



The Art of Retail

Pavilions Birmingham to host unique collaborations with city arts projects

'When it's at its best, shopping, to me, should be like the best theatre.'
How to Shop with Mary Queen of Shops, by Mary Portas

In a bid to enhance visiting shoppers' retail experience and showcase the creative talent in the city, Pavilions Birmingham is entering into the first of a series of innovative collaborative projects with city arts organisations.

During August, the boutique shopping centre on the High Street, whose anchor tenants include Marks & Spencer and HMV, will be hosting Gallery 37 Birmingham, an acclaimed youth arts training programme.

Now in its eleventh year, Gallery 37 offers young people from the Birmingham area aged between 16 and 24 years the chance to discover and develop their creative talents and interests, work alongside professional artists and gain qualifications.

An innovative and creative use of vacant retail space, the project running from 3 to 21 August will bring a new dimension to the shopping experience at the relaxed shopping centre. Shoppers at Pavilions will have the opportunity to share in and engage with the imaginative work in progress of 40 aspiring young Birmingham artists who will be working with four of the city's leading arts and cultural organisations, including the IKON gallery and Birmingham Repertory Theatre, on a combination of visual and performance arts projects.

As part of Gallery 37, Pavilions will be commissioning the young people to make a creative legacy for the shopping centre that will go on public exhibition, with the winning prize £100 of Pavilions vouchers.

Gallery 37 Coordinator, Saira Holmes, said of the partnership with Pavilions: "Gallery 37 is a unique arts training programme, initiated by Birmingham City Council. It really makes a difference to the lives of the young people involved, enabling them to develop skills and experience which can act as a springboard to advance their careers. We are very pleased to have the sponsorship of Pavilions Birmingham, providing Gallery 37 with a vibrant, accessible base in the city centre."

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Marketing Manager at Pavilions, Sarah Jenkinson said: "Pavilions Birmingham is absolutely delighted to be sponsoring and hosting the Gallery 37 project for 2009. The enthusiasm of the people involved makes it the perfect event for Pavilions Shopping Centre and with a city centre location such as ours we hope the wider community will see the impact and involvement of arts for young people in Birmingham.

"This is part of our long-term commitment to supporting the arts and enhancing our visitors' shopping experience. It is no secret that there are vacant shop units all over the city as a result of the current economic climate. We've decided to put this empty space to creative use, embracing what we see as the future for retail: providing shoppers with more than simply a shopping experience."

Already this year, Pavilions has provided a great platform for a number of arts projects. The shopping centre hosted Positively Red, an exhibition by Birmingham City University students in aid of Worlds Aid Day, Easter workshops run by Birmingham Opera Company for the new 2009 production of Verdi's Othello, and there are future collaborations in the pipeline.

Notes to Editors:

About Pavilions Birmingham

Pavilions Birmingham opened 22 years ago, offering a relaxed and luxurious shopping experience in the heart of the Birmingham's vibrant shopping quarter. Alongside more than 30 retailers bringing the best in fashion, furnishings and home ware, with key tenants including Marks & Spencer, Hobbs, LK Bennett, Laura Ashley, HMV, Azendi and DestinationSkin, are the food loft and coffee lounge offering the ideal destination to pause and refresh.