

News Release

Wednesday 29 March 2017

DUCHESS OF CAMBRIDGE, ROSAMUND PIKE, ALEXA CHUNG AND SOPHIE ELLIS BEXTOR ATTEND FUNDRAISING GALA AT NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

**The Portrait Gala, National Portrait Gallery, London
Tuesday 28 March 2017**

The Duchess of Cambridge, Rosamund Pike, Sophie Ellis Bextor, Samantha Cameron, Alexa Chung, Donna Air, Laura Bailey, Sai Bennett, Sadie Coles, Maggi Hambling, Mark Hix, Frances von Hoffsmantal, Maureen Paley, Samantha Spiro, Juergen Teller, Jamie Theakston, Philip Treacy and Jonathan Yeo were among the guests at the 2017 Portrait Gala, a special fundraising event at the National Portrait Gallery, London on Tuesday 28 March.

The Duchess, who has been Patron of the Gallery since 2012, viewed new special exhibitions *Howard Hodgkin: Absent Friends*, and *Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun: Behind the mask, another mask*, where Her Royal Highness was hosted by artist Gillian Wearing. The Duchess also met with Alexa Chung, Chair of the Portrait Gala Committee; the fashion designer, Erdem Moralioglu; artist, Ishbel Mysercough, and the milliner and designer Philip Treacy.

The gala saw artists, friends and supporters of the Gallery come together for an exclusive evening of art, live music and entertainment to raise funds for the Gallery's future work. The event included a live performance from the composer singer-songwriter Laura Mvula; a pop-up photography studio with renowned photographer, Johnnie Shand Kydd, set amongst the National Portrait Gallery's Victorian Galleries, and a private view of *Gillian Wearing and Claude Cahun: Behind the mask, another mask* and *Howard Hodgkin: Absent Friends*.

Celebrated artists and designers generously provided artworks and commissions to be auctioned or sold at the event, including 10 unique masks especially created for the gala by Dame Vivienne Westwood, Philip Treacy, Maggi Hambling, Sean Henry, Allen Jones, Peter Monkman, Ishbel Myerscough, Humphrey Ocean, Stuart Pearson-Wright and Andrew Tift. The one-of-a kind artworks were available to purchase at the Gala's *Behind the Mask* sale, and will be on public display at the Gallery until the 3 April 2017.

In addition, a *Mystery Portrait Postcards* sale included 100 new postcard sized works by artists, celebrities and well known individuals including Grayson Perry, Juergen Teller, Alex Katz and Julian Opie. The artworks are all anonymous and were sold for £250 on a first come first served basis. The *Mystery Portrait Postcards* will also be on public display until the 3 April 2017, and any unsold works will be available for visitors to purchase. The identity of the artist will be revealed when the works are sent out to those who have purchased them.

Funds raised from the Portrait Gala will directly support the National Portrait Gallery's work of delivering inspirational exhibitions and displays, offering unique learning opportunities and undertaking world class research. Additionally, proceeds will go towards *Coming Home*, a project that makes it possible for portraits of iconic individuals to return to places that are special to them for a period of loan. For example, *Coming Home* could enable sitters such as Sir Francis Drake to return to Plymouth, the Brontë sisters to Yorkshire or David Beckham to Essex.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, says: 'Events such as this evening allow us to celebrate our extraordinary collection and our achievements. Tonight we are raising funds for an excellent cause - to support both the Gallery's core purpose of delivering pioneering exhibitions and displays; which, as we hope, intrigue and delight; an innovative learning programme and world-class research – as well as a new project, and one that is very dear to me - *Coming Home*. This national programme will allow us to send portraits of key sitters from our Collection 'home', for a period of time, to the places they are most strongly linked to. For example, with your help, Sir Walter Raleigh could return to Dorset, the Brontë sisters to Yorkshire and David Beckham to Essex.

'We hope that sending portraits from our Collection 'home' in this way will foster a sense of pride and create a personal connection for local communities to a bigger national history; thus helping us to fulfil our aim of being truly a national gallery for everyone, in our unique role, as the nation's family album.'

The Portrait Gala is sponsored by William & Son and to celebrate the partnership, William & Son has created **The William & Son Gala Collections**, a combination of bespoke and permanent pieces featuring jewellery and evening bags which will be available in their Mayfair iconic store from spring 2017.

Ends

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National Portrait Gallery

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Notes to Editors

About William & Son

William Asprey founded his eponymous luxury goods store in 1999, establishing the company on Mayfair's Mount Street in 2000 before moving to its current flagship location on Bruton Street in 2015.

From the start William & Son specialised in the unusual and the surprising, the eclectic and sometimes the extravagant. In over a decade, the business has grown exponentially and, in the process, William & Son has built up a loyal, international clientele who appreciate and share the distinctive William & Son ethos of quality, innovation, tradition, bespoke and commitment to excellence.

William & Son is a small, family-run business with committed and engaging staff that is fortunate to have the confidence to indulge an eclectic rather than too commercial eye at the collections it offers. Founder and Chairman, William is a seventh generation member of the Asprey family and grew up with a strong sense of the traditions of retailing the finer things of life.

William & Son's guiding ethos is simple yet increasingly rare: to provide a carefully curated selection of the highest quality items, showcasing traditional British craftsmanship and the most discerning style. From leather goods to silverware, jewellery to watches, glassware to bespoke creations, William & Son's luxury boutique department store comprises two floors of beautiful, handpicked essentials and diversions for town and country living.

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10.00 – 18.00 (Gallery closure commences at 17.50) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10.00 – 21.00 (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **Website** www.npg.org.uk