ROUTLEDGE RESEARCH IN INTERIOR DESIGN

ARCHITECTURES OF DISPLAY

Department Stores and Modern Retail

EDITED BY
ANCA I. LASC, PATRICIA LARA-BETANCOURT, MARGARET MAILE PETTY

ROUTLEDGE

Architectures of Display

Through an international range of case studies from the 1870s to the present, this volume analyzes strategies of display in department stores and modern retail spaces. Established scholars and emerging researchers working within a range of disciplinary contexts and historiographical traditions shed light on what constitutes modern retail and the ways in which interior designers, architects, and artists have built or transformed their practice in response to the commercial context.

Anca I. Lasc is Assistant Professor of Design History in the History of Art and Design Department at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York.

Patricia Lara-Betancourt is a design historian and research fellow at The Modern Interiors Research Centre, Kingston University, London, UK.

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Documenting History, Charting Progress, and Exploring the World: Architecture in Nineteenth Century Photographs, edited by Micheline Nilsen (London: Ashgate Press, 2013), 155–171.

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Architectures of display

An introduction

Patricia Lara-Betancourt, Anca I. Lasc and Margaret Maile Petty

In 2014, Saks Fifth Avenue took home the top prize at PAVE's *design:retail* Winning Windows awards for the best holiday windows in New York City (Patino Dec. 4, 2014).[1] Collectively titled "An Enchanted Experience," Saks' windows featured a set of six displays showing costumes from designer collections that honored the history of the store since its beginnings in the "roaring 20s" (Patino Nov. 24, 2014). With hundreds of thousands of viewers a day, the windows of Saks Fifth Avenue had been the center of New York City's holiday attractions for years (Trebay Nov. 28, 2014); and, since the city's population expected no less, "An Enchanted Experience" was introduced to the general public with a "bang" – a dazzling spectacle led by the sidewalk performance of thirty-six dancers from the world-famed dance troupe the Rockettes. The curtains lifted during their performance to reveal the colorful window displays while, as the *Daily Mail* reported, "fireworks were shot from the roof into the sky," a sign that "the holiday season has well and truly begun" (Peppers Nov. 25, 2014). The prize was a small reward for the Saks Fifth Avenue creative team, which, chief marketing and creative officer Mark Briggs revealed, had worked for over a year on the windows (Ibid.). With costs rising into the millions, the windows took months of planning: designers would envision the following year's windows before the current year's had even unwrapped (Adamczyk Nov. 25, 2014).

Art Deco and the roaring 20s were only part of the glamor of Saks' 2014 holiday windows. According to Alicia Adamczyk writing for *Forbes*, "An Enchanted Experience" boasted "LED lights, strobes, up-lights, video projections and music" as well as "a light show on the building's façade – incorporating 71,000 lights," which would run every day and night through the New Year (Ibid.). The Art Deco-inspired settings also served as backdrops to classic fairy tales brought to life within iconic New York City locations. Sleeping Beauty was shown resting in the Belvedere Castle in Central Park. Her suitor and "more than 40, custom-made fairies with electrical wings" tried in vain to wake her from her "slumber," *Vanity Fair* contributor Elise Taylor explained – a slumber that hadn't been caused by a witch but rather by her inability to adjust to the "city that never sleeps" (Taylor Dec. 12, 2014) (Fig. I.1). Snow White, on the other hand, was stranded in Times Square and tempted by the Evil Queen with a poisoned apple cart on Broadway. Against a neon-lit group of posters referencing all the stories featured in Saks' windows, Snow White wondered: "Vendor, vendor on the street, what's the safest thing to eat?" The other displays included a meeting between Rapunzel and King Kong on top of the Empire State Building, Rumpelstiltskin spinning straw into gold at City Hall subway station, Cinderella making her way to Saks

Figure I.1 "An Enchanted Experience: Once Upon a Time in New York… A Central Park Setting for Sleeping Beauty," Holiday window display at Saks Fifth Avenue store on December 25, 2014.
Source: Alexander Image/Shutterstock.com

Fifth Avenue to buy herself a new pair of designer glass slippers, and Little Red Riding Hood meeting the Big Bad Wolf at the Plaza Hotel (Patino Nov. 24, 2014) (Fig. I.2). Comfortably ensconced in the red and green Art Deco milieu of New York City's 1907 Renaissance Revival iconic hotel across Central Park, the Wolf – passing as Red Riding Hood's grandmother – was fashionably attired to match his surroundings. Ignoring the dangers ahead, the girl was impressed by the material culture enveloping her. The window caption read: "Once upon a time in New York … Red Riding Hood gasped, Oh my, what a big suite you have... ."

