Celine’s New Bond Street store is as much gallery as store

By Godfrey Deeny - November 9, 2021

Celine has opened a new flagship in the traditional central London luxe shopping thoroughfare of New Bond Street, though its art gallery concept is anything but conventional.

Leave it to the house’s multi-disciplinary designer Hedi Slimane to dream up a fresh take on experiential with a giant art-filled boutique at 40 New Bond Street, the latest major store in the West by Celine since opening on Madison Avenue in 2019.

The 354-square-meter features a wide-ranging panorama of works from 17th-century Flemish oils and contemporary sculpture to site-specific, custom-commissioned wall hangings and massive wooden fine-art panels.

Designed by Slimane, the ground floor is devoted to women with an emphasis on French elegance and a vintage aura. Featuring antique furniture and multiple art works – 12 on the ground floor alone. Many works are part of the Celine Art Project, which has grown to some 80 artworks in various stores in the brand’s global retail network.
Hedi even commissioned two specific works – by Leilah Babirye of Uganda and Nika Neelova of Russia - the former with a boldly looming closed-eyed neo-primitive figure, the latter with two ceiling hangs made of reclaimed architectural materials.

An additional octagonal room will be dedicated to Celine’s Haute Parfumerie and the Maison Celine gift line, something particularly dear to the designer’s heart. Designed to be somewhere between a jewelry box and cabinet of curiosities.

Slimane has never been afraid of a little juxtaposition, so the ground floor’s antique marble floor is in striking contrast to the basement’s concrete. Under-rack lighting helps give the impression that shop shelves are floating off the walls.
The new store’s neighbor is another LVMH brand, Loewe, while the street also includes topline fashion marques like Alaïa, Delvaux, Ralph Lauren and Zegna.

Fitting rooms in the basement men’s department are designed as a huge wooden screen that opens to reveal a library, from which clients are invited to browse. During the pandemic, Slimane shot show videos in two of France’s most famous chateaux – Chambord down the Loire and Vaux Le Vicomte near Paris. So, it’s not such a surprise to discover in one of the men’s fitting rooms a genuine 17th century oil painting of the Duke of Sully, Maximilien de Bethune, in chain mail, ruffled lace collar shirt and with an enormous quantity of curly hair.

One senses the nobleman might have been well pleased to end up in this modern temple of fashion, design and art.

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