

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

The New Louis Vuitton Store in Singapore Is a Paean to French Arts and Crafts

Masterminded by French interior designer Stéphanie Coutas, an extravagant wall decoration is the star of this unique apartment-style boutique

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Since the maison's inception in 1854, every new Louis Vuitton store has been a celebration of exceptional creativity and rare craft, reflecting the brand's unique ability to make an art out of fashion. Its famous monogrammed leather luggage is as elegant as it is practical; collaborations with artists, architects and designers are as much a part of its DNA as luxury goods. In French interior designer Stéphanie Coutas, it may have found its perfect partner. Her love of decorative arts and fine materials – synonymous, in her philosophy, with French luxury – is displayed to breathtaking effect in her new Paris apartment-style retail space for Louis Vuitton, which is the star attraction at Singapore's Takashimaya Shopping Centre.



The dramatic entrance hall featuring hot-air balloons in LV's monogram flower design and spotlighting archival pieces from brand's luggage collection. Photo: Supplied

The store is a temple of Gallic arts and crafts, filled with bespoke pieces by a host of artisans hand-picked by Coutas. Part apartment, part store, part museum, it announces its exceptional nature from the outside, where a luminous, perforated white façade offers glimpses of a spectacular vestibule. This dramatic entrance space displays luggage from the archives – including a meticulously restored, hand-painted hat trunk from 1924 – suspended playfully from hot-air balloons, each decorated with a pattern based on Louis Vuitton's monogram flower.



An homage to Singapore's commitment to nature, motifs inspired by the frangipani tree adorn the walls of the main hall and gallery. Photo: Supplied

Following this celebration of heritage, Coutas shifts into a contemporary gear in the elegant Parisian apartment's main hall and gallery, where you can browse the latest ready-to-wear collections. Here, the walls compete with the clothes for attention: they are delicately adorned with frangipani trees rendered in white relief plaster, a work commissioned by Coutas from French sculptor John Lookas. Inspired by Singapore's reinvention of itself as a garden city, the trees were sculpted on site entirely by hand, each leaf and branch individually moulded.



Throughout the store, Coutas presents creative interpretations of LV's monogram flower. In this picture the design is imagined as a wood and marble 'carpet'. Photo: Supplied

You'll spot more creative twists on the LV monogram flower in the main hall and gallery, translated in Coutas's precious materials: beneath generously proportioned arches that present eye-catching vistas, an abstract flower "carpet" unfurls in wood, Taj Mahal Serpeggiante marble and Marfil Stone; a monogram flower is also traced on the ceiling in fine metal. In the gallery, there's a selection of Les Extraordinaires, Louis Vuitton's most luxurious designs, including classic Capucines leather handbags: an arresting prospect, for sure, but you may find yourself distracted by the ceiling, where a pattern mimicking water ripples emphasises the focus on craftsmanship.



Evoking chic living rooms in Paris, seating nooks serve as pause points to admire the latest collections. Photo: Supplied

There are seating nooks throughout the store that serve as pause points from which to admire the interiors, but it's in the three salons that the apartment-style feel is most pronounced. The first salon, dedicated to womenswear and evening gowns, is warm and feminine, and again boasts artistry in plaster: a "Singapore Sunset" amber-hued gradient design created by Paris firm Ateliers Berger using its signature decorative techniques. This cocooning finish surrounds a cosy seating area composed of curved Pierre Augustin Rose seating, a rock-crystal coffee table and bespoke rug.



The blue palette of the menswear salon was inspired by the ocean. The landscape artwork is by the Argentine artist Lautaro Cuttica. Photo: Supplied

In the second salon, which houses menswear, the colour palette shifts to blues, with a custom carpet inspired by ocean waves and a dynamic, oversized landscape painting by Argentine artist Lautaro Cuttica. Walls clad in exotic paldao wood and textured plaster (the latter inspired by LV's classic Damier pattern) are complemented by a wraparound wool couch and vintage Costela lounge chairs, designed by Brazilian Modernists Carlo Hauner and Martin Eisler in 1953.



A textured wood and plaster wall covering in the classic LV Damier pattern surrounds a vintage wool

High jewellery and watches take centre stage in the third salon, shown off in illuminated niches and under glass cloches on Budri marble tables. The niches have been decorated by French artist Sophie Mallebranche with a woven metal finish, its shimmering texture echoed by another Damier-style plaster effect: this time embellished with gold powder and custom-made by artisan studio Duval & Mauler. Abstract artworks, including a painting by American artist Julia Powers, subtly send the message that this is a sanctum devoted to the finest craftsmanship; whether or not you leave swinging a Louis Vuitton carrier bag, it's a shopping experience that can't be matched.



A painting by American artist Julia Powers holds court in the third salon dedicated to high jewellery and watches. Photo: Supplied