

# WWD

## Kerry Washington on ACE's Influencer Award



**NEW YORK** — The Accessories Council, now in its 20th year, will host the 18th annual ACE Awards tonight at Cipriani 42nd Street here. The event, hosted by Hal Rubenstein, will honor a number of brands, designers and influencers within the accessories industry.

Perhaps the buzziest honoree is Kerry Washington, who, along with “Scandal” costume designer Lyn Paolo, will receive the Influencer award. “It’s such a huge honor,” Washington told WWD, calling from the “Scandal” set. “It means that all the fun that Lyn Paolo and I have been having in our little room for the past four years has people enjoying it, and that brings us even more joy.” Washington said creating her character Olivia Pope’s

wardrobe had been a collaborative effort between herself and Paolo. “From our very first phone call, we’ve been so on the same page and so passionate about this idea of reclaiming what power dressing looks like for a woman,” she said. “We were taking it very seriously because we are passionate about fashion and passionate about storytelling, and passionate about how identity is expressed through clothing.”

To say the “Scandal” fan base, who call themselves “Gladiators,” is obsessive would be something of an understatement. “Social media has had an incredible impact on how this kind of collaboration is viewed, especially by people in fashion,” said Paolo, who now oversees a “Scandal”-inspired line sold at The Limited. “For awhile, people were asking for the ‘Olivia Pope’ bag at Prada.” Added Washington, “Over the break, I got this gorgeous new Prada handbag, and Olivia Pope exclusively wears Prada handbags, unless it’s an evening bag. But, I got this bag in a totally not Olivia Pope color — a bright emerald green. I think I Instagrammed it and

all the fans were so confused, like, ‘Wait, is Olivia Pope going to wear bright color in the next season?’ I was like, ‘No, that’s my bag!’” Washington and Paolo noted that accessories have become storytelling tools for Pope’s character. “I always think about shoes when I think about a character,” said Washington. “I am never 100 percent clear about who a character is until I know what shoes she is wearing. Shoes say so much about what we are — they literally define how we walk in the world. I literally will come to work and rehearse in sweatpants, a T-shirt and Manolo pumps, because I don’t feel like the character unless I’m in their heels.”

Added Paolo, “We were also extremely specific from Day One that it had to be a grounded shoe. It had to have weight and resonance and hit the ground running. In the early stage of the storytelling, Olivia was always in a platform with a cubed heel, and as she is a bit wobbly or uncertain with her relationship with Fitz, then she’d be in boots with stilettos.”

Pope’s simple, barely visible jewelry has equal significance. “I have a beautiful Monique Péan ring that I’ve worn since season one, and it’s funny because the fans are always wondering what the significance is behind that ring,” said Washington. “I know what the backstory is, and I’ve shared it with Shonda, but we’ve never talked about it on the show. It’s a bit of a mystery, and that’s kind of fun.”

Other honorees at the awards Monday night will be:

- Rose Marie Bravo, former chief executive officer of Burberry, who will receive the Leadership award. “I’ve had accessories almost all of my business life,” she said. “Accessories are the unsung heroes and in many cases, are the foundation for companies from a profit point of view.”
- Robbie Myers, editor in chief of Elle Magazine, is getting the Marylou Luther Award for Fashion Journalism. Myers said the accessories industry had greatly evolved since she became editor in chief in May 2000. “The market has exploded,” she said. “As fashion has become so democratized and you can see everything on the runway the day after the show, it creates even more desire for special, one-of-a-kind things. As an industry, it’s awfully powerful and influential. And for a woman, it’s really an expression of personal style. It’s the details and the way you put yourself together that really transmits to the world who you are and how you feel about yourself.”
- Kate Spade New York will take home Brand of the Year. A spokeswoman for the brand noted that handbags and small leather goods make up more than half of the business. “Accessories are the core of what we do,” said president and creative director Deborah Lloyd. “If you don’t get accessories

right, you don't have permission to do anything else."

- Alex & Ani will receive the Specialty Retailer award. Carolyn Rafaelian, founder, creative director and ceo, said the honor encouraged the brand to expand offerings beyond its signature bangles (Alex & Ani recently began manufacturing small leather goods, as well). "Eventually, I'd love to get into all kinds of things, and that really depends on the synergies between us and the manufacturers," she said. "Once I find the right companies and they have the capabilities to create a new product extension with our category, then we will. Our customers really do enjoy that our products are made in America with conscious manufacturing."
- Shinola will be honored with Brand Launch of the Year. Chief executive officer Steve Bock will be stuck in Detroit, where the watch manufacturer is based, but plans to send worthy replacements to accept the award — Detroit natives who now work in the factory. "These are the real stars of the brand, and the ones that deserve all of the accolades," said Bock.
- Now in its 130th year, Bulgari will receive the Legacy award. Mireia Lopez Montoya, managing director of the brand's accessories business unit, noted several key moments in its history. "The first milestone to be mentioned is the color revolution Bulgari introduced in jewelry starting from the Fifties and Sixties," she said. "The particular use of colored stones and sumptuous volumes is still today a Bulgari hallmark and also at the core of our accessory design." Other "pillars" mentioned included the launch of the Bulgari Bulgari watch in 1977 and the brand's first fragrance in 1993. Coco Rocha will present to Bulgari.
- Jack Huston will present the Brand Visionary award to Oliver Peoples. The eyewear brand will also launch its 2015 short film campaign, featuring Huston, at the event. "We have an incredibly clear idea of who our customer is," said ceo David Schulte of what separates Oliver Peoples from competitors. "We don't rely on focus groups — we have a look of a man or woman in mind, many of whom we already know, and we make frames for them."
- On the retail front, Lord & Taylor will receive Retailer of the Year. Liz Rodbell, president of Hudson's Bay and Lord & Taylor, cited the company's recent concept shop, Birdcage, as a step to continuing its relevance in the accessories world. "[Accessories] is often one of the first areas the consumer sees upon entering our stores so it needs to be exciting," she added. "We aim to be the best at presenting edited assortments that lead with fashion."