

VIA Outlets 'BE PROUD. BE YOU.' Exhibitions Promote LGBTQIA+ Stories and Inclusion in Pan-European Pride Month Celebration

Amsterdam, 12 June 2024 – VIA Outlets, Continental Europe's fastest-expanding owner-operator of premium fashion outlets by gross lettable area (GLA) over the past decade, is raising awareness of Pride Month in June by collaborating with local artists in its 'BE PROUD. BE YOU.' exhibitions across all its 11 outlet centres. The exhibitions feature unique jigsaw puzzle-shaped art, with the puzzle pieces created by nine local artists connected to the LGBTQIA+ community. The designs express stories or themes close to the heart of each artist and are displayed together in the inclusive exhibition space.

In select centres, guests can join the artistic conversation on an interactive canvas, where they can weave colourful creations to reflect their own journey. Guests can also explore the history of Pride and meanings behind the Progress Pride flag colours and shapes in the rainbow library educational zones.

The annual global Pride celebrations offer an important opportunity to reflect on the progress made, and need for further improvements to create a world where everyone is accepted and not discriminated against for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Through its exhibitions, VIA Outlets is amplifying stories and themes within the LGBTQIA+ community, spotlighting the history of Pride, and affirming why embracing diversity, equity and inclusion matters in its business. VIA Outlets and its centres will also donate to ILGA-Europe, a leading non-profit organisation, to support its work with and for frontline LGBTI activists in 54 countries across Europe and Central Asia.

Otto Ambagtsheer, CEO of VIA Outlets, said: "Within our organisation and at our centres, we seek to create inviting spaces where everyone feels welcomed. Throughout June, we are united across Europe as we celebrate Pride and raise more awareness of this important month. We are proud to continue our partnership with ILGA-Europe and share these talented artists' diverse and unique artwork with our guests."

Anna Shepherd, Partnerships Manager of ILGA-Europe, added: "In many parts of Europe, LGBTI people are being scapegoated by those in power, targeted with hate speech and violence, while their human rights are consistently attacked. Against this backdrop, it's crucial we all pull together to protect and advance LGBTI equality as a cornerstone of freedom, safety and equality for everyone in our countries and communities. VIA Outlets is proudly visible in its commitment to inclusion of all, raising awareness through creativity and education in its centres across Europe. We are delighted that, as part of this commitment, VIA Outlets and its centres will for the second year donate to ILGA-Europe, making a real impact on our work for the safety, equality and freedom of LGBTI people."

Suzan Habib, a mixed media artist based in Stockholm, Sweden, and one of the artists sharing her story in the 'BE PROUD. BE YOU.' exhibition, said: "There are many layers to me as a person that are reflected in my art. I am a woman, born in a Muslim country, living in Sweden as an immigrant, and I am a lesbian. Under the colours of the rainbow, I have found home. My art embraces and retells the safety I have found in the LGBTQIA+ community."

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