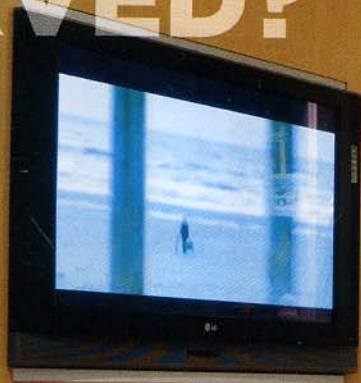


ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

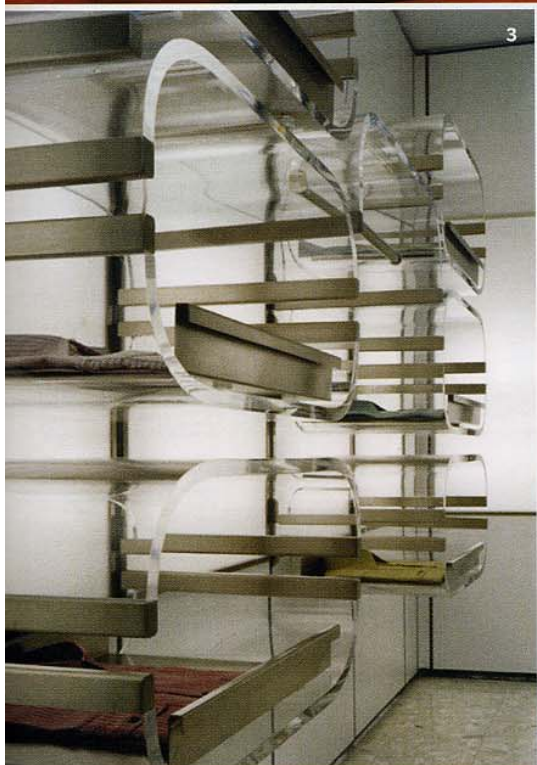


Designers' approaches to retail display continue to evolve, along with our changing notions of what constitutes a store. Large spaces – think big box stores almost as sprawling as the suburbs they serve – demand large, striking centrepieces that focus consumers' attention, like Eventscape's central island at a Harley-Davidson showroom in Edmonton. But smaller streetside boutiques in increasingly dense urban centres require a more delicate approach: consider, for instance, Perennial's design of a Mendocino store on Toronto's bustling Bloor Street, where simple, understated platforms built from salvaged wood prop up the merchandise to draw shoppers' attention. The use of salvaged wood also points toward the greening of retail design – a welcome development.

Retail display fixtures reveal trends in the industry, too. Many new lines, such as Mobile by Alu and Scissy by B+N Industries, can be assembled and modified quickly, allowing shop owners to change their display systems to reflect new product additions or larger inventory changes. And the Blaster by Finnish architecture and design firm Valvomo for Nokia points to another trend: mobile retail display, where companies (especially those catering to youth) send street teams to concerts and festivals to show off cellphones, portable gaming systems and food and beverage products. Just another sign of retail design on the move.

ANDREW BRAITHWAITE

Toronto design firm 3rd Uncle employed modern materials and very basic-looking furniture at local boutique Ella + Elliot. Custom display walls and simple platforms (constructed by Parallel General Contractors) were positioned to create a wide, gallery-like path running through the store, its polished concrete floors easily navigable by baby strollers. In the centre, adjacent to the wash-room and change tables, a curved Douglas fir veneer wall – with white lacquered cubbyholes for merchandise – creates a sort of waiting/play area, all under the glow of Frank Gehry's Cloud lamp by Vitra. A digital screen projects manufacturers' product info, along with music videos and films for kids.



1. Dumoulin by Guez Communication & Design

For this Montreal store of Quebec electronics retailer Dumoulin, Guez Communication & Design crafted a central island concept. The local firm employed custom counter-top and display case design in three styles of high-pressure maple laminate, along with drawer handles by Richelieu Hardware and Visplay rails and brackets by Marlite. Contrasting horizontal dividers clearly define product categories.

2. Ducati by Utility Seattle-based design firm Utility created this custom piece to display the debut line of road bicycles by Ducati, the renowned Bologna-based motorbike manufacturer. The fixture incorporates the classic Ducati red into a raw aluminum and steel design that employs a trellised cantilever framework to elevate the bike at an athletic angle.

