

RETAIL

Selfridges eyes lasting legacy via art installation

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Rendering of Bond Street Crossrail station ticket hall. Image credit: Crossrail

By STAFF REPORTS

British department store chain Selfridges is giving back to its hometown by supporting the City of London's Crossrail Art Programme.

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The retailer is funding the installation of an art piece at the Bond Street station for the city's new Elizabeth Crossrail line, which is located nearby to Selfridges' flagship Oxford Street store. As the only retailer to sponsor this art program, Selfridges will be gaining an additional presence in its neighborhood.

Art affiliation

The new 60-mile Elizabeth line will run from Reading and Heathrow to Abbey Wood and Sheffield. As part of the construction, a new Bond Street station is being built, which is expected to help make navigation to London's West End easier.

Selfridges is teaming up with the City of London Corporation to create a focal point within this new station. Together, the partners are funding the installation of a largescale artwork by Darren Almond.

Positioned in the ticketing area of the station, the piece will be a conceptual representation of London's transportation history. The artwork will also be integrated into the escalators, allowing passengers to think about the idea of journeys as they enter or exit the trains.

"As a child I was liberated by the rail network which enabled me to travel the length and breadth of the country; the adventures and the memories of which still inspire and forge new paths for me today," Mr. Almond said in a statement. "It's amazing how acute observations made at such a young age still inform and feed into my work today.

"I hope that my commission will address the space and passage of time and will activate, and hopefully stimulate, the inherent narratives implied by descent and ascent, by arrival and departure."



Darren Almond. Photo by Vincent Tsang, image courtesy of White Cube Gallery

When the station opens in December, about 137,000 people are expected to pass through it on a daily basis.

"We are thrilled to support this extraordinary commission for Bond Street station with Darren Almond," said Anne Pitcher, managing director of Selfridges, in a statement.

"The artwork will be enjoyed by everyone and create a lasting legacy in our city for years to come," she said. "At Selfridges we have always championed the compelling, memorable and unconventional, all qualities that are echoed in Darren's vision."

From March 13 to May 6, consumers will be able to view artwork from Mr. Almond and the other Crossrail Art Programme talents at an exhibition. "Art Capital: Art for the Elizabeth line" will be presented at the Whitechapel Gallery.

Aside from exhibitions, a number of luxury brands have made their art collaborations public.

For instance, Italian fashion label Fendi gave back to its hometown of Rome through art.

The brand commissioned a sculpture from artist Giuseppe Penone for the sidewalk outside of its Palazzo Fendi flagship. Meant as a donation to the city that has served as its backdrop and inspiration for more than 90 years, the permanent installation is designed to be a public exhibit ([see story](#)).