

VIA Outlets Celebrates Pride Month with 'BE PROUD. BE YOU.' Exhibition Across its Portfolio of Pan-European Premium Fashion Outlets

AMSTERDAM, 6 June 2023 – VIA Outlets, Continental Europe's fastest-growing premium fashion outlet owner-operator, is celebrating Pride Month in June by showcasing unique commissioned artworks from local artists connected to the LGBTQIA+ community in its 'BE PROUD. BE YOU.' exhibitions across its 11 European outlet centres.

The exhibitions will display limited-edition tote bags designed for VIA Outlets by nine local artists to express what Pride means to them. All of the unique bag designs are being exhibited in VIA Outlets' centres in the Netherlands, Germany, Portugal, Czech Republic, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland from 6 June to 7 July. Guests will be able to purchase the bag designed by the artist in their region at their local outlet centre, with proceeds from the bag sales donated to ILGA-Europe, the leading non-profit organisation working with and for frontline LGBTI activists in 54 countries across Europe and Central Asia.

Otto Ambagtsheer, CEO of VIA Outlets, said: "Our first-of-its-kind 'BE PROUD. BE YOU.' exhibition is a reminder to always express your true self and be proud of who you are. At VIA Outlets, we take our responsibility towards our employees, brand partners, guests and local communities very seriously, which is why we strive to create a working and shopping environment that is inclusive and embraces diversity. We are united across all our centres in celebrating the Pride message and raising awareness together of what this important month means."

Pride Month is a celebration, but it also highlights the progress still needed to create a world where no one is offended, oppressed or discriminated against for their sexual orientation or gender identity. VIA Outlets' Pride Month exhibitions aim to educate guests on what Pride is about and why embracing diversity, equity and inclusion values matters in its business.

Evelyne Paradis, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, said: "We want to thank everyone who takes part in the 'BE PROUD. BE YOU.' campaign for their support for ILGA-Europe's work to safeguard the equality, safety and freedom of every LGBTI person. While there has been much progress on lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex rights, the situation for LGBTI communities across Europe remains fragile, with their rights under direct attack not only in countries where hate speech is rife, but where it is widely believed LGBTI people are progressively accepted. To ensure real progress towards equality continues in the current climate, we need the support of determined allies across sectors. This is why we're delighted to partner with VIA Outlets to raise vital funds and awareness, and bring a message of acceptance and inclusion to their centres across the region."

Frida Marie Grande, a Norwegian digital creator and one of the bag designers, added "We live in a world where at least 62 countries criminalise homosexuality. Even in safe Norway last year, we witnessed a brutal attack on the Pride community the day before we were supposed to fill Oslo's streets with the colours of the rainbow. We must all stand up for everyone's right to be who they are and love who they want. Because as Kim Friele so beautifully put it, 'If you know what love is, you immediately know that it is not dangerous.'"

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