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DESIGNING A BRAND EXPERIENCE FOR SEPHORA

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ABSTRACT

How does one create a memorable ad that reaffirms a company's brand promise and is engaging to the participant? One answer is Experiential Advertising events, which are interactive activities or events that are hosted by a company and evoke certain feelings or thoughts about the brand of X company. As a frequent festival go-er, my favorite type of marketing has been these pop-up brand experiences in which I encounter a company on a new, more intimate level. The following paper is research on a company and its brand in order to create a full brand experience event. Using my findings and design skills, I created a full deck that outlines the makings and process of a brand experience for Sephora's 2022 House of Beauty event. The project is about a pop up museum and art gallery hosted by Sephora in which museum goers can participate in a 'paint and sip' makeup event and join the art gallery with their own face's makeup artwork.

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INTRODUCTION

“To me, the essence of truly modern makeup is the freedom to be yourself, to express who you are.” – François Nars, founder of Nars Cosmetics

Expressing and showing off your artwork is an act of being fearless. As a painter, sometimes it is difficult to show my art off; just posting my art online has been one of the first steps to being confident in my artwork and in being proud to show it to my friends and family. I love the accepting and adventurous nature of Paint and Sip events. People with differentiating artistic backgrounds come together to be social, create art, try something new, and show it off to everyone else while having fun.

In 2020, Sephora was posed to host their House of Beauty event, a 2 day beauty convention celebrating “boldness in beauty,” until the event had to be cancelled. With certain spaces being slowly opened up, it would be a perfect time for Sephora to reintroduce a new beauty tour for dates in 2022. For Sephora’s 2022 House of Beauty promo tour, I propose a mobile makeup ‘art gallery’ as a Sephora hosted Paint and Sip event to allow makeup enthusiasts to socialize, experiment with Sephora’s makeup, and take home some new Sephora products to continue their journey in artistic exploration.

The message is “with Sephora, one can freely express oneself in an artistic way,” and the supporting message is “Sephora gives makeup artists the best tools to be both the art and the artist.”

What Is Experiential Marketing?

Experience marketing is a marketing strategy that uses in-person events to promote

products. Some examples of famous experiential marketing are Kylie Jenner's Lip Kit pop up with Instagram-worthy lip inspired art installations, and Apple's Keynote events which gives attendees access to the latest product in their release. Experiential marketing events are designed to allow potential customers or fans to familiarize themselves with a product before they purchase it. The goal of an experience marketing event is to create an amazing customer experience, which in turn increases a company's customer value optimization. It also allows attendees to show the event on their social media platforms and to become their own influencers and promoters for a company's brand.

There are several types of experiential marketing, such as Product Showcases, Immersive Experiences, Event Marketing, Brand Activations, and Guerrilla Marketing (StreetPR). Product Showcases, the most popular type of experiential marketing, allows attendees to actually experience what it can do. Event Marketing provides consumers with a platform where to interact face to face with your brand and product within a fixed time frame. Brand Activation is usually reserved for new products, but can also fit into the realm of experiential marketing. It utilizes a showcase to promote any sort of new product or service from a brand, letting the customer see the benefits of the product and the best side of the company's brand (StreetPR). Guerilla marketing, referring to the name, uses the element of surprise to start a conversation about a brand, and is usually not an invited event but rather one a consumer would 'stumble upon'. As for creating a brand experience for Sephora, I wanted to combine the elements of all four styles of experiential marketing to create a mobile art gallery that shows attendees in Sephora makeup as the art being exhibited, which also allowed attendees to experiment and

explore Sephora's makeup catalog in a fun art gallery hosted Paint & Sip event.

Paint & Sip as Experiential Marketing

The Sephora art gallery and Paint & Sip event would be an effective experiential marketing event for Sephora, as it not only enforces the brand imagery of Sephora being a classy, sleek place for discovery and exploration, but it also allows guests to try out Sephora's long line of exclusive products and even take home some samples to encourage a future visit to Sephora. This type of event would be great for bringing in new potential customers, so the locations chosen for this mobile art gallery must have a large population of Sephora's target demographic already present to be most effective. For this reason, I chose to have the pop-up galleries appear at art fairs around the United States.

Art Fairs as a Suitable Location

Art Fairs are conventions that "host various galleries, collectives, curators, and independent artists to show artwork to local and international collectors for purchase" (ArtSpace). Art fairs can take from four to six days and are usually held in major cities around the world. They focus on artists getting their work out there to a new audience, so essentially Sephora would be getting their makeup and tools out to makeup artists.

