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FRONT ROW

Retailing as a Forum for Art



This eight-foot-tall sculpture by Matt Keegan will go in the window of the 57th Street shop.

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THE INTERSECTION of fashion and art has produced some strange bedfellows over the last decade (Richard Prince purses for Louis Vuitton; Cindy Sherman's Chanel series), but Kris Van Assche, the Dior Homme designer, takes a straightforward approach to art appreciation. He hires artists to create pieces for his stores, like the poetic Robert Montgomery light sculpture that hangs in the SoHo store.

The latest piece, being installed this week at Dior Homme at 17 East 57th Street, is by Matt Keegan, who also works in words. Mr. Keegan created an eight-foot-tall sculpture, left, that will sit in the front window. It's made of curving mirrored steel engraved with text that reads "How Do I Look?" Each "O" is completely cut out, like a porthole, so viewers on the street will be able to see into the store, while also seeing their own reflections.

"There's a number of ways to look at it," Mr. Keegan said. "But my interest was not in the merger of disciplines. It was in seeing how the sculpture functions on a heavily trafficked street."

Mr. Van Assche said the artworks are a way of personalizing the stores, which are rigorously designed.

"It's not about interfering with the store in a very dramatic or overwhelming way," he said. "It's attracting the attention for a minute, then letting the customer go about whatever he feels like."