

EVENTS/CAUSES

Selfridges looks to older generations to revamp campaign

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Exterior of Selfridges' London flagship

By NANCY BUCKLEY

British department store Selfridges is weaving a different tale this January with a spin on its usual “Bright Young Things” campaign by removing the age limit and welcoming talents of an older generation.

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Bright Old Things will celebrate a new age range of designers, those who might not be typically considered as up-and-coming. The participating artists reach ages in their mid-eighties and represent those with mid-to-late-life career changes as well as the more mature consumer of the department store looking for age-relevant campaigns and collections.

“The aim of the campaign remains the same as we are still striving to find strong talent with an original point of view and something to say through their creative output,” said Linda Hewson, creative director at **Selfridges**, London.

“The format of the campaign is also the same,” she said. “The fact that older artists and designers are taking over from the younger generation this year, only means that we are likely to be presented with art, design and fashion that reflect the rich life experience of

these extraordinary people."

Trendy with age

Selfridges has recently been looking to engage consumers of every age with its 2014 Christmas windows, which focus on 25 classic stories.

These narratives are not necessarily Christmas-related but have fairy tale elements that have survived multiple generations. This year's theme for Selfridges' celebration will appeal to consumers of every age and attract potential consumers just to see the artistic creations of the windows and façade ([see story](#)).



Selfridges Christmas windows

The focus on multiple generations transitions well into the store's Bright Old Things campaign which is hosting artists, designers, musicians and entrepreneurs.

"We are a store that has famously been egalitarian and welcoming to all since day one," Ms. Hewson said. "Everyone shops at Selfridges regardless of age, so there wasn't any hesitation in singling out an older generation of vibrant designers and artists to front next year's campaign.

"In fact, it isn't often that you are given the opportunity to celebrate age and maturity in such a creative and worthwhile way. We are thrilled indeed at the prospect of showcasing this exciting and eclectic line up of talents," she said. "They prove to us all that age is no limit to creativity and accomplishment."



Bright Old Things

Participants range from late-forties to mid-eighties, a switch from Selfridges' Bright Young Things campaign of the past that saw much younger contestants.

"I think the change in the initiative will affect the program in a positive way by garnering attention and highlighting individuals that have given substance to life," said Rony Zeidan, president and creative director of **RO NY**, New York.

"They have gone through a journey and continue to do so," he said. "It is admirable of Selfridges to highlight them, their style and their character."

Most of these older participants are in "retirement renaissance," meaning a period in which individuals retire from one career to start another based on a creative talent or hobby.

For instance, one participant is an ex-accountant who became an artist in his sixties and another is an architect who became a topiarist.

There are 13 participants and each will be given a window on Oxford Street to display their work. Products from some of the Bright Old Things will be sold in-store and online.

Bright Old Things will be promoted through the hashtag #BrightOldThings on social media.

Maturing clients

Looking toward an older consumer can rekindle relationships with a different generation than typically targeted in campaigns.

For instance, Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana targeted older female consumers by promising a youthful look through the use of its "Lift" beauty products.

As the name suggests, Dolce & Gabbana's Lift foundation works to enhance the user's natural, youthful glow through the exclusive Gold Flavo-Silk Tricomplex that works to smooth, refine and reduce aging skin. Although beauty products are for all ages, marketing a specific product to an older demographic may interest Dolce & Gabbana's more established consumer base (**see story**).

"Interestingly enough, the older generation has the best appreciation for luxury and fashion," Mr. Zeidan said. "They understand quality, heritage and the importance of the story behind an item."

"They also have the financial purchasing power which the younger consumer does not always have," he said. "That is a big differentiation between the power player retailers, and the mass retailers that sell lower priced goods."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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