Mark Briggs and his creative team at Saks Fifth Avenue brought traditional fairy tales to life in the Big Apple. The competition they won, however, points towards the development of similar cultures of display in other metropolitan centers around the world. While recreating New York City landmark locations within the store's windows, the designers questioned the relationship between reality and representation, urban architecture and the worlds of fantasy display, desire and material possessions. They summed up more than a century of innovative techniques of retail display developed in European and North American stores such as Bergdorf Goodman, Tiffany & Company, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's, Macy's and Lord & Taylor that had put department store windows on the map as ever more audacious demonstrations of conspicuous consumption. As varied amazements meant "both to delight window shoppers and to lure them toward the registers inside," show windows occupy a central role in the history of modern retail in general, and of department stores in particular (Trebay Nov. 28, 2014). Together with other modern retail display strategies such

Figure I.2 "An Enchanted Experience: Once Upon a Time in New York… Little Red Riding Hood's Hairy Encounter at The Plaza," Holiday window display at Saks Fifth Avenue store on December 25, 2014.
Source: Alexander Image/Shutterstock.com

as model rooms, constructed interiors, showrooms, and show floor cases, they form the core of the analyses that this volume brings together.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the opening of the first department stores in Europe and North America drove the development of an array of strategies meant to enhance the presentation of merchandize, giving rise to a new era of ever-greater "cathedrals of consumption." From innovative use of materials (glass and iron) and new lighting techniques (electricity) to new technologies of mobility (the elevator) and new spaces for socializing (tea rooms, art galleries, writing rooms, or dressing chambers), nothing was spared that could turn the heads of even the most adamant opponents of consumerism. The store was for display and display made the store. Experimental strategies and techniques of display became more widely implemented and were found in a variety of retail environments, from local mercantile shops to other modern spaces of commercial persuasion, including arcades, boutiques and malls, showrooms and wholesale retailers. Indeed, as the twentieth century unfolded, it seemed that the "cathedrals of consumption" had opened their doors and spread their gospel across the built environment.

Architectures of Display: Department Stores and Modern Retail departs from the premise that the presentation of merchandize cannot be separated from the modern materials and building techniques that have been the preferred focus of architectural and art historians so far. Consequently, it proposes to challenge the traditional hierarchy of materials and to replace brick and mortar, paint and stone with theatrical props, tantalizing fabrics, lighting, wax mannequins and artificial flowers as well as

a host of other visual effects focused on capturing and sustaining the viewers' attention, which, together, form a real architecture of display. Engaging with new materials, media, and ideas, the studies collected in this volume illustrate the historical importance of commercial display as an essential component of modern art, design, and architecture, highlighting the capacity of retail design to encapsulate, stylize, and reinterpret culture and its diverse manifestations.

Through a series of case studies analyzing strategies of display in department stores and modern retail spaces from the late-nineteenth century to the start of the twenty-first century, *Architectures of Display* aims to provide a rich array of historical insights of value to design, architectural and art historians. Established scholars and emerging researchers working within a range of disciplinary contexts and historiographical traditions shed light on the core of what constitutes modern retail and the ways in which retail and interior designers, architects and artists have built and transformed their practices in response to the commercial context. Focusing on the mechanisms and methods comprising the architectures of display and such spatial typologies as staged sets, window displays, model rooms/homes and corporate environments, our volume emphasizes the ways in which these displays have transformed and enhanced the retail experience through the decades, as well as the economic, political, and social contexts from which they emerged. These varied retail settings are viewed as sites of modernity, in which professionalization and gender also play a key part.