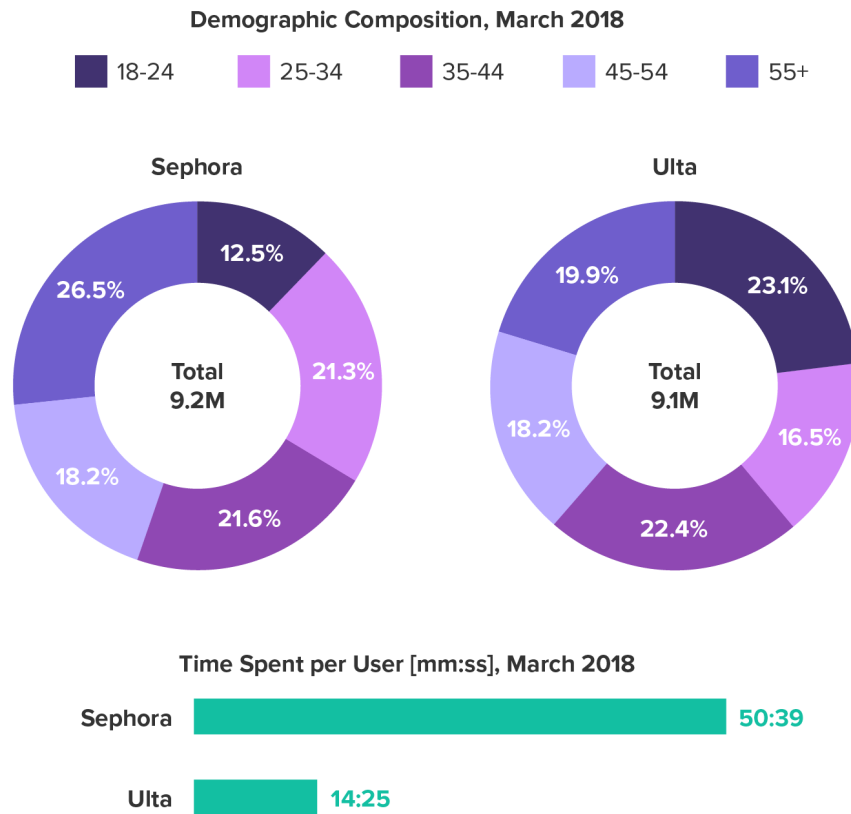
Most art fairs have a 50% split male and female, with over 80% coming with children under the age of 18 (Vail arts), while it is also reported that art fairs have an audience of 55% females, and 73% are white (Artsy.net). As for age of art fair participants, 23.8% are 25-34, 20.7% are 35-44, and lastly 17.9% are aged 45-54, with net worths at 32.4% under 100k, 36.2%

100k-999k, and 23.2% 1M-5M.

With Sephora's current market being beauty conscious upper middle class women and art fairs having that same demographics, the Paint and Sip is at a good intersection of being able to bring new customers by showing them the Sephora experience and how it differs from other beauty and skincare companies, as the target demographic is already present at these art fairs.

According to BrandGuide, Sephora's target market is upper middle class urban women due to their higher prices, and the segment within that beauty and status conscious women. Sephora is positioned as a makeup retailer with high quality products. Because of this, the most effective locations for the Sephora brand experience would be at **art fairs**, as they are where the targeted demographics match up, allowing Sephora to draw in new potential customers with ease. Figure 1, below, shows Sephora's demographic mainly being women over the age of 35, compared to Ulta, which has almost double the amount of teenagers Sephora has.

Snapshot - Sephora vs. Ulta, March 2018



Source: Verto Watch (U.S. adults 18+), March 2018



Figure 1: Sephora vs Ulta Demographics

Some proposed locations of the art fairs would be Frieze Art in LA, to Art Basel in Miami, then Gold Coast Art Fair in Chicago before finishing up at Sephora's very own House of Beauty event over a 5 month art and makeup tour.

Event Locations

Frieze Art (LA) - May 2022

A contemporary art fair, The Frieze Art Fair “features more than 170 contemporary art galleries, and the fair also includes specially commissioned artists’ projects, and a talks programme and an artist-led education schedule” (FriezeArt). This will be effective for Sephora as this education-centric art fair will attract people eager to learn new things and participate in an informative paint and sip for makeup techniques.

Art Basel (Miami) - June 2022

Next is Art Basel, an international art fair that takes place in June. According to their website, “Art Basel works in collaboration with the host city's local institutions to help grow and develop art programs. While Art Basel provides a platform for galleries to show and sell their work to buyers, it has gained a large international audience of art spectators and students” (ArtBasel). This will be handsome for Sephora’s brand experience as the visuals and fun spectatorship of Sephora’s live museum will be enticing to the Art Basel goers.

