

MULTICHANNEL

## Smythson targets trendy consumers with Quentin Jones collection

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By SARAH JONES

British stationery and leather goods maker Smythson has partnered with artist Quentin Jones on a collection of handbags, diaries and key chains bearing Ms. Jones' cartoon drawings.

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The line of accessories will launch exclusively online and in-store at Parisian concept boutique Colette, known for its quirky merchandise. Smythson will be able to reach a younger audience with this collection, both through Ms. Jones' cutesy art and Colette's trendy consumers.

"Smythson is a brand known for its classic, iconic designs," said Ashley Chin, account executive at [The O Group](#), New York. "A partnership with Quentin Jones, an artist whose appeal crosses the fashion and art worlds, the U.K. and the U.S., brings a fresh and contemporary spirit to the heritage brand."

Ms. Chin is not affiliated with Smythson but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Smythson](#) did not respond by press deadline.

Pop art

When Smythson was launching its new Panama line last September, it teamed up with Ms. Jones, who created a set of portraits of famous people and their relationship to their Panama diaries. Included subjects were actress Katharine Hepburn, philosopher Sigmund Freud and singer Kylie Minogue.

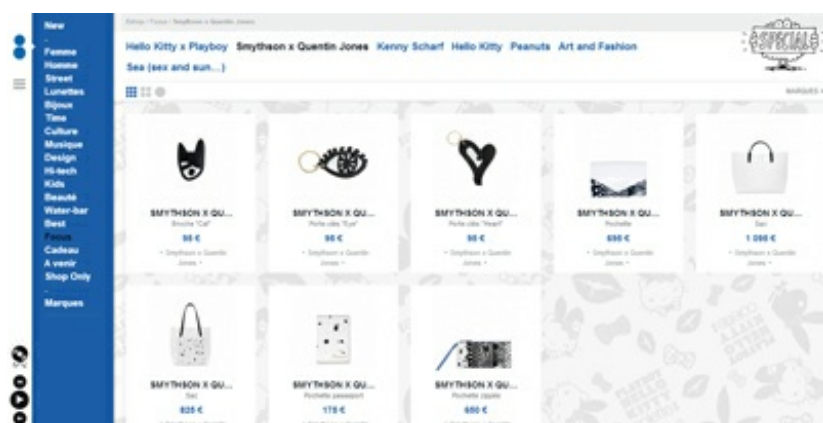


*Quentin Jones' artwork for Smythson*

Smythson called the collaboration the “perfect juxtaposition between traditional and contemporary.” Ms. Jones said having grown up in London, she was very familiar with the Smythson legacy, and enjoyed bringing her “twist” to the “classic” brand.

Smythson put Ms. Jones’ artwork on display at its New Bond Street store alongside its Panama collection.

For this second part of “The Panama Legacy,” Smythson has asked Ms. Jones to add her flair to Smythson leather goods. Diaries with “SoHo sinner” or “SoHo saint” scrawled on the front in gold, while a white tote bag is lined with a grey and white cat print.



*Smythson Quentin Jones collection on Colette's ecommerce site*

The line retails for approximately \$131 for a key chain or brooch to \$1,519 for a tote bag.

At Colette, Smythson has a large window display which shows all of Ms. Jones’ 10 portraits commissioned by Smythson last year, with large text that tells consumers of “The Panama Legacy.”



*Smythson window at Colette*

To introduce the collection, Smythson took consumers inside Ms. Jones' studio on its blog, explaining the process of making the accessories, which involved a special digital printing due to the texture of Smythson's leather.

The brand has also been promoting the collection on social media, showing sketches by Ms. Jones. Smythson also has the benefit of Colette's 289,000 Twitter followers and Ms. Jones' 3,400 followers, as all of the parties involved in the launch tweeted photos.



*Quentin Jones retweet of Smythson post*

From Colette, the collection and display of portraits will travel around the world.

Art statement

This is not the first fashion collaboration for Ms. Jones.

French fashion house Louis Vuitton enlisted the artist and fashion filmmaker to imbue its

fall/winter 2013 accessories collection with her signature energetic and exuberant style.

The video includes rapidly morphing shapes and colors, fractured planes and music similar to a video game while presenting many looks of the fall/winter accessories collection. Teaming up with an acclaimed filmmaker granted the brand the ability to reimagine what it stands for ([see story](#)).

Artist collaborations can elevate a brand's merchandise, making them collectors items.

British fashion house Alexander McQueen brought a touch of the art world into its skull scarves to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the iconic accessory.

The label selected artist Damien Hirst to design a capsule collection of scarves, which was available for purchase Nov. 15. By partnering with Mr. Hirst, McQueen was equating its scarves with art pieces and piquing collector, and therefore consumer, interest ([see story](#)).

This particular choice of collaborator points to a younger target demographic, and a goal of modernizing classic items.

"Through a partnership with Quentin, Smythson is trying to target a younger consumer, and perhaps appeal to those who admire a unique sense of style—someone who respects and values tradition but is expressive, and wants to share their point of view," Ms. Chin said.

"The collection will likely reinvigorate the brand's timeless appeal by juxtaposing classic design with Quentin's fun, bold and contemporary illustrations," she said.

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*