

JEWELRY

Tiffany addresses rumors of "slave collar" design

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Return to Tiffany necklace

By STAFF REPORTS

U.S. jeweler Tiffany & Co. was the subject of a viral Facebook post that alleged the company's heart designs stemmed from slave collars.

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A consumer's Facebook post from Sept. 26 depicting a display at a museum gathered 30,000 shares, forcing the company to respond in a Facebook post of its own. Tiffany addressed the photograph, saying that the collar was not affiliated with its company.

Rumor has it

The original post shows a photograph of a brass collar dating back to the 18th century featuring an engraved heart-shaped locket. On top of the locket is Tiffany branding in its iconic blue color.

Text below the display explains the use of the collar by wealthy slave owners for their female slaves. This paragraph also says that this collar was used as the basis for Tiffany's choker necklace with a heart pendant.

Due to the timing of the post and the original post's reference to Washington, the collar was rumored to be on display at the newly opened National Museum of African American History and Culture. Tiffany debunked this, saying that the collar was part of the exhibit at the Lest We Forget Slavery Museum in Philadelphia.

In a statement, Tiffany wrote, "We are deeply troubled by the image circulating of a 'slave collar' and can definitively assure you that this piece was not made by Tiffany, nor have we ever made any jewelry in our 179 year history for this deplorable purpose."

Tiffany contacted the Philadelphia museum, and "confirmed that there is no provenance information on the piece, who made it or any supporting documentation regarding its intended use."

The museum has taken down any references to Tiffany within the display.

A number of comments on Tiffany's statement came to the brand's defense, with one calling the jeweler a victim of the museum's lack of fact-checking, while others said that the brand should never have been forced to defend its

reputation. Others called for more information on the origin of the brand's heart designs, or said that the visual similarity was still a problem for them.

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