

RETAIL

Fortnum & Mason turns store into art exhibition

September 10, 2019



Zhang Enli is showcasing his work at Fortnum & Mason. Image credit: Fortnum & Mason

By STAFF REPORTS

British department store Fortnum & Mason is celebrating its artistic heritage and position as a global curator with a month-long display of Chinese artist Zhang Enli's work.

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Since launching its annual art showcase in 2016, Fortnum & Mason has worked with British artists and collectors, but this year it decided to turn its focus beyond its home nation. Staging in-store art events can help retailers drive foot traffic, while also pointing to their own place in culture.

Art exhibit

In recent years, Fortnum & Mason has been turning its Piccadilly flagship into a contemporary gallery ahead of the Frieze Art Fair in October.

In 2016 Fortnum & Mason partnered with avid art collector Frank Cohen for a celebration of British modern art. The month-long "Fortnums X Frank" saw more than 60 works from artists such as Charming Baker and Paula Rego displayed across the store ([see story](#)).

This year's event marks the first in the series centered on a Chinese artist.

Mr. Zhang was born in 1965 in China's Jilin province. He currently lives in Shanghai, where he works out of a studio on Moganshan Road.

The artist's style is reflective of traditional Chinese brush paintings, particularly his use of empty space. His work typically revolves around everyday objects, portraying them in an abstract manner.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Fortnum's X Zhang Enli has arrived! Featuring never-before-seen works by renowned Chinese artist, Zhang Enli, this exciting exhibition is now on display throughout our iconic Piccadilly. Until 18 October. #Fortnums #FORTNUMSXZHANGENLI #Art #Piccadilly #zhangenli | FortnumAndMason.com

A post shared by Fortnum & Mason (@fortnums) on Sep 10, 2019 at 8:46am PDT

Instagram post from Fortnum & Mason

Fortnum & Mason is staging an exhibit of 22 of Mr. Zhang's works of art throughout its entire store. Nineteen of the pieces were created specially for the retailer showcase and were based on the artist's travels within the U.K.

Opened Sept. 10, the free public exhibit will be up until Oct. 18.

This partnership comes as Fortnum & Mason prepares to open a store in Hong Kong. The 7,000-square-foot store will be situated in the K11 Musea within the new Victoria Dockside development.

As part of its celebration of Mr. Zhang, Fortnum & Mason will be including two of the artist's pieces inside its Hong Kong store. Mr. Zhang also made a bespoke Musea caddy.

The retailer's focus on art curation stems from its own heritage. Fortnum & Mason's owner in the 1950s Garfield Weston would attend art auctions and then head to the store with his new acquisitions to display them for shoppers' enjoyment.

Fortnum & Mason also has a long history of sourcing and finding goods from overseas, whether it was tea leaves from Asia or fashion design from continental Europe.

"For more than three centuries, Piccadilly has been an expression of our view on the world," Fortnum & Mason said in a statement. "Stepping into Fortnum's has never been about mindless shopping, but about thinking, feeling and engaging and art has long been part of that experience."

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