The volume is structured into three thematic sections titled "Displaying Modernity," "Technologies of Display," and "Contested Identities/Contested Displays." United by the provocation that visual merchandizing and the architectures of display have been instrumental in mediating modernity, technology, and modern design, the collected essays highlight the ways in which retail environments and strategies of display can and do communicate a range of social and cultural values. The aim is to offer an important contribution to the scholarship on retail and interior design as well as to provide a useful introduction to the history of modern retail, visual and material culture, design and architecture. Each section considers the ways in which the display of merchandize gave shape to and dramatized modern retail and the experience of modern life, while also calling attention to the agency of shops and designers in creating settings that expressed public and private identities. A number of correspondences, such as those between retail spaces and art practice, and between retail practices and technological expression and innovation, offer further continuities across and within the thematic sections, thus providing an opportunity for the reader to explore display as a conceptual and disciplinary meeting point.

Architectures of Display offers a cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary overview of the different display typologies and strategies emerging in places of commerce from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century around the world. In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the history of visual merchandizing amongst design and architecture historians. Publications such as Louisa Iarocci's *Visual Merchandising: The Image of Selling* (2013), John Potvin's *The Places and Spaces of Fashion, 1800–2007* (2009), David Vernet and Leontine de Wit's *Boutiques and Other Retail Spaces: The Architecture of Seduction* (2007), Elspeth Brown, Catherine Gudis and Marina Moskowitz's *Cultures of Commerce: Representation and American Business Culture, 1877–1960* (2006), Christoph Grunenberg and Max Hollein's *Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture* (2003), Johnny Tucker's *Retail Desire: Design, Display and Visual Merchandising* (2003) and Rob

Shields' *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption* (1992) are among the titles that have emerged in the last twenty-five years. Concomitantly, scholars have engaged increasingly with the analysis of commercial displays in department stores as part of a larger field of inquiry concerning the history of modern businesses and retail. Examples include Louisa Iarocci's *The Urban Department Store in America, 1850–1930* (2014), Jan Whitaker's *The Department Store: History, Design, Display* (2011) and Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain's *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store, 1850–1939* (1999). Further elaboration of modern retail in relation to contemporary social, cultural, economic, and political developments can be found in historical studies such as Lisa Tiersten's *Marianne in the Market: Envisioning Consumer Society in Fin-de-Siècle France* (2001), Erika Diane Rappaport's *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (2000), William Leach's *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (1993), Bill Lancaster's *The Department Store: A Social History* (1995) and Michael B. Miller's *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869–1920* (1981). Applying a historian's lens to the development of retail interiors and commercial displays, with the exception of Crossick's and Jaumain's book mentioned above, these scholars generally address very little of the visual imagery that these very same environments engaged with, responded to, and even engendered. Alternatively, the few books that have studied the plethora of designs that the visual culture of retail has produced, including William L. Bird Jr.'s *Holidays on Display* (2007), François Fauconnet, Brigitte Fitoussi and Karin Léopold's *Les Boutiques à Paris: Vitrines d'architectures* (1997), and Leonard S. Marcus' *The American Store Window* (1978), focus narrowly on a specific time period or geographic locale. The social sciences have similarly shown an interest in consumption, but such studies by and large have not addressed the design of commercial interiors and architecture. The primary aim of this volume, therefore, is to foreground new research investigating how retail places have offered an outlet for the expression of various design ideas, methods, and practices and, thereby, how they have contributed to the formulation of new forms of modern aesthetic experience, as well as art and design typologies. The chapters included in this volume, when taken collectively, demonstrate that the boundaries between art, design, architecture and commercial display are not as fixed, static, or clearly defined as they have been portrayed.

Display has always been an intrinsic part of markets, commerce and retailing but it was in the late nineteenth century when it acquired a preeminent role as a promotional strategy, furthering the economic and social importance of trade, retailing and distribution. In spite of this, current scholarship, although discussing at length the production and consumption of goods, does not address in equal measure the significance of retail and display design in understanding how international exchange and local production led to mass consumption.

Charles Dickens in his humorous *Sketches by Boz* (1836) gave an account of London's everyday life at a time of change. What he described as an "epidemic" and "disease" was nothing less than the sudden transformation of shops and retailing spaces through their adoption of new display practices:

> Six or eight years ago, the epidemic began to display itself among the linen-drapers and haberdashers. The primary symptoms were an inordinate love of

> plate-glass, and a passion for gas-lights and gilding. The disease gradually progressed, and at last attained a fearful height. Quiet, dusty old shops in different parts of town, were pulled down; spacious premises with stuccoed fronts and gold letters, were erected instead; floors were covered with Turkey carpets; roofs supported by massive pillars; doors knocked into windows; a dozen squares of glass into one; one shopman into a dozen; […] A year or two of comparative tranquillity ensued. Suddenly it burst out again amongst the chemists; […] and a great rage for mahogany, varnish, and expensive floor-cloth. Then, the hosiers were infected, and began to pull down their shop-fronts with frantic recklessness.

