

RETAIL

William & Son named National Portrait Gallery Gala sponsor

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William & Son's Gala Jewelry Collection

By STAFF REPORTS

British luxury boutique department store William & Son is demonstrating its commitment to the arts through patronage of the National Portrait Gallery in London.

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To show its dedication to supporting British heritage, William & Son has inked a deal to be the lead sponsor of the National Portrait Gallery's upcoming Portrait Gala March 28. In addition to sponsoring the social event, William & Son has created a jewelry and handbag collection to mark the occasion.

Dressing for the occasion

Since the National Portrait Gallery was established in 1856, it has been collecting portraits of individuals who have made a significant contribution to British life and history.

Held annually, the gala raises funds to financially support the National Portrait Gallery's daily work. One such ongoing project is "Coming Home," an effort to return portraits of iconic individuals to places of significance to them. For example, a portrait of the Bronte sisters will be returned to Yorkshire.

The 2017 Portrait Gala will be held on the evening of March 28.

"Portraiture explores the nature of humanity in a way that other art forms find hard to beat, by capturing the never-ending array of facial expressions which raise questions in the viewers' minds which can never be answered," said William Asprey, William & Son's chairman and founder. "It makes human subjects live forever through a timeless form of representation."



Illustration of William & Son's Mayfair department store

"The National Portrait Gallery, with its extensive collection of portraits and special exhibitions, gives us all a wonderful insight into past and present lives and makes us question where we have been and where we are going," he said. "Therefore we are delighted to be the lead sponsor of the Gallery's Portrait Gala, to support this important process of education."

In addition to the gala, William & Son has created two collections, with both bespoke and permanent pieces, made in support of its patronage.

The Gala Jewelry Collection will feature jewelry designed by William & Son's in-house designers and handcrafted in British workshops. A necklace and earring suite features ethically-sourced aquamarines and diamonds.



Sketch of William & Son's Gala Jewelry Collection

William & Son's gala jewelry was inspired by the Elizabethan ruffs seen in the "Ditchley Portrait" of Queen Elizabeth I.

The Gala Evening Bag Collection includes a range of hand-embellished evening bags made from exotic skins and

sold in vibrant colors.

William & Son's one-off jewelry suite and handbag range will be sold at the retailer's Mayfair store. The Gala Jewelry will go on sale March 29 and the handbags will hit shelves summer 2017.

Fine art is at the top of the luxury pyramid, and today's luxury brands should strive to be modern-day Medicis by becoming patrons, says an Artsy senior executive.

At Luxury Interactive 2016's "Supporting the Arts: How Artsy is Opening its Storytelling Doors for Brands" keynote, the platform's president and COO worked to demonstrate why advertising dollars should be allocated toward the support of the arts. Aside from being a public good, advocating for the arts enhances a brand's stature and allows it to tap into an audience that is dedicated, involved, knowledgeable and financially established ([see story](#)).

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