That is the location of LVMH Fashion Group, which oversees some nine fashion houses including Givenchy, Fendi, Kenzo, Loro Piana and Pucci. It’s notable that the president of Project Loud is a senior LVMH executive – Jean-Baptiste Voisin. A graduate of the great French college, Ecole Polytechnique, 51-year-old Voisin has been director of strategy of LVMH since 2006. In 2012, he was named to the Executive Committee of the giant luxury group, which also numbers among its stellar global brands: Christian Dior, Louis Vuitton, Dom Perignon and Hennessy brandy.

The French luxury behemoth already knows the Barbadian singer very well. In 2017, Kendo, LVMH’s incubator for beauty brands, launched Fenty Beauty by Rihanna exclusively at the group’s cosmetics chain Sephora, then rolling it out simultaneously at 1,600 stores in 17 countries. Fenty Beauty by Rihanna, reportedly a licensing deal with the singer, went on to become a giant global success.
“Fenty Beauty by Rihanna was created for everyone: for women of all shades, personalities, attitudes, cultures, and races. I wanted everyone to feel included. That’s the real reason I made this line," says Rihanna on LVMH's official website.

An official spokesman for LVMH declined any comment on these latest developments at Project Loud.

Sources close to LVMH note that the group frequently funds new companies. The group is also understood to be poised to finance a new fashion house for Nicolas Ghesquière, its women's designer at Louis Vuitton. However, given the name, Project Loud, all roads would appear to point to a major undertaking with Rihanna.

Already back in March 2018, when Voisin became president of Project Loud, he replaced Caroline Bergeron-Plantefève, a lawyer specializing in M&A, whose title is Assistant Legal Director of LVMH. The company also changed the legal description of its activities to become a proper brand specializing in fashion, accessories, lingerie and perfume. While on LinkedIn.com, several experienced LVMH fashion operatives – with careers at Christian Dior and Marc Jacobs - have begun listing Project Loud as their new employer.

Moreover, in September 2018, Roraj Trade LLC, the LA-based owner of Rihanna's multiple trademarks, made a mass registration of over 100 product categories and services for Fenty with the National Institut of Industrial Property, France’s national intellectual property office – covering China, the European Union, Japan, Korea and Singapore. All of them used a Fenty logo, with an inverted N, as Rihanna has preferred of late.

Rihanna is not unfamiliar with Paris. She staged a much-lauded Fenty Puma collection runway show in March 2017, taking over France’s greatest library, the Bibliothèque Nationale, where models in posh punky athleisure marched down the reading desks, ripping apart fake books. The singer has also been a regular guest at major runway shows, from Chanel to Dior.

Last September in New York, Rihanna staged a Savage x Fenty – made in collaboration with Techstyle Fashion Group - spring 2019 lingerie show in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Showing sexy, fetish-influenced lingerie on a widely diverse cast of models in terms of both skin color and size during a performance art presentation within plant-filled botanical domes. Separately, Rihanna has launched a series of perfumes under license to Parlux Fragrances, a group that also creates scents for Jessica Simpson, Jay Z and Kenneth Cole.

In January, when announcing the luxury multinational’s annual results, LVMH chairman and dominant shareholder Bernard Arnault said Fenty Beauty by Rihanna was a phenomenal success, with sales last year reaching nearly 500 million euros.

Asked by Fashionnetwork.com about the reports of a link-up with the singer, while attending the latest runway show of Berluti, another LVMH brand, Arnault responded with an enormous smile: “Oh, I believe that Rihanna is an enormously talented artist!”

Clearly.