

Press Release **August 2007**

Selfridges to present Conrad Shawcross's most startling work to date

Selfridges is delighted to announce that it has commissioned Conrad Shawcross, one of the brightest stars of the young British art scene, to produce two new arresting pieces exclusively for the store to be launched this September.

Selfridges has been pioneering the arts in the UK since it opened its doors in 1909 and has welcomed, often commissioned, countless artistic exhibitions embracing a plethora of themes, influences and media, the latest of which was a celebration of Surrealism in tandem with the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

It will be Conrad Shawcross's first commission to be exhibited within a retail environment, opening his art to a more mainstream audience in the heart of London.

The new work will push further this conceptual artist's continued investigation into his two most current and absorbing reflections. On the one hand the nature, structure and spiritual nature of space and on the other its inherent binary reality.

Selfridges has given Conrad Shawcross two of its most highly visible spaces with which to fill his art – its largest window (Window 20 - at the corner of Orchard Street and Oxford Street) and the Ultralounge, the store's dedicated events and exhibitions space.

The Ultralounge – *Lattice*

Lattice breaks new ground in Conrad Shawcross's exploration of space and the ways to structure and divide it using for the first time a combination of wood and steel to make a complex structural lattice of tetrahedrons. Conrad has been researching the perfect shape of the essential building unit with the help of one of Oxford's most respected Professors of Mathematics and found it in his tetrahedron, a four sided shape which he calls his 'basic brick'. *Lattice* builds tetrahedrons into an optimum construct of 120 units, the number beyond which the construct loses its ideal balance and harmony. In

effect *Lattice* also reprises Conrad's running interest in binary systems – at the core of *Palindrome*, his second work for Selfridges - by presenting two constructs, one in steel one in wood, of identical shape and weighing over 1.5 tons. Ultimately the works refer to cartography, its history and how we attempt to chart the edge of the known.

Window 20 – *Palindrome*

Palindrome unveils a new metamorphosis in Conrad's better known series of kinetic sculptures. It offers the viewer the spectacle of symmetry interrogating itself by the means of two articulated arms spinning lights and, in turn, attracting each other to the centre of the piece and repulsing each other to its opposite ends. The combination of symmetry, light and movement produces a tremendously engaging and hypnotic effect whilst never quite providing the answers the work generates.

Conrad Shawcross says: "....."

Alannah Weston, Selfridges' Creative Director says: "We are thrilled to welcome Conrad and his wonderful and original artistic approach to modern art to Selfridges. His constant desire to challenge space, order, symmetry and the conventionally useful showcases a refreshing philosophy which echoes Selfridges' own constant interest in bringing new and exciting thinking to the experience of shopping."

The exhibition opens on 21st September until 28th October in the Ultralounge, lower ground floor Selfridges Oxford Street during store opening times.

The exhibition coincides with Frieze Art Fair which takes place in Regent's Park from 11th – 14th October. Selfridges is delighted to be providing gifts for VIP visitors to Frieze Art Fair and the 150 international contemporary art exhibitors who make up the fair in 2007.

Ends

For further images and information, please contact Bruno Barba at Selfridges Press Office on 020 7318 3204 or email bruno.barba@selfridges.co.uk

Editor's notes:

- **Conrad Shawcross biography highlights**

Born in 1977 Shawcross lives and works in London. He achieved an MFA from Slade School of Art in 2001 and a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from Ruskin School of Art, Oxford in 1999. Solo exhibitions include *The Steady States*, which toured The New Art Gallery, Walsall and The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool in 2005. In 2004, Shawcross had a solo exhibition at The Queen's House, National Maritime Museum, London entitled *Continuum* and presented work at Manifesta 5, San Sebastian, Spain. His work has been included in exhibitions both in the UK and abroad including, Sudeley Castle 2006: *Reconstruction 1*, Sudeley Castle, England, *S.N.O.W Sculpture in Non-Objective Way*, Galleria Tucci Rosso, Torre Pellice, Turin, *New Blood*, Saatchi Gallery, London, 2004 and *New Contemporaries 2001*, Camden Arts Centre; Northern Centre for Contemporary

Art, Sunderland. Conrad Shawcross had work included in Rifleman becomes Indica, November 2006 – February 2007. He recently.....Unilever
Conrad his represented by Victoria Miro Gallery – contact: Kathy Stephenson, Head of Press and Events:
kathy@victoria-miro.com / tel: 020 7549 0422

- **Selfridges** is world famous for its many creative collaborations. Over the past couple of years has staged numerous cultural events including a celebration of China's modern art scene by inviting two of the most influential Chinese artists to produce exclusive installations for the store. "Follow Me" by Wang Qingsong became one of Selfridges most talked about window displays and "Eating the City", the edible miniature city which covered part of the shop floor by artist Song Dong, was a big hit with visitors.
- **The Ultralounge** is in the lower ground floor of Selfridges' Oxford Street store. It was launched as a dedicated events space in February 2006, with Future Punk – a month-long review of the attitude that has dominated youth culture since its inception in 1976. Involved in Future Punk were Malcolm McLaren, legendary photographer Bob Gruen, Don Letts, The New York Dolls, The Buzzcocks, The Slits and The Long Blondes. Other Ultralounge events include the presentation of an exclusive video art installation called Luminous by Brian Eno in 2007 followed by a large scale celebration of Surrealism in partnership with The Victoria and Albert Museum's own Surreal Things exhibition.
- **Alannah Weston** took on the role of Creative Director of Selfridges in 2004. Alannah was previously Creative Director of Windsor in Vero Beach, Florida where she founded an art gallery for the community and curated a series of exhibitions including work by Christo and Jeanne Claude, Ed Ruscha, Bruce Weber and Peter Doig. The Ultralounge is part of her vision for a store which offer varied and surprising experiences to the customer
- **Bettina von Hase** is Selfridges' art advisor and curator of the current Surrealism Season at Selfridges. She is founder/director of art consultancy Nine AM, and has curated many art projects for the store, including Vegas Supernova (David LaChapelle), Africa Remix (Samuel Fosso, 'The Chief'), Song Dong 'Eating the City' and Wang Qingsong 'Follow Me'. Her latest project for Selfridges was Brian Eno's 'Luminous' which ran in January and February earlier this year.