

INTERNET

De Beers paints portrait of Olympic athlete to exemplify passion, commitment

January 15, 2016



Ning Zetao for De Beers

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Jeweler De Beers is personifying its rigorous standards for diamonds through a profile of an Olympic athlete who has also met its criteria.

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"In Pursuit of Excellence" features Chinese swimmer Ning Zetao, who won gold in the 100-meter freestyle at the 2015 FINA Swimming World Championships in Kazan, Russia, last August, becoming the first Asian to medal in that event at the 16th annual competition. While an athlete may not seem like the obvious choice to represent a jewelry house, this short video allows De Beers to parallel its own dedication to exceptionality through the sports star.

"At De Beers we are dedicated to pushing the boundaries of diamond jewelry creation, and in all of our diamonds we look for fire, life and brilliance," said Jennie Farmer, brand director at [De Beers Jewelry](#). "Ning Zetao demonstrates all these qualities as he shines in his pursuit of excellence."

Shine bright like a diamond

When Mr. Zetao won the gold medal, his victory turned him into a celebrity in China. According to the [Wall Street Journal](#), the hashtag #NingZetaoMakesHistory saw 66 million readers.

Now, as the swimmer trains for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, De Beers is showing support for his efforts through a social video.

The one-minute film opens with Mr. Zetao lying in a surreal meadow, his white attire and headphones popping against the lush green grass.



Video still

He narrates in Chinese with English subtitles, "There are many moments in life gone in a flash, but the memory lasts forever," as the film cuts to a closeup of his hand, on which is a De Beers diamond ring.

His voiceover continues, "I like to use my eyes to experience different environments, and my ears to hear different sounds." As he says this, the film illustrates this by showing him peering up at a clearing in a forest or removing his headphones.

During footage of the athlete swimming, he explains that he uses his hands to capture his dreams.

In the next scene, he is wearing a suit, his ring still in place as he holds his hand over his chest, urging the viewer, "feel with your heart." As he embraces a faceless female, he finishes the statement with "and love deeply."

At the end, as De Beers jewelry is shown, he explains how life resembles a diamond itself, because "wonder shines through every facet."

In Pursuit of Excellence: De Beers and Ning Zetao

"In China top athletes are true icons and figures of national pride," Ms. Farmer said. "Ning Zetao is a wonderful sportsman and a true example of exceptional passion, expertise and commitment, values that we share at De Beers."

Profiles in excellence

De Beers has previously highlighted its own accomplishments through profiles of successful women across fields.

The "jeweler of light," is illuminating women's causes through a portrait series that highlights the talents and achievements of five women across various industries.

Photographed by Mary McCartney, "Moments in Light" works to capture the "brilliance" of these women just as De Beers aims to "honor the light" of a diamond. By showing empowered, successful women in the "Moments in Light" initiative, De Beers is underlining traits sought in potential consumers ([see story](#)).

With the Olympic Games coming up this year, other luxury marketers will likely be aligning themselves with athletes or expanding on current efforts.

In 2014, U.S. apparel brand Ralph Lauren heightened its association with the United States Olympic team with a video featuring a select group of athlete brand ambassadors.

In the video, the athletes talk about their feelings about participating in the Olympics and representing the U.S. while sporting the apparel Ralph Lauren designed for the team. Ralph Lauren was continuing its legacy of outfitting the U.S. Olympic team, which gave the brand an opportunity to connect itself to the prestige of the games, and connect with fans following the sporting events ([see story](#)).

"Ning Zetao stunned his competitors winning gold in the 100m freestyle at the 16th World Swimming Championship, and is highly admired in China," Ms. Farmer said. "He is dedicated to his training for the 2016 Olympics, so we wish him the very best of luck!"