

Tiffany & Co. hosted the first in a series of panel discussions titled In Conversation with Tiffany, which brings together creative talents from diverse fields to share insights on themes of common interest. The initial conversation, the Art of Storytelling, was held in the Susan and John Hess Theater, at the new Whitney Museum of American Art, located at 99 Gansevoort Street in Manhattan's Meatpacking District, and set to open to the public on May 1.

"We're here to inaugurate the partnership between our two great institutions," said Adam D. Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum, referring to Tiffany's recent agreement with the museum to be the lead sponsor of the Whitney Biennial in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The 2017 exhibition will be the first held in the new Whitney Museum. Tiffany CEO Frédéric Cumenal added, "We are thrilled to support the Whitney Biennial in giving emerging artists exposure on a global scale, and to bring new ideas in art, design and popular culture to the forefront."

Amy Fine Collins, special correspondent to Vanity Fair, moderated the panel, which included Reese Witherspoon, Oscar®-winning actress and producer; Matthew Miele, documentary filmmaker; Francesca Amfitheatrof, Tiffany design director; and Weinberg. "Each of our distinguished panelists is a master storyteller," she said. "Through their work in art, acting and film production, documentaries and jewelry design, they all tell stories."

Reese Witherspoon discussed purchasing the movie rights to the bestseller Wild and her Oscar®-nominated role as its author Cheryl Strayed in the 2014 film. "It was so exciting to bring her story to the screen," she said. "Here's a woman who goes on a thousand-mile journey by herself and ends up with no man, no money—and it's a happy ending." Witherspoon also produced the film version of the bestseller Gone Girl, which gave her "the opportunity to create a role for a woman that is complex. I think it's important for women all over the world to see diversity on screen and more complex roles for women."

To Collins' question about the stories the new Whitney might tell, Weinberg said "this whole site will inspire new work," pointing to the museum's spacious indoor and outdoor areas as exciting spaces for artists' creativity. He recalled another such space, the Tiffany Workshop, where he saw photos of abstract paintings at a craftsman's workstation that reinforced the museum's collaboration with Tiffany. "I was fascinated by someone working on a jewel and then glancing up at the work of Willem de Kooning and Barnett Newman," he said. As seen through a jeweler's loop, the jewelry itself becomes abstract, he suggested, leading him to conclude that "jewelry design and painting are not so far apart."

In creating her first Blue Book Collection for Tiffany & Co., design director Francesca

Amfitheatrof chose the sea as inspiration. “It was important to continue the Blue Book tradition,” she said, referring to the collection’s legacy as Tiffany’s greatest showcase for its most magnificent jewels. She also stressed the importance of reconnecting with nature, long a theme of Tiffany design, and searching the company’s archives for stories of Tiffany’s rich history. It is these stories, she said, that set her on the path of discovery.

Mathew Miele, director of an independent documentary film on Tiffany & Co. that is yet to be released, described interviewing over 100 people over a two-year period to find “just the right interviews and sound bites” that would make the Tiffany story come alive on screen. As an example, he said he was “blown away” by a sales professional’s very special memory of the Tiffany Diamond, as well as such artifacts as tourists’ postcards from the 19th century, which detailed visits to the Statue of Liberty and Tiffany & Co. “This is a company founded in 1837,” Miele said. Documenting it is “thrilling and humbling at the same time.”

Tiffany is the internationally-renowned jeweler founded in New York in 1837. Through its subsidiaries, Tiffany & Co. manufactures products and operates TIFFANY & CO. retail stores worldwide, and also engages in direct selling through Internet, catalog and business gift operations. For additional information, please visit Tiffany.com.

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