

EVENTS / CAUSES

Tiffany mines brand history for 2015 documentary

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Jeweler Tiffany & Co. tapped Matthew Miele, director of "Scatter My Ashes at Bergdorf's," for a documentary chronicling its history to be released in 2015.

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The documentary will shed light on how Charles Lewis Tiffany developed the brand following its inception in 1837 and then travel through pivotal moments in its history. Unlike social media followers, for example, audiences of a documentary have a higher tolerance for absorbing information, which gives Mr. Miele plenty of slack when capturing the brand's lengthy background.

"The primary aim like any film is to tell a great story," said Matthew Miele, director of the Tiffany & Co. documentary. "And great stories exist not just within people, places or events, but they also exist within select companies who have had such extraordinary success, they have become American institutions.

"I am very interested in the business aspect and how such a modest beginning could eclipse just about every other company to become truly iconic," he said. "There are also the characters, both modern day and the unique individuals who have collectively catapulted the company along the way, who will be brought out from behind the curtain and given a unique profile to delve into their motives, their methods and their ultimate

influence within the Tiffany & Co. organization.

"I also think Tiffany & Co. as an aspirational brand has an inherent curiosity. I believe people will want to know what goes on behind the scenes, discover the who, how, why and where within Tiffany & Co., and achieve the goal of not only to document, to reveal, but also to inspire."

Trophies and seals

The documentary has been in production for more than six months as Mr. Miele researches and devises the film's arc, according to a press release.



Tiffany jewelry featured in Baz Luhrman's "The Great Gatsby"

While loyalists have a tendency to romanticize a brand's creation as the fruits of a single figure's inspired toil, Mr. Miele understands that Mr. Tiffany was helped along the way by a host of people worthy of recognition. Consequently, the documentary will try to recreate the many voices that influenced the brand and trace Tiffany's rise from a small stationary gift shop to a global luxury house.



Tiffany holiday window display on 5th ave, New York

In addition to the origin story, Mr. Miele will focus on the moments in Tiffany's history that have accrued cultural importance. For example, Mr. Miele referenced events ranging from the Tiffany Super Bowl trophy hoisted each year in front of hundreds of millions of viewers to the Great Seal of the United States visible on dollar bills.

Mr. Miele's earlier film "Scatter My Ashes at Bergdorf's" received mixed reviews. Rotten Tomatoes summarized the film as "a fun documentary which ultimately doubles as an infomercial for the Manhattan store."

Cinetic Media will package and sell the upcoming Tiffany film.

Pulling back the curtain

Luxury brands groom their origin stories to gain seals of authenticity in an environment where high prices are justified with inherited craftsmanship and brand mystique.

Chanel received Luxury Daily's 2013 Luxury Marketer of the Year award partly for its ability to translate the noise of brand history into compelling anecdotes ([see story](#)).

Chanel's film called "Once Upon a Time" with actress Keira Knightley, the longtime ambassador for Chanel's Coco Mademoiselle fragrance, starts in 1913 when Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel has opened a namesake hat boutique in on the Rue Gontaut-Biron in Deauville, France.

The label's creative director Karl Lagerfeld produced and directed the film to show how the brand's founder revolutionized fashion by creating a new style concept for modern women ([see story](#)).

Also, Italian footwear and accessories label Salvatore Ferragamo is telling the story of the

brand's eponymous founder through a fantastical short film showing the designer as a child.

"A Ferragamo Fairy Tale: White Shoe" is based on the first shoe that late Mr. Ferragamo created, a white shoe for his sister to wear for her first communion, which he constructed by candlelight. With this 24-minute film, Ferragamo is able to weave a more intricate story and tell its fans a dramatic version of the label's early history ([see story](#)).

Mr. Miele has ambitious plans for the Tiffany & Co. film and will likely draw upon the experience gained from his time working on "Scatter My Ashes at Bergdorf's"

"In the Bergdorf film, we touched briefly upon the history of the store in favor of showcasing how select designers were both incubated and given Bergdorf's seal of approval to go on to extraordinary success," Mr. Miele said.

"The Tiffany & Co. history is so innovative and complex in both its various incarnations, as well as the breathtaking talents who have marketed, designed or creatively directed the company to the global phenomenon it is today. I do plan on devoting at least 1/3 of the film to its unparalleled history," he said.

"Presenting an engaging backstory of any company or individual since their inception or birth respectively is always a challenge, but because Tiffany & Co. is such an inspired corporation on the creative level of an opera company, the timeline of events speak for themselves and I cannot wait to share what I've documented with the filmgoing audience."

Final take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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