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Hold that pose: The Chelsea Museum of Art provides the perfect place for an art-based product launch (1). To celebrate the new line of sensual intimate apparel, EventQuest takes a new look at the old masters (2). Keeping Sony's Blu-ray DVD player top of mind, a street in Rhodes comes alive with performances that center around blue light (3).

PRESS TIME

Event pros use dragons, nearly nude models and a faux pharmacy to engage jaded members of the press at product launches
 By Alexandra Gudmundsson

Members of the media see plenty of new products debut. It takes a new take on press previews to awe an audience that's been there and done that before. Read on to see how interactive environments make events worthwhile for the media.

ART'S ALIVE

Instead of falling back on another stale fashion show or mannequin display to announce a new brand of intimate apparel, New York-based EventQuest decided to bring art to the party. For client JCPenney's new Ambrielle collection, the largest brand launch in JCPenney history, according to EventQuest CEO and executive creative director Mark Veeder, the line of sleepwear, bras and panties needed a fresh, hip launch last fall.

At Manhattan's Chelsea Museum of Art, 250 members of the media enjoyed a display of iconic images of women by painters including Kahlo and Degas. Models wearing the Ambrielle collection posed in *tableaux*

vivants. Ingres' masterpiece "Le Grande Odalisque" served as the base of one vignette with a model echoing the famous stance complete with a fan of peacock feathers.

Alongside these classics, a variety of more recent pieces by emerging artists added to the atmosphere. Forty works of art depicted each artist's own interpretation of sensuality, which clued guests into the Ambrielle brand's "unique perspective of sensuality both past and present," Veeder says. Since the media has "been everywhere and seen everything," Veeder says, "you need to continually come up with fresh and new ideas to keep their attention."

BEAUTY BLAST

With a beauty line launching in the U.S., U.K.-based drug store giant Boots wanted to educate American consumers about its stylish cosmetics line. To bring Boots to U.S. consumers, New York-based Paint the Town Red looked back on the venerable company's



150-year-old history.

Paint the Town Red crafted a mock apothecary at New York's Boylan Studios in February. "The press conference area was decorated with dark wood-paneled counters and display cases, antique cash registers, mortars and pestles, and other props from a 19th century apothecary, where Boots was born," says Howard Givner, president of Paint the Town Red. Treating 80 journalists from fashion and lifestyle publications to the old-fashioned scene helped the editors "fully understand the history and pedigree of the company," he adds.

An intimate introduction to Boots' products followed the press conference. "Dedicated product

specialists gave 6-minute introductions to small groups of editors," Givner says. The smaller groups allowed for a personal experience with each product. Givner stresses the importance of a clear and consistent message. "Stick to a few key messaging points you want the media to take away, and then hammer them home over and over," he suggests. "Repetition in various mediums—signage, collateral, video, staging, etc.—counts."

As for future product launches, Giver says experts are turning to viral methods for long-term exposure. "Examples include providing podcasts of the press conference or launch for people to download who couldn't attend," he says, "and insuring that influential bloggers are covering the announcement." ▶

Media Magnets

Event experts share the basics of presenting new products to the press.

Howard Givner, Paint the Town Red:

"Each guest represents readership/viewership of thousands—if not millions—of potential customers, so you have no margin of error and really have to be on top of your game. If you really nail the experience, you leverage their impact in a positive way."

Ursula Morrish, Imagination:

"Members of the media don't want to feel as though their time has been wasted, so stress-free travel and a choice of what they do when they arrive is crucial. You should also allow downtime for media to write and check e-mail."

Mark Veeder, EventQuest:

"We're always looking for new venues and taking media to **unusual places.**"

