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The Architecture of Fashion Retailing: Michael Gabellini and the Creation of Brand Environments

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H Introduction

- Background to the research
...aim and objectives.
- Literature outline
...methodology.
- Findings.
- Conclusion.

Background

Great stores leave a mark, and if shopping indeed is an experience – as so many sociologists, architects and retailers claim – some experiences just cannot be forgotten. (Ngo 2008)

- Implies store design plays a major role in delivering a brand experience...
...the store is not merely the location of a transaction.

Background



Chanel Tokyo



London

Autogas, Milan



Background

- Little attention been paid to the selection of architects/store designers.
- Little understanding of how the designer interprets, integrates and presents the brand.

Aim:

Investigate the processes involved in the selection of a retail architect and their role in creating a branded environment.

Literature

Martineau (1958)

- Store can have personality.

Liljander et al (2009)

- Store image affects purchase behaviour and brand quality/value perceptions.

Kent (2003):

- Store image composed of functional qualities and psychological interpretations.

Moore et al (2010):

- Flagship stores represent the ultimate interpretation of the brand.

Methodology

- Qualitative approach aims to understand the processes and motives behind a phenomenon.
- In-depth interview with an influential retail architect.



- **Vera Wang, New York.**
- **Nicole Farhi, New York.**
- **Jil Sander worldwide.**
- **Salvatore Ferragamo, Venice & NYC.**
- **Gianfranco Ferre, Milan & Paris.**
- **Giorgio Armani , Milan.**

Findings

Function of the store:

- “Enhance the viability of the products”
- “Achieve the transporting of desire through the transporting of goods”

The retail environment becomes a vehicle for the brand to unveil itself, to consolidate brand awareness and burnish brand loyalty – by creating experience or experiential value

Findings

Selecting & recruiting a designer

- Brands often work with 'favourite' designers.
- Tenders are offered occasionally.
- Approaches are usually private.
- Contact developed often informally.

Jil Sander was first drawn to our work when she saw the Park Avenue boutique we designed for Linda Dresner, who carried Jil's fashion collections.

Findings

- Complications of working with a fashion designer / brand director:

If the client is a fashion company, someone famous for style and design in their own field, we sometimes find ourselves... editing the company's conflicting dreams and aspirations.

- Practical and creative issues:
 - Architecture is as much science as art.
 - Difficult to transpose a vision to a different medium.

Findings

Brand interpretation phase:

- Understanding the nature of the brand
- Act as “spatial advisors”.
- Interpret and apply product design and marketing imagery to the retail space.
- Different brands have different demands

and

We become familiar with the essence of the brand and advise what will work spatially and scenographically with the brand’s DNA to craft a series of brand and spatial narratives.

Findings

Location and Architectural phase:



Vera Wang collections are very layered, with an emphasis on material and draping... she is also know for juxtaposing materials and fabrics in an interesting way.

Findings

Design conceptualisation phase:

- Distill & apply brand DNA



Jil Sander, Paris

- Landmark façade.
- Reflect modernism of brand.
- Create sense of mystery.

Ferragamo, Venice

- Reflect more traditional values.
- Consider products & customers.
- Emphasise material interplay.

Findings

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BRAND INTERPRETATION PHASE

- Architects role is to interpret and apply brand

LOCATION AND ARCHITECTURAL PHASE

- Balance of architecture.

- Brand identity and expression is key but two inputs to design are underestimated.

DESIGN CONCEPTUALISATION PHASE

- Locational context.
- Product and customer issues.

- Model for store design:

STORE APPLICATION PHASE