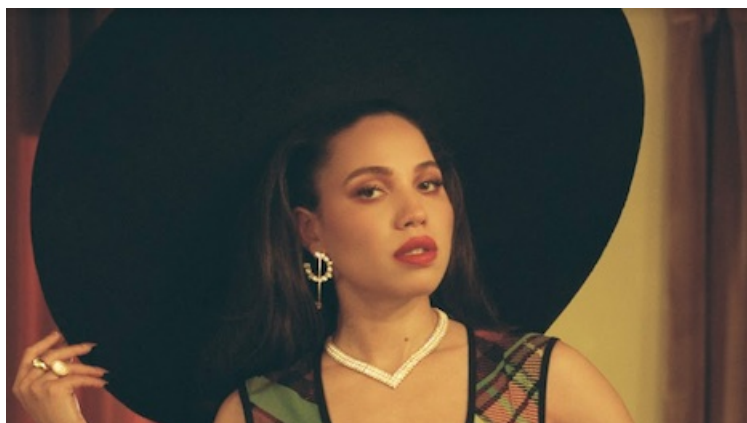


JEWELRY

Only Natural Diamonds reveals dazzling digital cover star Jurnee Smollett

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Actress Jurnee Smollett in an eye-catching Van Cleef & Arpels necklace. Image courtesy of Only Natural Diamonds

By AMIAH TAYLOR

Natural Diamond Council's consumer-facing digital platform Only Natural Diamonds has launched fall content featuring actress and producer Jurnee Smollett covered in more than 100 carats of genuine gemstones.

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As the star of this season's digital cover story, Ms. Smollett is in good company. Previous starlets who have served as ambassadors and frontwomen for the digital platform include English model and singer-songwriter Karen Elson, British actress Lily James and Cuban and Spanish actress Ana de Armas.

"My first substantial memory with natural diamonds was the New York premiere of my film with Denzel Washington, *The Great Debaters*," said Ms. Smollett, in a statement.

"I was about 20 or 21 and Cartier loaned me all these diamonds I was just in awe," she said. "We grew up pretty poor, and anything like that seemed so out of our reach or only reserved for women like Diana Ross and Elizabeth Taylor."

"Being able to see the artistry, craftsmanship, and unique energy of diamonds in person was such a special experience."

The many facets of Jurnee

American actress Ms. Smollett is instantly recognizable from her roles in films such as *"Eve's Bayou,"* and *"Birds of Prey."* In addition, she gained a cult following and an Emmy nomination for her bewitching presence as the character Letitia on HBO's *"Lovecraft Country."*

"The Multifaceted Jurnee Smollett / Only Natural Diamonds Fall Cover Story" was written and directed by Mark Lim

For her cover look, Ms. Smollett's skin is adorned with a cornucopia of brilliant crystals. Her bejeweled accessories include earrings from the Black-owned brand Mateo featuring ethically sourced diamonds from De Beers, and a ring from alumna of NDC's Emerging Designers Diamond Initiative Dorian Webb.

The actress' showstopping diamond necklace is from none other than French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels.

In the correlated campaign film, the first scene depicts Ms. Smollett sitting at a vanity table with jeweled pins littered across her voluptuous brown hair.

A pink velvet phone rings and Ms. Smollett answers a call from another version of herself she dubs her "shimmering queen."

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A post shared by Only Natural Diamonds (@onlynaturaldiamo...

A peek at Ms. Smollett's smoldering alter ego, dripping in diamonds

Perhaps in a call for every woman to dip deeper into all of the glimmering facets of herself, Ms. Smollett's personality is fragmented and the two foil characters play off of one another. The shimmering queen is adorned in black lace and pearls and the polished Ms. Smollett is characterized by brighter colors and textures like plaid and emerald green satin.

The discrepancy in costuming may also allude to the fact that Ms. Smollett's image has been divided into a public persona and a more private self.

At one point during the playful telephone conversation, Ms. Smollett says the following to her shimmering queen persona: "such sparkles and spontaneity I can never tell which of your stories is true, it's all so fantastic."

The film, deeply grounded in whimsy, ends with the affectionate phrase "bye, bye, apple pie," as Ms. Smollett hangs up the phone and continues a glamorous life uninterrupted by her disparate diamond diva alter ego.

The spectrum of stones

In February of this year, the Natural Diamond Council embraced a content-driven strategy with the appointment of Sam Broekema as its first editor in chief of Only Natural Diamonds ([see story](#)). Consequently, its publication's first cover star was supermodel Karen Elson ([see story](#)) who graced the cover in June outfitted in some of the best brands that luxury has to offer such as Bulgari, Gucci and Omega.

Natural Diamond Council is not the sole luxury entity looking to elevate the sophistication of gemstones through campaign films.

For its Divas' Dream jewelry collection, Roman jeweler Bulgari created a spellbinding promotional video that elevated colored gemstones like mandarin garnet and mint tourmaline to superstar status ([see story](#)).

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