

SELFRIDGES DESIGNER STUDIO

Oxford Street, London

Design: Campaign
Opening date: July 2016
Floor space: 1,580 sq m



Harry Gordon Selfridge once said, 'Develop imagination, throw away routine', which is what design firm Campaign set out to achieve with the first phase of the department store's new Designer Studio. The space joins the newly opened Body Studio, the Denim Studio and the Contemporary Studio on the third floor to house a mix of new and established labels.

Boutique concepts from J.W.Anderson, Vetements, Christopher Kane, Marni and Joseph are joined by international brands such as Maison Margiela, Undercover, Toga and Craig Green along with new names Dilara Findikoglu, Richard Malone, Le Kilt, Walk of Shame and Puma x Fenty in the 1,580 sq m space, which opened in July 2016.

The architectural mood of the Designer

Studio is a juxtaposition of raw and exposed, contrasted with classic and refined. 'Honest, curated and considered define the principles of the architectural envelope,' says a spokesperson for Campaign. 'Honest in its exposed columns and walls, mingling with traditional and considered detailing.'

The environment continues to reveal the original 1909 architecture of the Selfridges building, with six of the closed windows opened up, allowing natural light to flood the space, and round columns reinstated.

Traditional coffered ceilings with a new modern perimeter of articulated beams are brought together using concrete-effect tiling, providing continuity across the space.

A series of architectural follies (installations-cum-retail fixtures) created

by a number of progressive artists, including Gary Card, Anna Lomax and Patternity, punctuate the area, lending itself to a curated gallery. The follies, inspired by a 'Theatre of Forces', are designed to adhere to three design principles: artistic, customisable and functional. Challenging the boundary of art and retail, each structure expresses the individual creativity of the artists, as well as acting as a tool for selling.

'Our starting point for the development of the Designer Studio was the question: What does our customer want? What does she expect and what doesn't she expect?' says Sebastian Manes, buying and merchandising director at Selfridges. 'We asked ourselves: How is she shopping the store up, down and across? This is



Photography (left and all below): Roman Thomas

Photography (left and below): richfoto



particularly relevant in a time of fast moving digital retail. We want the experience to surprise and make sense simultaneously.'

The fitting rooms have a bold and playful feel, with curated furniture, painted OSB walls and satin brass ironmongery hinting at luxury. 'Forces come into play with bespoke printed aerial landscapes, spanning across the fitting rooms and each fitting room bank, tells a different story, providing perfect backdrops for those selfie moments,' explains the spokesperson for Campaign.

The stylist fitting room is a sanctuary of mid-century furniture with subtle pink hues, and takes advantage of its corner location looking out over Oxford Street and Duke Street.

The experience is rounded off with playlists chosen by the designers.

The Designer Studio is a destination that addresses both the creativity and practicality of shopping for fashion, concludes Manes. **Rf**

