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BRIAN ENO CREATES VISUAL MUSIC AT SELFRIDGES

Selfridges is bringing the work of world-renowned sound and light artist Brian Eno to the Ultralounge, its dedicated space for special projects, where from 27 January to 11 March customers can experience the calm and beautiful sensation of *Luminous*, a marriage of sound and image created exclusively for the London store.

Luminous is a multi-screen installation with software that selects, mixes and overlaps up to four images at a time, to create constantly changing paintings. Alongside the visual, ambient audio is also processed – combining layers of sound and light so that you never see or hear the same thing twice.

Shoppers are invited to immerse themselves in a sensuous and contemplative atmosphere, evoked by the large colour screens installed in specific formation in the Ultralounge, which has previously played host to events ranging from the Vegas chill-out bar to Future Punk.

Luminous explores the collapse of boundaries between artwork and audience by encouraging visitors to not just look, but linger for a while and make themselves comfortable.

Eno, the pioneer of ambient music, has based *Luminous* on his “generative art” work, *77 Million Paintings* – so called because of the number of paintings that could be created from almost 300 hyper-colourful images made by the artist over the last two decades. He describes it as “visual music A slow changing light painting.”

Alannah Weston, Selfridges’ Creative Director, comments: “Brian Eno is an inspirational artist whose work is incredibly innovative and I’m sure our customers will respond both to its visual beauty and sense of tranquillity.”

Brian Eno said: “Selfridges is the first London venue of this particular installation, their innovative spirit in keeping with the store’s fantastic track record of juxtaposing retail and the arts. I am very pleased to have my work as the latest development of this tradition.”

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, one of Britain’s foremost contemporary art centres will also welcome Brian Eno’s *77 Million Paintings* and will curate it in another exciting configuration entitled *The Constellations*. This exhibition will take place between 31 January and 15 April 2007.

Notes for Editors

- Brian Eno is an English electronic musician, music theorist and record producer. As a solo artist, he is probably best known as the father of modern ambient music. He first came to prominence as the keyboard and synthesiser player of the 1970's glam and art rock band, Roxy Music. His production credits include some of the most respected albums by Talking Heads, James, U2 and David Bowie. Eno has also been active in other artistic genres, producing videos for gallery display and collaborating with visual artists in other endeavours. He is an Apple scholar
- At the core of the installation lies over 300 paintings and other visuals created by Brian Eno over the past 20 years processed by 'Primitives', a specially designed software able to randomly overlap up to four images and produce an exponential number of new unique images. 'Primitives' ensures that no two images are ever exactly the same. The continuous end result, which can be played at varying speeds, creates seamless ever shifting patterns of imagery and texture which could potentially reach up to 77 million in number: hence the title of the work
- It's been estimated that it would take over 9,000 years to watch the entire show at the fastest speed available on the software and it would take several million years to witness all the possible combinations it can create. This generative art form, which Brian Eno calls 'visual music', turns the table on the traditional artistic expectations from both the artist and the audience by relinquishing the artist's control over the end result to artificial intelligence and the audience's natural need for a prompted narrative. The experience is at once totally vivid, visual, musical and involving - yet without script, start or finish, like stepping into a parallel world of calmness with its own rhythm
- 77 Million Paintings is the very latest evolutionary stage of this exploration of generative light compositions of which Brian Eno is the stellar advocate. It is the first serious challenge to using screens (especially the ever increasingly high performing flat plasma television screens invading our homes) as a place in which to display art and not only as a medium for story telling. 77 Million Paintings is a brilliant demonstration of what Pixelart (or screen art) can do. It uses the pixels as an artist's material and combines them with more traditional materials in a way that is unachievable in any other medium
- Alannah Weston took on the role of Creative Director of Selfridges in 2004. She has responsibility for developing the company's cultural heritage. Alannah was previously Creative Director of Windsor in Vero Beach, Florida where she founded an art gallery for the community and put together a schedule of exhibitions including work by Christo and Jeanne Claude, Ed Ruscha, Bruce Weber and Peter Doig
- Selfridges is also famous for its many creative collaborations. Early in the year, Selfridges invited 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 whereas "Eating the City", the edible miniature Chinese 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 celebration 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 in 2006 were: Spring Beauty; Street Style and the Christmas Grotto

- BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England. BALTIC presents a constantly changing, distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation, commissioning and communication of contemporary visual art. BALTIC has welcomed over 2.3 million visitors, since opening to the public in July 2002.

Brian Eno's *The Constellations* will open on 31 January and will run until 15 April 2007 in the Level 4 exhibition space, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art.