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

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# Introduction

- Background to the research

  ...aim and objectives.

- Literature outline

  ...methodology.

- Findings.
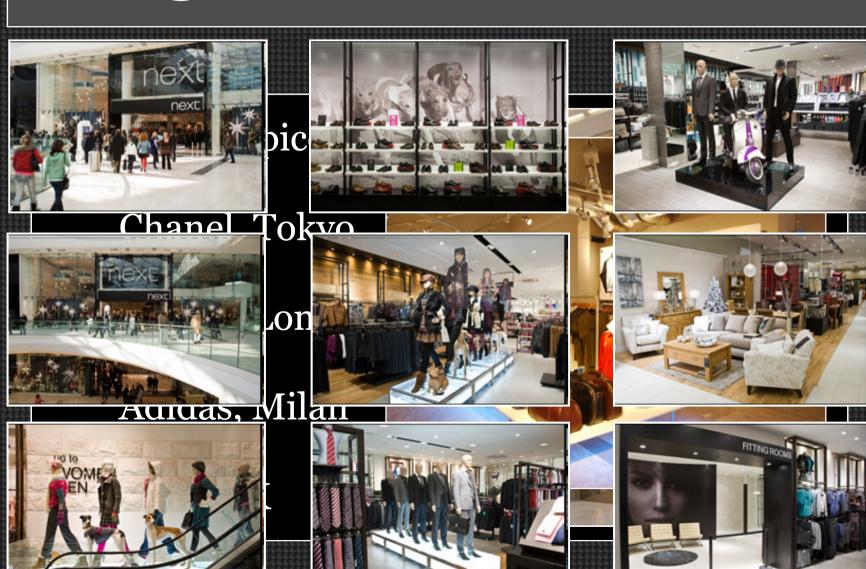
- Conclusion.

# 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

Adidas, 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 say 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
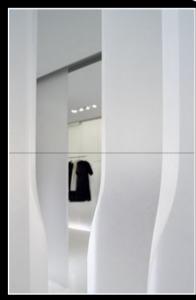
**Brand interpretation phase:**

- 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



*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:

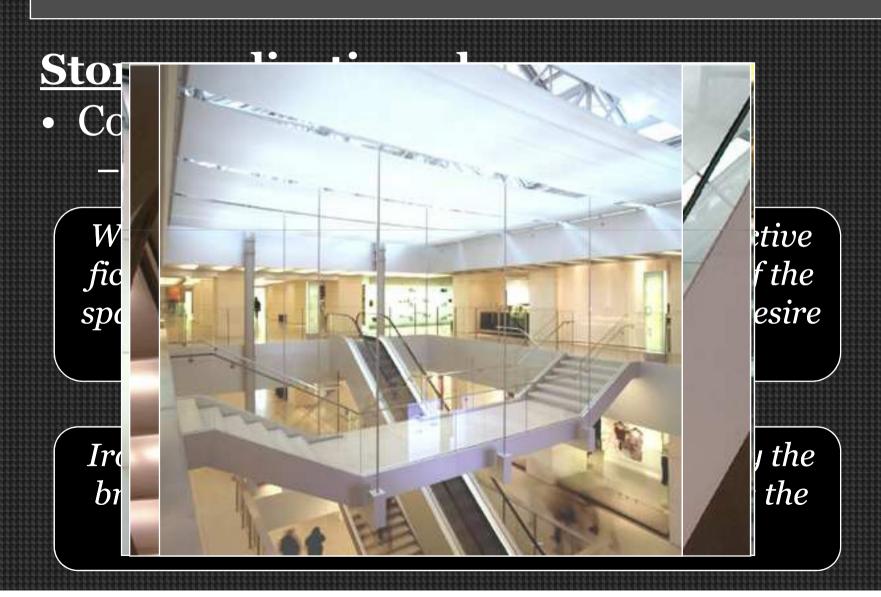- Distill & apply brand DNA



**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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# Concl...

- Architects role is to interpret and apply brand v...
- Balanc... of architecture.
- Brand identity and expression is key but two inputs to design are underestimated.
  – Locational context.
  – Product and customer issues.
- Model for store design:

**BRAND INTERPRETATION PHASE**

**LOCATION AND ARCHITECTURAL PHASE**

**DESIGN CONCEPTUALISATION PHASE**

**STORE APPLICATION PHASE**