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Art Fairs

The Winter Show Has Taken Over the Window Displays at the Old Barneys New York Department Store to Show 5,000 Years of Art

The fair is also reviving the store's beloved restaurant, Fred's.

Sarah Cascone, April 5, 2022



A window at the old Barneys's department store for the Winter Show, designed by Corey Damen Jenkins. Photo by Simon Cherry, courtesy of the Winter Show.

The venerable Winter Show, the unique fair combining art, antiques, and modern design, has been a New York fixture for nearly 70 years —but it's doing things a little bit differently for 2022.

The Winter Show (“in spring,” as this year’s edition has been branded) has taken over the former Barneys New York flagship on Madison Avenue, bringing the luxury department store and its famed windows back to life for its 10-day run.

These opulent showcases draw from 5,000 years of art history, mixing works from far-flung corners of the world in widely disparate media to reflect the diversity of the fair’s offerings—and to give collectors a bit of decor inspiration.

“People don’t think about the Winter Show as having both historic and contemporary materials,” Helen Allen, the fair’s executive director, told Artnet News. “The windows helps contextualize everything, and show how you can mix materials from across different eras.”

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A window at the old Barney's department store for the Winter Show, designed by Keita Turner. Photo by Simon Cherry, courtesy of the Winter Show.

To create the eye-catching displays, the fair enlisted designers Corey Damen Jenkins, Young Huh, Keita Turner, and Ralph Harvard, as well as Mark Ferguson and Andrew Oyen of Ferguson and Shamamian Architects. They were given access to a selection of artworks, antiques, and other artifacts offered for consideration by the fair's 70 exhibitors, as well as vibrant wallpaper from partner companies Dedar Milano, Phillip Jeffries, Trove, and de Gournay.

"Not one vision was remotely the same, even though they were choosing from the same works," Allen said. "It is really fun, and it feels very much in the spirit of what we would have seen at Barney's."

In a Barneys-appropriate touch, two of the windows feature dresses and gowns from Christian Siriano and Victor de Souza, while jewelry and decorative arts historian Levi Higgs chose decorative eggs as his theme for a smaller jewelry box window at the main entrance.

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A window at the old Barneys department store for the Winter Show, designed by Levi Higgs. Photo by Simon Cherry, courtesy of the Winter Show.

The fair wound up at the former department store after the omicron wave prevented the show from moving forward with its planned January opening—a decision made on Christmas Eve, necessitating some scrambling on the part of organizers to make new plans.

With the Park Avenue Armory booked through the spring, the disused department store, which was closed in February 2020 after the chain declared bankruptcy, was intriguing alternative. (There was talk last year that ArtVest, the company that helped bring TEFAF to New York, was turning the space into an exhibition venue and private club called Art House, but that project seems to have stalled.)

“The windows are one of the biggest selling points of the venue,” Allen said. “We definitely have been getting street traffic from a lot of people who were never familiar with the show before.”

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A window at the old Barneys department store for the Winter Show, designed by Youna Huh. Photo by Simon Cherrv. courtesv of the Winter Show.

The six-floor space presented new challenges, of course: competition for elevators during load in, for instance, and trying to make sure dealers maintained a degree of familiarity despite the new environs.

But the spacious venue also allows for bigger booths and plenty of seating for well-heeled collectors to rest. There's also a dedicated VIP lounge, a panel discussion room, a special exhibition of quilts from New York's American Folk Art Museum, and even a full-fledged restaurant, with Canard Caterers bringing back Barneys beloved power lunch hotspot, Fred's, for the run of the fair.

"Like the Winter Show and Barneys itself, Fred's was a New York institution," Allen said. "We are excited to pay homage to Fred's and recreate some of the favorites from the menu."

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The Winter Show 2022 at the old Barneys department store. Photo by Simon Cherry, courtesy of the Winter Show.

For Allen, the most important thing is to be back in business raising money for the East Side House Settlement.

“For two years, East Side House has been pivoting the meet the needs of its community, expanding from education and workforce development to helping to feed thousands of New Yorkers every day,” Allen said.

“The fair is vital to our dealer community and our collectors,” she added. “But the ticket sales provide unrestricted funds for East Side House to develop its programs and help our neighbors who are most in need. It can’t be understated how important it was that this show could take place so that we can give back to the community.”

The Winter Show is on view at 660 Madison Ave, New York, April 1–10, 2022.