

# THE SHOP AT BLUEBIRD

## Floral Street, London

Design: Dalziel & Pow  
Opening date: May 2018  
Store size: 1,393 sq m

More than 10 years ago in an Art Deco space on London's King's Road. The Shop at Bluebird emerged, filled with the most unexpected fashion finds and works of art. Over time, this treasure trove grew and grew until it was time to move. The Shop at Bluebird's new chapter has opened in the beautiful Grade II listed Carriage Hall on Covent Garden's Floral Street, with its original pulleys, beams and glass atrium set against modern art installations and a delicious restaurant opening soon.

Designed by Dalziel & Pow, the 'Playground of Wonders' embodies the brand's whimsical, expressive, free-spirited identity. A carefully selected edit of artwork, design, premium fashion and beauty including Chloe, Alexander McQueen, Peter Pilotto, Victoria Beckham, Racil, Galvan, Temperley London and Ports 1961, alongside contemporary labels like Isa Arfen, Rixo London, Ganni and Forte Forte, unfolds across this 19th Century building, completed by a rooftop terrace and restaurant.

'The Shop at Bluebird has long been a hub of creativity, and in our new Carriage Hall home we'll be bringing our unexpected fashion, art, and beauty finds to a truly unique store setting,' says Claire Miles, head of The Shop at Bluebird.

The space has been designed to gradually reveal its theatrical interior, and is of course packed with instagrammable moments. After a deceptively understated shopfront, shoppers progress through a trend area featuring a bold VM arrival statement and trailing greenery along the ceiling, which gives a hint of what lies ahead.

A glass-topped atrium, encircled with three galleried floors, awaits at the heart of the store. Flooded with natural light and paved with cobblestones, it evokes an open-air courtyard feel. Continuing the juxtaposition of indoors and outdoors, lush hanging baskets cascade onto the foliage on the ground. The centrepiece of the atrium is a bespoke Icosahedron installation of 20 mirrored faces that reflect and distort the surroundings.

'The atrium itself is already a beautiful space, which makes people stop, reflect



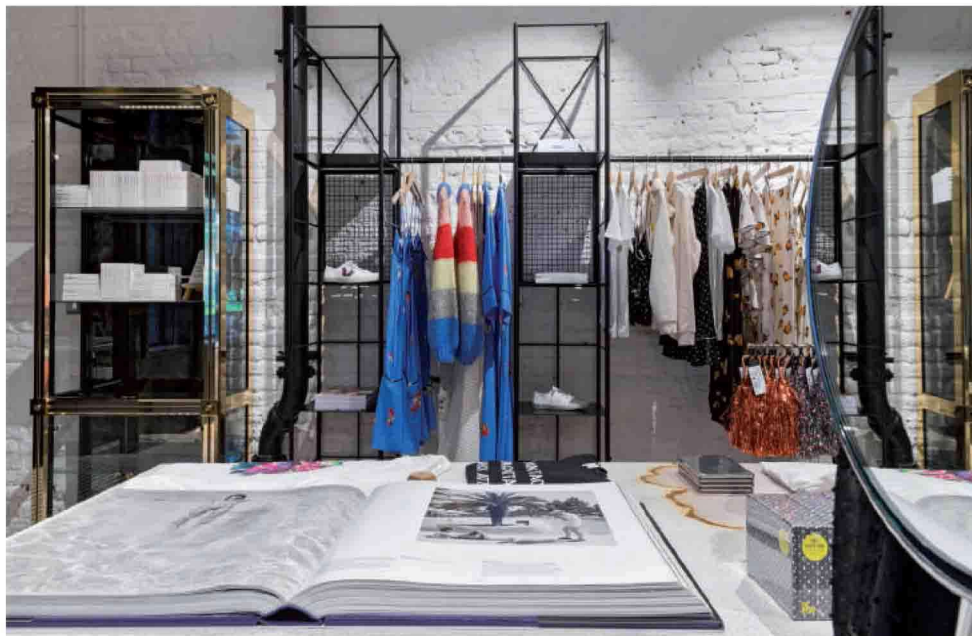
and look up and around at its surroundings. It was important to design something which would be unexpected but also add to the "wow" factor of the space,' says Laura Graham, lead designer at Dalziel & Pow. 'The idea of the mirrored Icosahedron was to reflect back the amazing 19th Century Grade II listed building to give unexpected views showcasing the space and our design from all angles as the customer progresses through the space, and not to forget creating a 360-degree instagrammable moment.'

