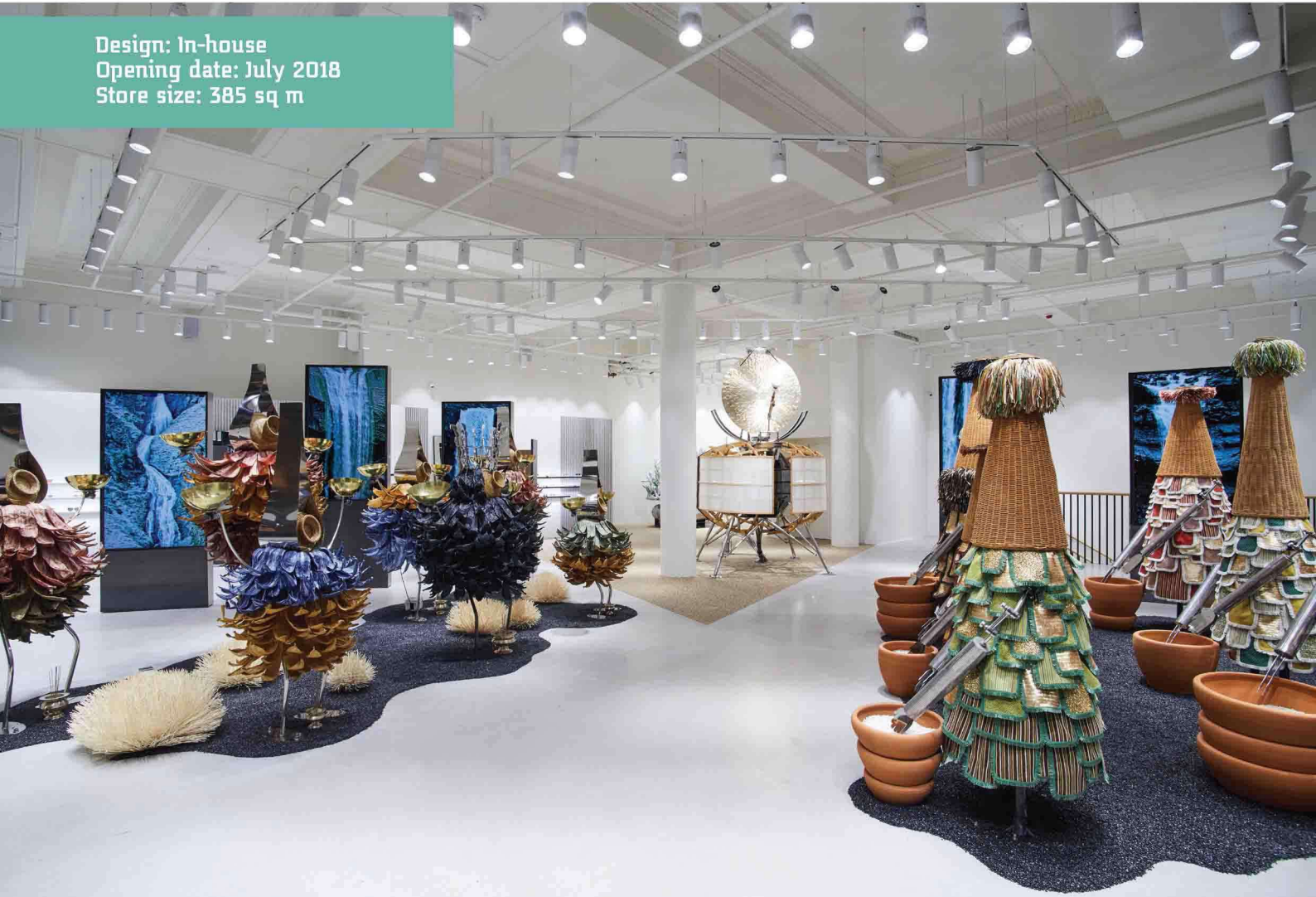


# GENTLE MONSTER

Argyll Street, London

Design: In-house  
Opening date: July 2018  
Store size: 385 sq m



Following the launch of a pop-up shop at Selfridges in June, Gentle Monster has opened its first European flagship store on Argyll Street in London. The Seoul-based eyewear label has once again created a gallery-like retail space, immersing visitors in a total sensory experience.

With focuses on product, space, styling, campaign and service, Gentle Monster aims to deliver a radically new and innovative eye for design. These principles are addressed not only in the design of its sunglasses, but also in the design of its stores and creative projects.

The 385 sq m store at 28-29 Argyll Street

is spread across two floors and has a Kung Fu theme, focusing on martial arts practice, intertwined with extra-terrestrial creatures. Visitors are immediately transported into a Kung Fu training ground run by alien life, to the sound of a sacred gong that chimes in time with the trainees' regime.

The training ground is bordered with waterfall video installations of artist Ryoichi Kurokawa's 'Octfalls (2011)', which have been re-edited in collaboration with Gentle Monster. 'The waterfall embodies serenity and the meditation that follows martial arts practice,' explains a spokesperson >

for Gentle Monster. The space is also filled with various plants which act as the energy source for the sacred gong.

The in-store experience is heightened downstairs, where guests enter a Kung Fu battleground surrounded by a bamboo forest. The arena hosts the Kung Fu Championship battles and also holds the champions hall of fame.

Commenting on the store design, Gary Bott, managing director of Gentle Monster, says: 'Often our store concepts may begin with simply an idea that we like and expand upon. Whilst the art of kung fu alone is visually striking, aliens visiting Earth and discovering kung fu then interpreting this on their home planet creates a unique customer experience beyond imagination.'

The aliens are inspired by earth tones of shaolin temples, bamboo forests and Asian villages, which inform the colour palette of ochre, sand, sienna and gold. Meanwhile, traditional materials used in store range from straw and wicker to plush metallic cacti (the power source for the ceremonial bronze gong).

Gentle Monster launched in 2011 under the philosophy of high-end experimentation and has grown significantly with stores in Korea, China, the US and Singapore. **RF**