Gold Coast Art Fair (Chicago) - June 2022

Gold Coast Art Fair is the 3rd Oldest Art Fair in Chicago. Artwork Archive reports it as the “3rd oldest and by far one of the most well-attended art festivals in Chicago. Located within walking distance of the Art Institute of Chicago, Millennium Park, The Bean, and Buckingham Fountain, the Gold Coast Art Fair draws hundreds of thousands of art enthusiasts from Chicago and the surrounding suburbs annually” (GoldCoast). As Gold Coast attendees will already be looking forward to visiting the Art Institute as well as many other cool installations, they will be intrigued by the fun illusion-type installations featured in the Sephora art gallery.

House of Beauty - September 2022

Lastly, the art gallery will end at Sephora's annual House of Beauty event after touring the three art fairs.

Sephora: Profile

Sephora, founded in 1970, is a "French multinational retailer of personal care and beauty products. Featuring nearly 3,000 brands along with its own private label, Sephora Collection" (Wood). Sephora offers a wide range of beauty products including cosmetics, skincare, body, fragrance, nail color, beauty tools, body lotions and hair care, carrying not only a broad range in each, but also featuring exclusive contracts with popular companies such as Fenty Beauty and NYX Cosmetics.

Sephora's Brand

Sephora's Brand promise is to TEACH, INSPIRE, PLAY, and SHARE, while promoting an inclusive, judgment free zone and an ability to explore. I chose a paint & sip event for its nature of exploration and having fun in a social setting; People of all ages and different ranges of artistic ability can enjoy themselves and learn something new in a welcoming environment. I believe that a Paint & Sip type of event best encompasses all of Sephora's brand promises through *teaching* new makeup skills, allowing people to *play* with makeup, *sharing* participants faces in a #Sephoria gallery, and *inspiring* new uses of makeup in more bold ways. With a Paint and Sip, the audience is taught how to use Sephora's tools while being able to explore and play with it themselves, akin to the explorative nature of a Paint and Sip class. The art gallery allows them to share their work in a non-judgmental space, as well as inspire the next class of Painters and Sippers to make even more spectacular works.

Sephora SWOT

Strengths

Sephora's strength is their strong brand image that stays consistent through stores and social media. The black and white theme is seen in every store, as well as influences the sharp socials on every platform. Even the website reflects a black and white interface, giving a sharp and clean look. Because of this adherence to black and white, a museum setting for Sephora's brand experience would be on brand and would look cohesive with the Sephora experience. The black and white, sleek look of a museum reestablishes Sephora as a clean classy place as compared to the colorful and overly pink Ulta or a chaotic Target. The Sephora experience is refined, just like walking through the galleries of a nice museum.

Next, Sephora also has more unique and well curated items than their main competitor, Ulta, as Sephora has exclusive contracts with lines such as Fenty, TooFaced and NYX that Ulta would never be able to supply. With the art gallery, Sephora can advertise their unique and broad range of makeup, and the best way to do so is to showcase their makeup 'tools' and palettes at the brand experience Paint and Sip museum.

Weakness

Sephora's weakness is the expensive prices as compared to their competitors. However, this can also be a strength as higher product prices sometimes infer better quality, and the higher prices also are on brand for the image of a high class museum setting that Sephora will put the event goes in.

Opportunities

Not only is the makeup and skin care industry growing, with the latter expected to grow by USD 4.65 billion during 2021-2025 (Technavio), the beauty industry itself is evolving especially due to technological advancements and trends during COVID, such as no-transfer liquid lipsticks to combat lip smudges from mask usage. Sephora is ahead of that trend curve with their exclusive skincare lines and Sephora original skin care products. Sephora can fully capture this opportunity by showcasing that Sephora carries the most elite, museum finish quality tools for any makeup or skin care job as well as a broader and more unique range of items than competitors.

Threats

Lastly, Sephora's main threats are their closest competitors, Mac and Ulta, but if Sephora continues to push their exclusive products and how they differ from those competitors, they will continue to stay relevant and sought after in the beauty industry. The purpose of the Paint & Sip and Art Gallery is to show that Sephora has the best and most elite tools for artistic expression, on a broader scale than that of Ulta's or any other beauty product retailer, while still allowing guests to explore those tools in a fun and engaging way.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
★ Strong Brand Image ★ Exclusive lines	★ Higher prices than competitors	★ Makeup/skincare industry evolving	★ ULTA ★ MAC

Figure 2: SWOT Chart

The Event

The 2nd phase of this project is to outline the procedures and details of Sephora's 'Mobile Art Gallery' and Paint & Sip sessions. An instrumental aspect for a memorable event marketing is the incorporation of the 5 senses - the sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound of the space.