3. Muro Wall System by Artitalia

This reusable system features perimeter and free-standing walls. Panels varying in size and material can be affixed to the horizontal and vertical wall standards. Available in veneer, painted MDF and acrylic, they clip onto the frame and provide the backdrop for a selection of retail fixtures, such as the rounded rectangular shelving shown.

4. Dot Wardrobe by Monica Graffeo and Bluezone for Kristalia

This clothing display system includes hanging tubes, and shelving and drawer units for merchandise storage. The clean-lined components, finished in anodized aluminum and aluminum-painted steel, can be wall mounted or left free standing.

5. Mendocino by Perennial Toronto's Perennial design studio crafted this Mendocino store interior on the city's

high-end Bloor Street retail strip. The focal tables, mannequin platforms and seating areas were custom-fabricated by Middlebrook Woodworking, using reclaimed wood supplied by local company Urban Tree Salvage. The pine was salvaged from the historic Queen's Wharf, built in 1833, which was unearthed in March 2006 during excavation for a condo on the city's waterfront.

6. Mobile by Alu This new line by Italian retail manufacturer Alu features multiple tower units, wall-mounted shelves and racks, rolling racks and tables, all linked aesthetically using three-centimetre steel tubing. Some of the components also feature white laminate or clear tempered glass tops. The easy-to-assemble collection comes in a variety of ready-made kits.

7. Female Leg Form by Bernstein Display Available in two poses, these seductive bent-leg mannequin forms by Bernstein Display of Brooklyn are manufactured from rotationally moulded B-lastic, the company's proprietary – and virtually unbreakable – material.





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8. Fornarina, London, by Giorgio Borruso California-based Giorgio Borruso designed this flagship store for Italian footwear and apparel brand Fornarina. The walls and ceilings are covered by more than 1,000 convex polycarbonate panels of varying thicknesses, held in place by industrial magnets and backlit by 400 metres of natural-spectrum LEDs. Some clusters of panels separate from the wall to become seats or pedestals for merchandise. A five-tonne steel staircase links the store's two levels.

9. Schuhkippe by HP Weidmann This shelving unit by Switzerland's HP Weidmann is available in single (shown) or double configurations. The wall-mounted units, produced in galvanized and powder-coated sheet steel, protrude only 16 centimetres from the wall when the four shelves (available in 11 colours) are displaying shoes in an upright position.

10. Twister Shelving by Zero System The modular Twister system employs injection-moulded methacrylate shelving, steel tube sidewalls and a special Twister node that slides and rotates to allow multiple curving configurations. A new option from Zero System allows brand graphics to be printed by direct ink jet onto any of the system's aluminum front panels.

11. Chalkline by Ian Milne Toronto designer Ian Milne created these large-scale chalkboards, 2.1 metres long and 15 centimetres high, using mild steel salvaged from discarded retail fixtures by Solway Metal Sales. Stainless steel frames the writing surface, which can display changing bar and restaurant specials. Chalklines adorn the wall in two Toronto establishments, Ezra's Pound and Ferro Bar Café, where Milne personally changes the messages each week.

12. Harley-Davidson of Edmonton by Eventscape Working with showroom architects Stantec Architecture of Vancouver, Eventscape crafted this nine-metre central display module that recalls the spokes of a motorbike wheel. Half of the structure is hung from the ceiling, the other free standing and floor mounted. A lighting grid illuminates the bikes below, and three large plasma screens project product images.

13. Scissy by B+N Industries This colourful, modular system of wall components and stand-alone units for shelving and hanging can be assembled without tools. A smaller tabletop version, MiniScissy (shown), features Sorbetti acrylic surfaces for cosmetics, gifts and impulse buys.

14. Blaster by Valvomo for Nokia Designed by Ilkka Terho and Teppo Asikainen of the Finnish architecture

and design studio Valvomo, these transparent acrylic boxes equipped with electronic components were used in the summer of 2006 as mobile display units for Nokia music phones. The sonorous marketing campaign toured parks, beaches and concerts around Finland.

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