

RETAIL

Fortnum & Mason pays tribute to British art with in-store installation

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Fortnum & Mason X Frank teasers

By SARAH JONES

British department store Fortnum & Mason is turning its Piccadilly flagship into a contemporary gallery ahead of the Frieze Art Fair.

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Before Frieze London opens in October, Fortnum & Mason is partnering with avid art collector Frank Cohen for a celebration of British modern art. Opening Sept. 13, the month-long "Fortnum's X Frank" will see more than 60 works from artists such as Charming Baker and Paula Rego displayed across the store.

"Frank and I met through the writer, Howard Jacobson," said Ewan Venters CEO of **Fortnum & Mason**. "Howard thought we should meet; he felt Frank and I would get on well, and he was right.

"Frank's an incredibly inspiring, interesting man in his own right, who just so happens to be the owner of one of the most incredible collections of modern British art in the world too, so the idea to work together on this project came very naturally," he said.

"Fortnum's has a long history of supporting art and artists from the Royal College of Art and the Slade School of Art to the Bloomsbury Group, and so on. Art has always lined the walls at Piccadilly, and we spend a lot of time and effort on making our products look beautiful, too.

"Art and design have always been incredibly important to us, and Fortnum's X Frank is the latest example of that."

Shopping gallery

The Frank Cohen Collection is one of the most impressive arrays of privately held modern British art. Mr. Cohen began collecting in the 1970s, and his affiliation with art continued over the years as he became a patron of the Young British Artists in the early 1990s.

In 2013, the collector opened the Dairy Art Center in Bloomsbury, which serves as a public space for contemporary art. The center offers free exhibitions, educational programs and internships, opening up the art world to a wider audience.

Fortnums X Frank continues Mr. Cohen's focus on bringing art to more individuals will take over the entire store, from the retailer's windows to its staircases and sales floors.



Ewan Venters with Frank Cohen

The installation was curated by Robert Upstone, the former director of modern British art at the Fine Art Society whose resume also includes curator of modern British art at Tate Britain.

In the windows will be works by Howard Hodgkin, Frank Auerbach, Spencer Gore, Tracey Emin, Bridget Riley, Matthew Smith and Lynn Chadwick.

The first floor Parlour Restaurant will display John Hoyland's work, while the wine bar will be home to a William Roberts piece.

This installation continues to the board room, where Frank Auerbach, Edward Burra and Patrick Heron works will be on view.

"We're always looking for new ways to deliver a sense of pleasure to our customers to surprise them, delight them and excite them," Mr. Venters said. "After all, what could be more typically Fortnum's than popping in to buy your tea or to visit The Parlour, and suddenly discovering that you're surrounded by countless significant and beautiful works of modern British art?"

"We get to host many icons of modern British art inside our Piccadilly store, and our customers will be able to enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime experience, as well as making Fortnum's a destination when the world's art establishment descends on London."

Frieze London will be held from Oct. 6-9 at Regent's Park, drawing an international crowd of art enthusiasts to London for the show. Galleries from all over the world, including New York, Paris, Shanghai, Madrid, Los Angeles and Berlin, will be showcasing pieces at the fair.

"Fortnum & Mason has a long history of supporting art and artists and showcasing contemporary art from Frank Cohen's collection is an outstanding way to enter into the spirit of the Frieze Art Fair," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at **Boston Retail Partners**.

"Frank Cohen is one of the most prolific collectors of international contemporary art in the world and exhibiting 60 pieces from his collection across the Fortnum & Mason Piccadilly store will be a magnificent attraction for its customers," he said.

"As a leading luxury brand, Fortnum & Mason has a reputation of offering its customers the best exclusive and personalized experiences in retail. Collaborating with one of the best art collectors and collection in the world enhances Fortnum's brand position of being the best of the best."

Works of art

Sharing art with shoppers is a way to heighten the in-store experience while positioning a retailer within the broader cultural conversation.

Department store Bergdorf Goodman previewed Sotheby's Contemporary Art Day Sale with a store window display of art mixed with apparel.

The displays, up from Sept. 26 through Oct. 13, 2014 featured work from the likes of Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst, representing the first time the retailer had used work of this scale in its windows. In addition to creating a street-level

gallery to attract consumers, this gave Sotheby's publicity for its upcoming sale ([see story](#)).

Hong Kong shopping center Landmark similarly turned its Atrium into a public art gallery with a display of works valued at more than \$140 million.

Beginning March 13, consumers could visit the mall to see "Take Another View on Art," which featured works by nine artists, including Claude Monet, Marc Chagall, Zao Wou-ki and Zeng Fanzhi. Creating a cultural experience for shoppers to take part in may convince them to extend their stay ([see story](#)).

These art installations are also a way to drive traffic.

"Offering shoppers the chance to see some of the world's best contemporary art in its exclusive venue should inspire consumers to make a special trip to the Piccadilly store," Mr. Naumann said.

"While many of the shoppers that come to see the Fortnums X Frank exhibit will be existing Fortnum & Mason customers, the exhibit will also attract some new customers," he said. "Ultimately it will bring more shoppers to the store and drive incremental sales."

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