In Dickens' description it is worth noting the rapid dissemination of larger plates of glass and larger windows for the display of merchandize, and a more theatrical approach to shop fitting and decoration, effectively changing not just shops, streets and urban life but shopping and consumption habits, features which would become more pronounced as the century progressed. There were no department stores in Britain at the time (with the exception of Bainbridges in Newcastle) but from the 1860s onwards, they would colonize the high streets of all major British cities.

This volume's overarching theme is particularly exemplified by the department store and other related commercial spaces in Europe and America since the late nineteenth century. Part I, "Displaying Modernity," considers display in the period 1880 to 1950 within the context of modernity, a process understood as inextricably linked to industrialization and to the profound transformations it unleashed in global commerce, business methods, transport, technology, materials, population growth and urban expansion. There were never this many shops, and they were never so large, imposing, or attractive, transforming the streets, the city and urban culture. This focus on commercial modernity and display examines a type of modernity that privileges visual spectacle, surfaces and strong sensorial experiences.

Although it cannot be claimed that department stores brought about most of the innovative business methods and marketing techniques that came to characterize them (many of these innovations were already in place in the eighteenth century), before the 1830s most urban shops in Europe used bartering and credit as opposed to fixed prices, sold mostly one type of merchandize rather than a large variety, and had a slow turnover given the high cost and prices of stock, instead of the model of high volume sales at low prices. After the 1830s however, some shops began to change their retailing approach, as illustrated by Dicken's testimony above. Department stores did not invent modern retail, but their success and large scale of operation came to epitomize it, as well as modern shopping and consumption. By 1920, these modern methods were widely established and few could imagine shops and department stores without large and impressive buildings, a continuous front of large windows on the ground floor and spectacularly designed displays and interiors with abundant, well-lit, colorful, varied and glamorous merchandize.

Most essays in Part I are concerned with design trends born in Europe, particularly in England and France (such as Historicism and Art Deco), and with the dissemination of modern design, be it through the examination of "model rooms" in period styles (Chapters 1 and 2), the introduction of installment payment in the 1920s (Chapter 3), the powerful alliance of art and commerce (Chapter 4), the successful promotion of Art Deco designs for the home (Chapter 5), or the use of Neo-Baroque styling as

design strategy (Chapter 6). All essays address the role that department stores played in the design and dissemination of interior environments, with four of them in particular focusing on domestic interiors (Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5). In doing so, they also consider such interiors from a merchandize and display strategy perspective. There are three cities running the show in this section (London, Toronto and New York), reflecting the leading role played by major urban centers in supporting retail and display innovations. Main cities in this period underwent an intense type of commercialization with innovations in retailing and mediation causing in turn a profound transformation in the ways of consumption, while spurring along production, industry and finance (Hahn 2009, 2, 155).

The first chapter in Part I, Trevor Keeble's "'A world of furniture:' The making of the late Victorian furniture shop," examines London's furniture and furnishing shops in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It argues that the growth of middle-class domestic consumption during these years constituted the shop as a contested public interface between the professional interests of furnishing and decoration and the domestic desires of the consuming homemaker. The development of specialist furnishers and retailers catering to a non-elite market offered new goods to new consumers, and the presentation, exhibition and display of these goods in dedicated galleries, spaces and windows became a finely conceived aspect of retailing.

In Chapter 2, Patricia Lara-Betancourt's "Displaying dreams: Model interiors in British department stores, 1890–1914" examines the "model room" as a crucial retailing practice in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, highlighting the correlation between the growth of department stores, the expansion of their furniture and furnishing departments, and the sophistication of display designs and strategies. A prominent example was the construction of realistic and impressive modern domestic interiors, displayed in the store and at national and international exhibitions, in an array of styles and budgets, complete with ceilings, panelled walls, plants and lighting. The essay discusses in particular the craze for the modern "period room" during which traders, decorative artists and consumers consciously chose historical styles and designs to convey the modernity of the home.

