

GOVERNMENT

In light of royal funeral, British luxury brands extend final farewells

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Heritage houses are reflecting upon legacy. Image credit: Walpole, Heathrow Airport

By AMIRAH KEATON

As millions gathered at Westminster Abbey in London to view Queen Elizabeth II's final public procession on Monday, audiences also witnessed the region's luxury maisons respond with formal regards.

Heritage houses worldwide are bidding adieu alongside citizens, dispatching a myriad of honorary assets and reflecting upon Her Majesty's legacy. Particularly personal and intense in nature, expressions of condolence from British luxury leaders have stood out above all.

"Historically, style and taste are inherent to royal imagery," said Darnell Lisby, assistant curator of fashion at Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.

"There is a common link and respect between the two, the fashion industry and the royal family."

Final farewells

While a majority of British luxury brands paid their respects on the day of or after the royal loss, virtually all have now extended commemorations to the Queen and family. As the funeral ceremony airs worldwide at the week's start, so too do honorary public displays.

Britain's fashion heavyweights, many of whom had designs embraced by royals during notable, newsworthy occasions in royal history, have responded, using long-form editorial mediums to spread messages in memoriam across various mediums.

Of course, as with any heads of state, supporting the brands in one's own country is paramount to convey solidarity and national pride," Mr. Lisby said.

"Designers from Vivienne Westwood to Galliano to McQueen have had designs worn by the royal family."

British designer and popularizer of punk Vivienne Westwood presented a portmanteau of sorts, drafting a handwritten letter addressing the occasion's significance, pictured and posted to the brand's digital climate crisis forum, "No Man's Land."

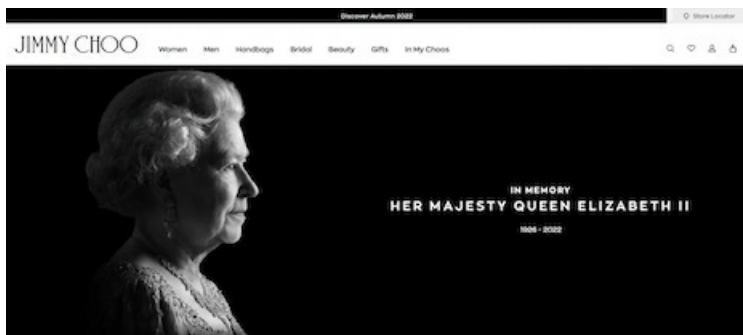


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A post shared by Vivienne Westwood (@viviennewestwood)

Known for his creative work with French fashion houses Givenchy and Dior, fashion designer John Galiano paid his respects by penning a piece for [Vogue](#).

British luxury brands have exhibited just as much vigor as individual cases. Nearly all British brands chose to commemorate the Queen with a simple homepage banner.



British footwear label Jimmy Choo's homepage features a tribute to Queen Elizabeth II. Image credit: Jimmy Choo

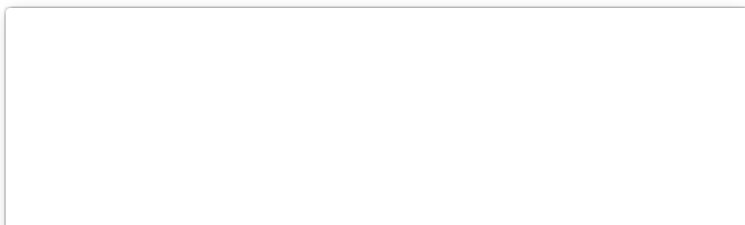
The sentiment continues onto social.

"Today we pause, reflect and show heartfelt gratitude for the life and historic reign of Her Majesty The Queen, an inspiration to all for generations to come," reads a caption on a Bentley Motors social post pushed live on Monday.

British entertainer and designer Victoria Beckham posted an ode to the leader, labeling the royal as the "epitome of elegance."

Luxury label Burberry has chosen to cease communications altogether. The brand has yet to post anything to its Instagram feed since Sept. 8.

Luxury retailers headquartered in the region, such as Harrods and Harvey Nichols, were also quick to weigh in.



[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Harrods (@harrods)

"In many generations, it was the duty of royal families to set the fashionable outlook of their realm in Britain and beyond," Mr. Lisby said.

"Of course, as with any heads of state, supporting the brands in one's own country is paramount to convey solidarity and national pride."

Royal patronage

Historically speaking, the royal family has served as first-in-line luxury patrons.

"Certainly, during the mid to late 1800s, British Couturier, Charles Frederick Worth became a favorite of Queen Victoria," Mr. Lisby said. "Worth obviously became internationally recognized for dressing royal women, including Empress Eugenie of France."

"Another major moment that comes to mind is the famous image of Duchess Wallis Simpson wearing the famous Schiaparelli dress with the lobster illustration by Dali," he said. "Royal men resorted mostly to Saville Row tailors traditionally, but with that said, there's always been a link between the British monarchy and the luxury fashion industry."

Despite a long history between luxury and the Queen, the industry was largely caught off guard by the loss ([see story](#)).

"This is slightly unprecedented because for all the British designers and most brands today, [as] this is the only monarch they knew," Mr. Lisby said.

"Obviously, there have been royal members over the years who've passed away, but this sentiment is slightly different from the others because the Queen was the symbol of the UK for 70 years."

The U.K. fashion industry's governing bodies have attempted to adapt, sharing similar, more serious sentiments in addition to updated protocols ([see story](#)).

Upon announcing that all fashion week events landing on the same day as Queen Elizabeth II's funeral would be shifted, both the British Fashion Council (BFC) and London Fashion Week lifted the country's National Moment of Reflection on social, held Sunday in honor of the Queen.

"I think the BFC's approach depends on who they are aiming to please," Mr. Lisby said.

"From what I've heard and seen, many of the labels are canceling their shows, which I think is an appropriate route as a show of bereavement and respect for her majesty," he said. "I can't speak economically if there will be an impact, but I think the gesture is noble."

"I'm sure the BFC is probably working with design houses, behind the scenes, to develop some commemorative collections or developing special public programming or a conference to discuss this very topic, reminiscing about the Queen's relationship with fashion."

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