She says foliage was important to bring the outside in within the atrium, to create the feel it would've had many years ago when it was an external courtyard. 'Purposeful material choices within this area of cobblestones and reclaimed timbers bring character of a courtyard feel with the green additions of a 6.5m tree, lots of large-scale planting, cascading arrangements and hanging baskets suspended bringing life to the atrium.'

Continuing the reflective theme, the main staircase also has a reflective underside, as if floating among the greenery, and this playfulness with the perception of space continues around the store.

'Similarly to the Icosahedron, we wanted to reflect back and showcase the amazing architecture and create the illusion of our design elements becoming invisible and lightweight, for example, the Icosahedron almost becomes invisible on a cloudy day whilst looking up towards the sky, and the large-scale mirrors concealing the staircase structure create the allusion of a much larger courtyard space. We also





played with reflection to create infinite views and to create a contrast of old and new,' continues Graham.

A wall of artworks is located on the first floor exclusively curated by William Ling of the Fashion Illustration Gallery. Stairwell treatments pay homage to different artists on each level.

The lifts are treated with a kaleidoscope of coloured paint that seemingly drips down the walls and puddles out onto the timber flooring, connecting the two floors.

Statement design and objets d'art similarly express the brand's creative, eclectic spirit, combining found antique furniture with pieces rehomed from the

King's Road location. Long tables for merchandising displays bring a grandeur of scale, alongside large handmade rugs and dramatic draped curtains. Wallpaper in clashing colours and textures continue the eclectic aesthetic, both the elegant geometrics of Art Deco pattern and florid Victorian motifs. The work of Timorous Beasties, a Glasgow studio known for its surreal and provocative patterns, appears frequently including behind the cash desks and in fitting rooms.

Dalziel & Pow added an exciting sense of discovery to the store experience, punctuating landing spaces with lifestyle elements, books and homewares, and

giving each shop-in-shop or department a unique treatment. The Bags and Jewellery shop-in-shop, for example, uses yellow zinc as a signature material, while Beauty and Fragrance is natural, earthy and soft with apothecary detailing and a living tree bursting through the 'test and play' table.

A strong VM statement of projections onto draped fabric draws customers into the first-floor Fashion Playground, with mannequins from HOL. This sleekly styled area again plays on reflections, using mirrors and cleverly landscaped screens to create infinite perspectives. Contemporary and casual fashion embodies the 'playground of wonders' theme with >

a striking lighting installation, mixing Rothschild & Bickers bespoke hand-blown glass with found vintage pieces.

The design is respectful of the Grade II-listed architecture, offering an artful blend of heritage and modernity. The team have highlighted original features such as beautiful wooden beams and brickwork, as well as adding equestrian details and carriage wheel motifs in a nod to its former life as a coach house.

'The architectural material choices were chosen to feel as if they could have always existed within the space. Building on the theme of old and new, we then used bold contrasting new finishes against the old to create visually interesting details, such as the yellow electroplated metal which line and protrude through the existing arches,' says Graham. 'Playful material choices were used to build on the eccentric Bluebird character. Bold prints, colours and textures were used to create statements, and varying material choices were cleverly put together to create an eclectic feel which will continue to build as The Shop at Bluebird settle and grow into their new home.'

With a smart pulley system of suspended rails, the whole space is able to adapt for brand takeovers, fashion shows and other events. Fitting rooms are cleverly disguised behind discrete angled walls, while cash desks (hand-crafted from recycled waste materials) are made into striking features thanks to patterned or tiled backdrops.

An exceptional level of detail is visible throughout, from the bluebird and bee-shaped handles on cabinets to the branded labels hanging on rails.

A restaurant and roof terrace will open on the store's top floor in Summer 2018. This will join the dedicated spaces for Blink Brow Bar, offering a walk-in eyebrow shaping services using the ancient art of threading, the Avery Perfume Gallery and a takeover shop-in-shop by Italian lifestyle brand Fornasetti.

'The Shop at Bluebird, Carriage Hall, Covent Garden is one of those rare opportunities in retail design - a great site and a brave client who can see the potential in creating a benchmark retail experience,' says Dalziel & Pow's creative director, David Dalziel, who headed up the creative team. 'This can become the 'must-see' fashion lifestyle store in London.'

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'PLAYFUL MATERIAL CHOICES WERE USED TO BUILD ON THE ECCENTRIC BLUEBIRD CHARACTER!'