Following the theme of the "model home," this time in North America, Susan Haight's essay "Home economies: The T. Eaton Company's Thrift House, 1926–1950" (Chapter 3) uses as case study one of the most important Canadian department stores, which, by 1940, was among the largest in the world. The author examines the role played by Eaton's model house in defining the store's marketing strategy. Known as the "Thrift House," the model and its displays were an integral part of a promotional campaign designed to introduce and inform customers about Eaton's new installment credit service. Together with the Thrift Bureau, the office that drew up individualized household budgets, they constituted a program of public pedagogy intended to teach consumers the principles of wise spending. The author argues that the Thrift House and Bureau helped shape consumers' understanding of modern domesticity while redefining middle-class thrift as sensible consumption. Responding to a democratizing effort, the rationale for the Thrift House was intended to facilitate the ordinary householder purchasing the home of their dreams through the instalment system. This was also the case of the budget "model room" discussed in Chapter 2, in its attempt to bring to the masses the furniture and furnishing styles favored by the well-to-do.

Although the product of individual designers or design teams, the shop and exhibition displays of model rooms and houses discussed in this section were credited to the store with very few exceptions. It is later, in the 1930s and 1940s, when recognized designers and artists are acknowledged as creators of shop windows, interiors and exhibits displayed in the shop, and their names are prominently included in promotional material. There is a move from an emerging professional capacity in interior design and decoration (subsumed in the branded store credentials) in the late nineteenth century towards an established and recognized area of individual professional expertise, as exemplified by Salvador Dalí, William Pahlmann and Dorothy Draper.

In Chapter 4, Sandra Zalman's "The art of window display: Cross-promotion at Bonwit Teller and MoMA" examines New York's Fifth Avenue department store's 1936 windows, designed by prominent contemporary artists. Referring to Dalí's work for the store as a case study, the essay illustrates avant-garde art's liaison with commercial display practices. Not only were Bonwit's surrealist windows given over to avant-garde symbols and strategies, but they also displayed a copy of the catalog for the Surrealism exhibition concurrently on view at the Museum of Modern Art down the street, thus showcasing the imbricate relationship between the worlds of art and commerce. Zalman's examination of the association between Bonwit Teller and MoMA (which would itself feature retail-window designs during the "Modern Art in Your Life" exhibition) demonstrates that these institutions were not in competition over visual culture but in fact recognized that cross-promotion could strengthen their appeal to shared audiences. This chapter resonates well with Alice Friedman's essay in Part III, "The Cultured Corporation: Art, architecture and the postwar office building," where the author further examines the role of art and artists in corporate branding, and the significance of artistic display in the creation and definition of a new type of retail space.

Beverly Grindstaff in Chapter 5, "William Pahlmann and the department store model room, 1937–1942," considers the work of the popular American interior decorator and designer. As head of the Lord & Taylor's department of interior design for five years, Pahlmann's displays and installations ranged from the October 1937 "International Show" to the May 1942 "Pahlmann's Proverbs," with suites appearing in popular media and being quickly and widely imitated by other department stores. His most celebrated was the "Peruvian Show" (Winter 1941), drawing up to 30,000 people per month. Pahlmann was the first to design model rooms for department stores as a semi-permanent display of domestic furnishings and home decorating advice. The author argues that his model rooms boldly revised the department store display and were instrumental in shifting American tastes to new interiors and especially modernist Art Deco forms.

In the sixth and last chapter in Part I, titled "Baroque lines in a modern world: The retail displays of Dorothy Draper," John C. Turpin examines the retail strategies employed by this influential interior designer. Among female decorators, Draper was one of the very few who engaged in retail design. Turpin discusses her redesign of Coty Beauty Salon (1941), a New York store specialized in selling cosmetics. The author argues that at a time when Modernism was a dominant influence, Draper's employment of Historicism in the design of retail spaces was both romantic and strategic, showing how she relied on aesthetic stylings to engage the romantic ideals of the American middle-class housewife, who sought to emulate the upper class. She was effectively

redesigning retail space to support women's new roles, and her designs both empowered and indulged the female consumer through addressing her psychological needs.

