

RETAIL

## Selfridges brings art to the masses in multichannel campaign

January 8, 2019



*Selfridges is bringing public art to its window displays. Image credit: Selfridges*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

British department store chain Selfridges is embracing the intersection of art and fashion with a creative campaign that spans stores and digital channels.

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The newly announced "State of The Arts" initiative is influencing everything from Selfridges' window displays and product offerings to podcast episodes. Retailers continue to seek ways to differentiate their in-store and online experiences from competitors'.

"Associating Selfridges and its fashions with art is a great way to elevate the brand and inspire customers to visit the store more frequently during the art campaign to see the latest artwork and experience workshops," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at **Boston Retail Partners**, Boston.

"Tapping into consumers' multiple senses and incorporating art throughout the store make this campaign very interactive and unique," he said. "Shoppers can listen to artist podcasts, see art in street windows and in the store, attend workshops, meet artists in-person and shop for art."

Mr. Naumann is not affiliated with Selfridges, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Selfridges** was reached for comment.

### Public art platform

The accessibility associated with public art makes it influential on a mass scale. Selfridges is working with artists and curators to bring public art to the forefront of its customers' minds.

"The most important element of retail today is the experience," said Casey Gannon, vice president of marketing at **Shopgate**, Austin, TX. "Retailers like Selfridges are redefining what a consumer experience feels like and are creating an inclusive lifestyle brand that crosses art and products."



*Darren Almond is among the artists exhibiting through Selfridges window displays. Image credit: Selfridges*

Nine artists are working to update the window displays at Selfridges' Oxford Street windows.

British artist Darren Almond created a grid-like painting and bronze and aluminum nameplate for the displays. Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, who has worked with French fashion label Louis Vuitton in the past, includes metal spheres that rely on one another to stand.

Filmmaker Douglas Gordon will be airing one of his earlier works, "Scrath Hither," on a display of nine television monitors stacked on top of each other. Chantal Joffe's work reflects the British heritage she shares with Selfridges and features residents, famous and otherwise, of the East End.

To further engage shoppers, Selfridges will be hosting weekly art tours through Mar. 2. With admission costing 10 pounds, or less than \$13 at current exchange, the store ensures this artistic opportunity is available to a wide audience.

The Art Tank is located in the window of The Corner Shop at Selfridges London and is meant to serve as a live event space. One event will allow consumers to have their portraits done by artist Jake Spicer.

In addition to the art events, materials and limited art pieces will also be available for sale within the Art Tank.



*Selfridges is using an event space to further engage customers with art. Image credit: Selfridges*

Selfridges curated women and men's apparel reflecting the current pop-art theme. For instance, the retailer suggests a neon pink Calvin Klein coat for women or a striped zip-up jacket from Prada for men.

Adding to the longevity of the campaign, Selfridges' podcast network is launching a State of the Arts series to better educate consumers. The first episode explores art forgery.

"Art makes people feel emotions, memories, dreams and other essentials of the human experience," Shopgate's Ms. Gannon said. "By combining this power with tangible products, art purchases become emotional purchases, which increases the lifetime value of a buyer."

#### In-store experiences

Selfridges continues to rethink its physical stores to draw in shoppers.

The department store chain is looking to attract both male and female shoppers with a menswear space devoted to high-end streetwear, leaning in to luxury fashion's increasingly gender neutral, casual aesthetic.

Dubbed the "Designer Street Room," the retail concept has found a home in the menswear department and was developed with brand mixing and cross-category shopping in mind, including luxury labels such as Gucci and Versace. Selfridges' latest opening reflects consumers' high-low shopping patterns, as they curate wardrobes that blend a bevy of brands ([see story](#)).

Selfridges saw its sales in the 24 days leading up to Christmas climb 8 percent year-over-year.

Breaking the retailer's previous records, the holiday season saw a sales uplift across channels. Selfridges attributes the rise to its holiday campaign, in-store entertainment and new offerings, which drove shoppers into stores.

The retailer's Oxford Street flagship in particular outperformed the average, with sales up 10 percent ([see story](#)).

"Selfridges is known for its revolutionary understanding of consumers' love of the theater of retail," BRP's Mr. Naumann said. "Their mission is to offer its customers a shopping experience that promises to surprise, amaze and amuse by delivering extraordinary customer experiences."

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