First, **taste**. Like the fancy hors d'oeuvres some museums pass out, guests at the Sephora art gallery will be served cheese, crackers, and a drink of choice upon sitting down at the vanities. It will be an alcohol-free event, as there are still under 21 crowds at art fairs, as well as parents at the fair with young children, so instead there will be an option for mocktails to really emulate the spirit of a fun and relaxing Paint and Sip event.

The **sounds** will take a mature step away from Sephora's usual in store pop-music playlist and instead be a live violinist or orchestra to keep the museum ambiance. During the Paint sessions, the live music can be replaced with a calm classical music soundtrack. According to Kasimu, classical music can improve concentration and create a different environment, so it would be a great ambience creator for a museum event. Music can also provoke a certain mood in listeners, so the inspirational classical music combined with snacks will have the attendees remembering how relaxed and eager for creativity a Sephora pop-up made them feel.

The **smells** in the space will be of incense, as its scent sparked images of "freedom and nonconformity" (SensoryCo4d.org) in a case study led by Newseum in Washington DC. One takeaway from this study was the power of scent and memory. "Many studies show how intricately scents are tied to memories and museums are using this phenomenon to take exhibits

to the next level” (Newseum). A fresh incense smell will also help make the event more memorable, as it can not only create a mood but also spark memories or have more attendees remember their time in the Sephora gallery.

The **sights** will include the social moments and installations scattered around the space, such as the digital frames showcasing the Sephora looks of attendees to the Museum-of-Illusions-inspired bust statues for a photo op. The space will be decorated minimalistically to match the look of a contemporary museum, keeping the black and white colors of Sephora. An example is shown in Figures 4 and 5. This will allow the focus to be on the Paint and Sip teacher and the attendees rather than what is on the walls. The attendees can only add value to the blank digital frames on the wall when they contribute their makeup artwork to the Sephora gallery, and allow their artwork to be displayed in the digital frames.



Figures 4 & 5: Black and White Contemporary Museum Interiors

Lastly, the **touch** will be the hands on learning experience of a Sephora masterclass and being able to experiment with the tools given by Sephora in a judgment free environment. Guests will be given a leather roll-up bag that carries Sephora brushes and a few samples to use during the Paint & Sip master class, which also doubles as a tangible takeaway and a makeup bag to remember Sephora every time they use the bag to carry makeup. Inspired by artists' tool kits, a leather black and white tool roll up as seen below would be a fun but artistic way to deliver three premium Sephora brushes and four sample sized Sephora products for participants leaving the gallery. These art themed bags keep the museum presentation alive as well as reminds the audience of the link between makeup and artistry.



Figure 6: Canvas & Leather Artist Tool Kit

Next is the outline of the user journey to show in which order the guests will experience the Sephora Art Gallery and Paint & Sip.

Audience Journey

1. Guests enter the gallery.
2. Along the walls are digital frames showing slideshows of people in Sephora's makeup.
3. Guests are served drinks and snacks, museum gallery style, as they look around briefly.
4. Guests can choose to join the 'curation' of gallery artwork, which consists of attending the Paint and Sip class and creating a makeup look either on their own face or a reusable mannequin head. Those participating will be given the Sephora roll up tool kit to use and keep afterwards.
5. Guests can take photos inside the "blank" frames or the illusion-style bust podium to best show off their new face artwork.
6. After they take their photos, guests can leave.

The event sessions will be 45 minutes- 20 minutes of Paint and Sip activities, 20 minutes for pictures and viewing, and 5 minutes in between parties for clean up, and those who chose not to partake in the paint in sip can have a 20 minute experience to look around the live faces museum and take pictures with the installations.

While waiting in line, event goers can take surveys to color match skin tone for the palette they will be given at the door, and take this time to answer questions about their experience with Sephora in general.

When inside, attendees will be served drinks, snacks and their personal Sephora tool bag, and can choose to take a seat at the vanity to participate in the Sephora Paint and Sip event or

head to the art gallery to look around and take photos. Those who participate in the Paint and Sip will be showcased on the virtual frames on the wall throughout the event and the rest of the day.

The Head Artist will Explain that the Sephora gallery consists of everyone's faces and that Sephora would like to curate new artwork together, and will teach the class- people can naturally choose to either follow along in the mirror or change things up to differentiate their looks. The different 'Class offerings' are inspired by different art styles such as Pointillism, Abstract, and Realism as seen in figure 7. Afterwards, Paint and Sip attendees will essentially provide walk around advertising for the gallery as they will all leave with beautiful makeup in these artistic styles.