The theme of historicism examined in Lara-Betancourt's discussion of the "model room" (Chapter 2) is also addressed in Turpin's essay. In both cases, an appeal to history is made in connection to middle-class aspirations. This theme is also connected to the recognized role of the department store in democratizing luxury or a perceived wealthier way of life. As shown in the essays grouped here, modern retail, exemplified in department stores' display and retail practices, had a determining role in shaping, disseminating and communicating modern design. Particularly the show window was a key mediator and communicator, while model interiors constituted a successful retail strategy and pedagogical tool in defining and promoting notions of modern design, modern interiors and modern domesticities.

In Part II, "Technologies of Display," the authors call attention to the influences and impacts of an array of technologies on the development of display design and retail merchandizing practices, as well as concurrent artistic investigations of these same technologies within the retail context, but with the aim of public engagement rather than increased sales figures. Focusing on show windows as a central interface between retail environments and public engagement, this section offers views into the adaptation of artificial lighting and other mechanical innovations as means of increasing the public appeal of displays, particularly when employed by a new generation of display designers and window dressers (Chapters 7 and 8). Similarly, attention is given to the role of these display technologies as utilized in the retail context by avant-garde artists in efforts to democratize both the experience of modern art and the modern department store (Chapters 9 and 10). Providing bookends to the major technological advances that transformed the practices of retail display and customer experience between the nineteenth and twenty-first century, Part II explores the ways in which technologies of both production and consumption have contributed to the design of the retail environment and shaped expectations of customer experience (Chapter 11).

Opening the second thematic section, Chapter 7, Emily M. Orr's "'The Age of Show Windows' in the American department store: Techniques and technologies of attraction at the turn of the twentieth century," provides an evaluation of the onsite construction of displays in American and British stores. It argues that visible technology in the form of lighting effects, revolving stands, and the use of automatons became instant attractions towards the beginning of the twentieth century, show windows thus celebrating both careful handcraftsmanship and mechanical innovation at once. According to Orr, a window dresser would convey the store's up-to-date reputation not only by employing personal skill but also by engaging the aid of technology in order to choreograph continual transformation of the show window's contents.

In Chapter 8, "Drawing power: Show window display design in the USA, 1900s–1930s," Margaret Maile Petty explores the role of electric lighting in defining and advancing new approaches to window display design aimed at communicating consumer messages to the public and enticing customers into the retail environment. Examining the transition of the retail show window from a means of displaying merchandize inventories to a site of theatrical invention, consumer spectacle, and artistic expression, "Drawing power" traces the development of the show window as a frame and context for display design in relation to a number of factors, including the emergence of an independent profession of window display designers, the appropriation

of modern stagecraft techniques and technologies, and the influence of the electric industry and the newly defined field of illuminating engineering. Contextualizing electric lighting as a common interest and concern across these parallel forces, as demonstrated in the shared ideas, beliefs, practices, and objectives that shaped both its uses and meanings, this chapter illustrates the importance of this modern and ephemeral technology as both a primary medium of and conduit for modern display design during the first third of the twentieth century in the United States.

Chapter 9, Laura McGuire's "Automatic show windows: Frederick Kiesler's retail technology and American consumer culture," examines the retail work of the Austrian émigré stage and exhibition designer Frederick Kiesler in the late 1920s and early 1930s, arguing that, for this artist, the employment of technological developments was essential to a store's success. In a series of texts on show windows, McGuire explains, Kiesler laid out a vision of stores populated with robotic salespeople, subliminal films, automatic merchandize dispensers, and enormous television screens that would "help him wage aggressive, multi-media campaigns to woo potential buyers." In addition to incorporating innovative technologies and display techniques, Kiesler's proposals for streamlining the shopping experience also promoted his vision that retail spaces could be democratically inclusive.

With "Prop art: Harald Szeemann and the Warenhaus Gebrüder Loeb AG, Bern," Anna-Sophie Springer revisits Szeemann's pioneering curatorial work in the 1960s and 1970s through the examination of an unusual set of engagements involving a provocative renegotiation of the role of the department store and the department store window as sites of both commerical activity and artisitic practice. Bringing new attention to Szeemann's long-standing but little-known relationship with the Swiss department store Warenhaus Gebrüder Loeb AG, Chapter 10 provides fresh insights regarding the idiosyncratic function of spectacle in Szeemann's seminal thematic exhibitions through the exploration of two group installations staged in Loeb AG's display windows, as well as Szeemann's involvement with the department store's props workshop in the realization and fabrication of his famous 1975 Bachelor Machines exhibition.

