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Acne Studios Goes Uptown With Madison Avenue Store

Gold is the store's signature color, in honor of its tony new neighborhood.

By [Jessica Iredale](#) on November 11, 2016




Acne Studios Madison Avenue store.


Acne Studios, the Swedish brand with downtown cool-kid associations, is moving on up to the Upper East Side of New York with a Madison Avenue store that opened Thursday.

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“We have realized in the last couple of years that we have the cool downtown girl, but we also have her uptown mother, to a big extent,” said Mikael Schiller, Acne Studio’s executive chairman. “We have the 22-year-old girl and we have the 50-year-old woman. Therefore, it felt quite natural for us open uptown.”

Located at 926 Madison Avenue on the corner of 74th Street, the store is Acne’s third in New York — there are locations in SoHo and the West Village — and fourth in the U.S.

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An Acne store on Madison isn’t as counterintuitive as one might think. Schiller pointed out that Jonny Johansson, the brand’s creative director, got married at the Carlyle Hotel, the epitome of old world uptown, last year. Taking a 2,000-square-foot space where Clyde’s pharmacy, which downsized, was a big financial commitment. Schiller and Johansson also wanted to make a design statement worthy of the new, posh neighborhood.

“If we were going to do it, we wanted to do it properly,” said Schiller. “We didn’t want to build a mansion. We wanted to elevate our neighborhood store and put it on the global stage.”

The store is the only one in Acne Studio’s retail network to use gold as the signature tone, with aluminum metal interior walls and fixtures done with a gold finish. The shelving is gold, the racks are gold and the benches and tables and display cases are gold. The floor and pillars are done in black asphalt sprinkled with semiprecious colored stones. Max Lamb, who has a long

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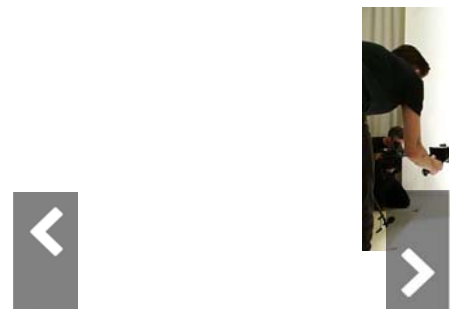
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relationship with Acne, designed the interiors, softening the bronze and asphalt effects with custom hand-dyed rugs done in Scandinavian patterns that were tufted at Kasthall in Sweden.

The store carries women's and men's ready-to-wear, denim, bags and accessories. Schiller said the U.S. is the brand's biggest market. A San Francisco store is planned for next year, as well as Milan and Sydney. Interestingly, the brand is looking to lower its store count in Scandinavia.

"What we're doing is not suitable for as many doors and as many stores as we opened 10 years ago in Sweden and Norway," said Schiller. Still, he said the company experienced double-digit growth last year, declining to get specific, though he did say the size of Acne Studios's global business is 200 million euros.

Like many brands, Acne Studios has felt the struggle of wholesale. Schiller said e-commerce has the highest sales volume, followed by its own [retail](#), then wholesale. "What we feel in wholesale is basically that we want to work with fewer stores, but we want to work deeper and closer," said Schiller. "I think actually, we'll decrease our number of stores from an all-time high, maybe five years ago, of 1,400 and now we're talking about 700 globally."

Two-thirds of their business, of which Schiller and Johansson are the majority owners, is women's. Knitwear and denim are important categories for men and women. And Acne has started to gain traction on its small leather goods and handbags. Schiller said the Musubi bag range is beginning to perform quite well.

He declined to cite sales projections for the Madison Avenue store, but asked what it means for the brand to be on Madison, Schiller said, "Ask me that in one year's time, please."



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