

ACCLAIMED CHINESE ARTIST TO BUILD CITY OUT OF BISCUITS AT SELFRIDGES

15th – 22nd February

This week will see the humble digestive biscuit elevated to a new role – as part of a major artwork that will be created in Selfridges by acclaimed Chinese contemporary artist Song Dong.

On 15th February, Song Dong will start to build a city entirely out of biscuits on Selfridges' lower ground floor. Whilst he has built other biscuit cities before, in Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai and Paris, this work, specially commissioned by Selfridges, is the first to be created and exhibited in the UK. Entitled 'Eating the City', it will use approximately 72,000 biscuits, supplied by McVities, including Digestives, Chocolate Digestives, Rich Tea, HobNobs, Caramels and Fruit Shortcake, and will be about twelve metres long. The city is scheduled to be completed by Wednesday 22nd February when customers will be invited to eat it.

Beijing-based Song Dong uses performance, photography, video and installations to explore ideas of transience, perception and the ephemeral nature of existence. Of his "Eating the City" project, he says: "As cities in Asia grow, old buildings are knocked down and new ones built almost everyday. Some cities have even been built from scratch in 20 years. My city will be built of sweets and biscuits, making it tempting and delicious. Visitors will enjoy my city but, if it is eaten, it will be destroyed".

Currently in Selfridges windows is another commissioned art installation by Chinese artist Wang Qingsong. The work, entitled 'Follow Me', explores our fascination with shopping and highlights the irresistible allure of consumer goods to all people everywhere. Selfridges has worked with Pekin Fine Arts and with The Red Mansion Foundation to bring the work of Wang Qingsong and Song Dong to the UK during the China in London celebrations. Bettina von Hase, art advisor to Selfridges, brought both collaborations to Selfridges through her art consultancy Nine AM.

Alannah Weston, Creative Director for Selfridges, said: "We're thrilled to build on our heritage of working with talented people by having two of China's most celebrated artists creating works in our store. Our relationship with the arts is an essential part of our creative programme and I'm delighted that we're able to support the China in London Festival in this way."

For further information, please contact:

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Selfridges has had a long association with the arts having sponsored numerous exhibitions as well as staging the Sam Taylor Wood Wrap (XV Seconds) in 2000. Since then, Selfridges has continued to commission acclaimed artists, photographers, and architects including Julian Opie, Spencer Tunick, Future Systems, David Adjaye, Rankin and Mario Testino.

China in London has been organised through a partnership between the Mayor of London, Visit London, and the Royal Academy of Arts. Additional contributions have been made from a wide range of organisations including London Chinatown Chinese Association, New West End Company, Regents Street Association, Transport for London and London Development Agency.

Song Dong lives and works in Beijing. Recent solo exhibitions and performances include: Still Breathing, performance, Tian An Men and Hou Hai, Beijing, 1996; Stamping the Water, performance, Lhasa River, Tibet, 1996; Slap, video installation, Ruin for Arts, Berlin, 1997; Song Dong in London, installation and performance, Tablet Gallery, London, 2000; Writing Time with Water, Creative Times and Times Square Alliance, NYC, 2005; and Broken Mirror: The 59th Minute: Video Art on the NBC Astrovision by Panasonic Times Square and Creative Time, NYC, 2005. Group exhibitions include: Out of the White Cube, Hong Kong, 1996; Inside Out: New Chinese Art Exhibition, P.S.1 Contemporary Art, New York, 1998; Cities on the Move 7, Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland, 1999; Khoj International Artists Workshop, India, 1999; HOME: Chinese Contemporary Art, Shanghai, 2000; IRREDUCIBLE: Contemporary Short Form Video 1995–2005, CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, 2005; Faces in the Crowd, Whitechapel, 2005; and Indeterminate States: Video in the Ella Fontanals Cisneros Collection, Miami, 2005

The Red Mansion Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation, which promotes artistic exchange between China and Great Britain through exhibitions, exchange programmes, publications and the Red Mansion Art Prize.