

RETAIL

Selfridges reflects founder's open house vision with charity shop-in-shop

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Miranda July inside the interfaith charity shop at Selfridges. Image courtesy of Selfridges

By STAFF REPORTS

British department store chain Selfridges' Oxford Street flagship is turning a portion of its third floor into a charity shop as its hosts artist Miranda July's latest project.

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A commission for Artangel, Ms. July has brought together four religious charities for an interfaith store that will benefit both the organizations themselves and other nonprofits chosen by the participants. While each of the quartet of charities run their own stores, this installation marks the first interfaith charity shop in the U.K.

Cause-based commerce

The chosen charities partnering on this shop are Islamic Relief, Jewish charity Norwood, London Buddhist Centre and Spitalfields Crypt Trust. These participants are running and staffing the store, and they will split the proceeds equally.

With merchandise that is typically found at these nonprofit-run stores, such as secondhand clothes, books, CDs, games, home accessories, toys and kitchenware, the prices will also be reflective of typical charity shops.

Along with supporting the four charities, each of these organizations has chosen another nonprofit to receive 2.5 percent of their portion of sales.

Islamic Relief is donating to The Bike Project, which gives bicycles to refugees, while London Buddhist Center is also giving to a migrant-based charity Praxis Community Project. Norwood is donating to Carers in Hertfordshire, which centers its mission on supporting those who care for others, and Spitalfields Crypt Trust will give to Providence Row, which tackles homelessness.



Selfridges' interfaith charity shop. Image courtesy of Selfridges

The shop opened Aug. 31 and will run until Oct. 22.

"For many years I've wanted to make a store as artwork; utilizing the inherently participatory conventions of commerce," said Ms. July in a statement. "When I first came to London, in my twenties, I was giddily amazed by the sheer number of charity shops, but it's only in creating this store with Artangel that I understand what a radically unique economic model they are."

"The nuances of this come from my faith-based charity shop partners and from the site: Selfridges."

Selfridges' founder Harry Gordon Selfridge thought of his store as a place that was welcoming to all, and the retailer believes this shop-in-shop reflects his vision and values.

Ms. July's work typically asks for consumer participation. As brands look to engage consumers beyond point of sale, others have joined forces with the artist.

For instance, Prada's Miu Miu looked to change how consumers communicate digitally by sponsoring the creation of a mobile application tied to its latest commissioned Women's Tales film.

Director Miranda July's "Somebody," which premiered at the Venice Film Festival Aug. 28, centered on an app that could be used to send a message to a loved one verbally through a third party. Helping to bring this concept to life kept Miu Miu in mind as consumers participated in the art project ([see story](#)).

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