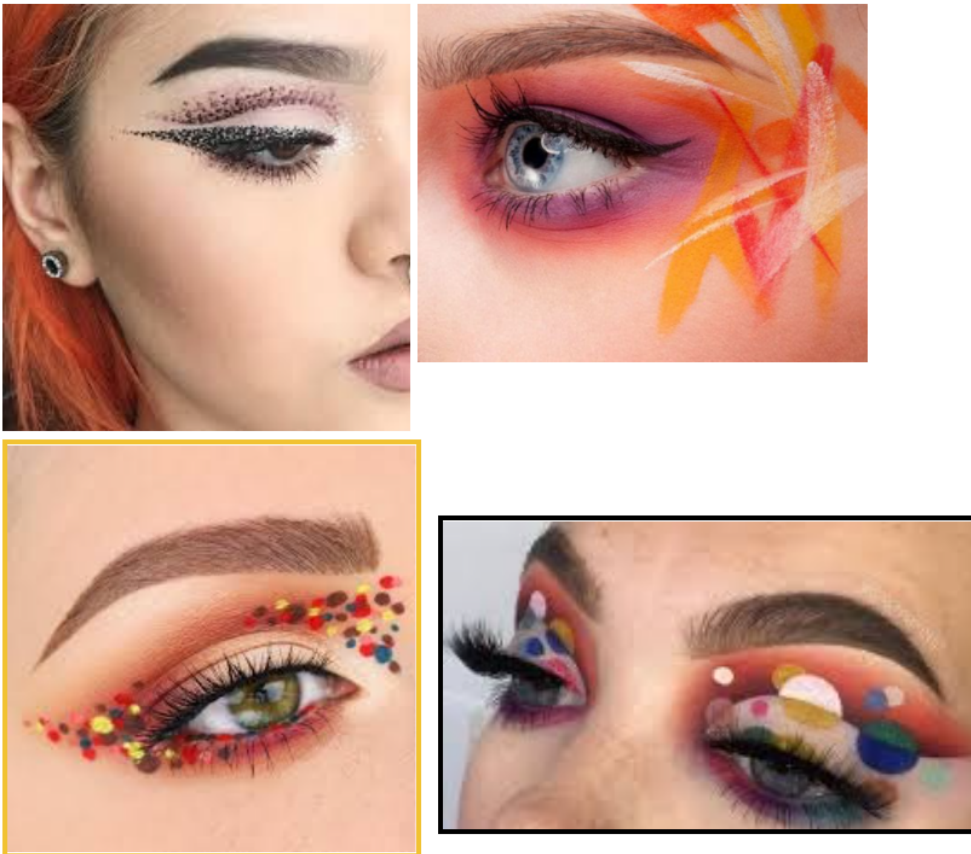


Figure 7: Examples of Paint and Sip Class Offerings: The Abstract & Pointillism

Style Guide

Color Palette

To keep consistent with Sephora's black and white scheme, the colors of the event will only be black, white, and gold, with the gold adding a touch of regality and staying on theme with a museum setting.

#000000	#ffffff	#f1c232
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Figure 8: Color Palette & Hex Codes

Social Moments and Photo Opportunities

It is crucial to have social media moments so people not only have a photo memory of their experience with Sephora, but it will also provide free advertising as people post their pictures on social media. Taking professional photos of guests and including these in the art gallery's walls also makes event-goers feel like they are included in the experience and are shown off properly in Sephora products. As seen in Figure 9, guests will be able to pose inside gold Sephora frames by entering a hollow wall, as if they too were "a work of art." Alongside these empty frames will be digital frames showcasing the faces and makeup looks from earlier that day, or some of Sephora's favorite makeup looks in the past.



Figure 9: Empty Frame Installation

The next installation is a marble bust style sculpture inspired by the Museum of Illusions. Event goers would essentially become an art installation as Sephora's artwork as they are to be displayed on a pedestal that only focuses on the bust. Lighting on the face will help to also spotlight the makeup look done. An example of this is shown in Figure 10 and 11.



Figure 10, Figure 11: Marble Bust & Museum of Illusion Installation

Following these photo moments, guests will be able to leave with many fun and interesting photos of a gallery made from their own face, as well as photos with these installations.

Conclusion

All in all, the purpose of this project was not only to design a brand experience for Sephora, but also to push myself to create something in a topic that I am passionate about. In the future I hope to have a job in the creative realm designing and executing these types of events, or to work as a graphic designer for an awesome company like Sephora. Future developments with this brand experience proposal could be to find a Sephora manager and pitch this idea to them for a chance to work on their event planning team as well, or to even one day see the full execution of Sephora's Art Gallery and Paint & Sip!

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