

EXCLUSIVE: John Galliano Renews Contract at Maison Margiela

Revenues have doubled since the designer arrived in 2014, according to the company.

By [Miles Socha](#) on October 30, 2019



[John Galliano](#) has hit his creative stride at [Maison Margiela](#) — and he's staying put, WWD has learned.

[Renzo Rosso](#), president of Margiela parent OTB, confirmed that he has renewed Galliano's contract as creative director of the Paris-based house. The length and terms of the new pact were not disclosed, but it is understood to span several years.

Margiela trumpeted that revenues of the house [have doubled since Galliano arrived in 2014](#), and that the designer propelled accessories to account for 60 percent of the business thanks to a series of hit handbags and sneakers in particular.

"I believed John was the only person who could take this house five years ago, and I am even more convinced of this today," Rosso said in a statement. "John's undisputed talent is only matched by his understanding of today's generations, their way of thinking, their struggles, their dreams. And he is doing exactly what this maison always did at its best — disrupt, innovate and inspire."

For his part, Galliano said: “I am super excited for this new chapter and grateful to Renzo for his belief in me and the vision for **Maison Margiela**.”

The maverick British designer has dubbed Maison Margiela “the coolest cutting-edge couture house,” and used the haute platform to explore gender fluidity, high-tech fabrications that interact with smart phones, and new experiments in garment reconfiguration.

Rosso left Galliano free of any commercial obligation to create Margiela’s Artisanal collections, returning couture to its function as a research and development department that can inspire other product lines, rather than service an elite clientele.

At Margiela, the couture serves as the top of a creative pyramid “which infuses all ready-to-wear and accessories lines. **John Galliano has managed to create a new, relevant and coordinated image** and offer for the house that is successfully catering to the market,” the maison said in a statement.

One of fashion’s most flamboyant and controversial figures, Galliano surprised the fashion world when it was first revealed that he would take over the creative direction of Margiela, founded in 1989 by an intensely secretive, labcoat-wearing Belgian designer.

The appointment in 2014 telegraphed Rosso’s daring approach to the fashion business and raised questions about how one of the industry’s great romantics might interpret a house built on avant-garde ideas like deconstruction.

Galliano had been sitting on fashion’s sidelines **after being ousted from Christian Dior** and his signature fashion house in 2011 following racist and anti-Semitic outbursts that precipitated one of the most spectacular flameouts in recent fashion history.

Prized for his ultrafeminine, historically inspired designs, and a particular penchant for bias-cut gowns, Galliano was seen as a surprising choice for a house known for cleft-toed boots, deconstructed fashions and all-white stores.

Yet critical and commercial acclaim for Maison Margiela has widened in recent season, prompting speculation Galliano could be poached, or decamp to a larger house.

According to sources, the designer reconciled with LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton last year, and some executives there had floated him as a potential candidate **to succeed Karl Lagerfeld at Fendi**, for example.

Margiela now seems poised to put more firepower behind Galliano's creativity with a new store concept debuting soon "to support the important retail development the brand is planning worldwide," the company said.

The house has already introduced a new fragrance, Mutiny, developed with licensing partner L'Oréal and underscoring Galliano's rebellious, boundary-breaking approach to fashion.

Rosso's OTB swept in and bought a majority stake in Margiela in 2002, one of a series of acquisitions aimed at building a multibrand Italian group.

The founding designer remains as celebrated as he is elusive: He is the subject of a new documentary by Reiner Holzemer, "Martin Margiela: In His Own Words," slated to premiere Nov. 8 at the Doc NYC film festival.