In Chapter 11, Mark Taylor and Yannis Zavoleas expand the chronological frame of this section, from the nineteenth-century origins of modern retail display to the digital disruptions of twenty-first century technologies and design practices, with their study, "From retail stores to real-time stories: Displaying change in an age of digital manufacturing." Contrasting the first generation of department stores, with their vast collections of merchandize enabling customers to see and purchase prefabricated items displayed in store, to that of contemporary digital retailing largely accessed through online portals and virtual shopping, Taylor and Zavoleas examine the ways in which these technologies are challenging and reshaping the customer experience as well as the architectures of display – both physical and virtual. In parallel, the authors explore the implication of such seismic cultural and technological shifts on the production and consumption of commercial fashion and the role of display in mitigating the transformations in the customer experience as well as in creating new forms of consumer engagement with the retail environment and transactions. From bespoke fabrication to ready-to-wear to mass-customization, Taylor and Zavoleas call attention to the sustained centrality of display in maintaining a connection with consumers and providing a conduit for the customer experience.

The essays in Part III, "Contested Identities/Contested Displays," break down the larger themes of display and consumption to understand not only how display practices have influenced the distribution of goods but also how display itself has consistently responded to social, cultural, political, economic, religious, and gender norms. Sensually stimulating displays aimed to incite consumer desires in a female audience (Chapter 12), taxidermied animal *tableaux* mimicking natural history museum presentations (Chapter 13), lavishly decorated windows eschewing religious associations to gain political support (Chapter 14), corporate merchandizing strategies associating consumer practices with artistic excellence and elite art patronage (Chapter 15), product design, museum displays, and exhibition tours artfully promoting commercial flatware (Chapter 16), and cross-cultural influences paradoxically informing retail displays while simulating a rejection of capitalist consumption (Chapter 17) have formed a contested terrain where the boundaries between right and wrong, good and bad, moral and immoral were consistently dropped.

In "Exotics to erotics: Exploring new frontiers of desire within Parisian department store décors," Kevin C. Robbins studies, through a critical analysis of Émile Zola's novel *The Ladies Paradise* and Félix Valloton's paintings, the effects that the newly built and constantly redecorated nineteenth-century commercial zones exerted on the psyches and social behaviors of urban consumers, especially women. Capitalizing on the mass allure of sensually stimulating store displays that eroticized consumption and incited consumer desires in order to yield higher profits, Robbins argues that the gendered displays promoted by commercial institutions such as Au Bon Marché also provoked a frenzy for store-inspired imagery at the level of paintings and prints, novels, and even plays. The store's innovative display strategies thus informed modern visual culture, taking the nascent gendered debates about proper behaviour and class associations to the public sphere.

On the other hand, Emily Gephart's and Michael Rossi's "Dovetailed displays: Show windows, habitat dioramas, and bird hats" examines the contested nature of early window displays that employed taxidermied animals to enhance consumption. The authors skilfully argue for strong affiliations between the seemingly disparate institutions of the natural history museum and the department store that arose from interrelated strategies of display. While nineteenth-century critics often blamed women and their artistically feathered hats for the loss of bird life, at the further encouragement of commercial institutions, museum curators bore a shared amount of the blame.

In Chapter 14, Douglas Klahr continues the examination of contested identities and displays in his chapter titled "Department stores and their display windows during the prewar Third Reich: Prevailing within a hostile Nazi consumer culture." In Germany, Klahr argues, an anti-*Warenhäuser* (anti-department stores) sentiment had developed since the 1880s. This reached an all-time apogee in the Nazi period, following contemporary identification of department stores with their Jewish owners. Since they were vital to supporting the regime, large-scale retailers were never shut down, but the merchandize they sold and the displays they created were heavily regulated by the Nazi regime. In order to prevail "within a hostile consumer culture" and to differentiate themselves from small shops, *Warenhäuser* created elaborate *tableaux* in their display windows, where goods, although in tone with the ongoing political agenda, were part of a larger narrative. "How to put on a gas mask," "how to care for stockings," or

how best to travel thus became favorite themes that ornamented the streets of modern German cities.

In Chapter 15, "The cultured corporation: Art, architecture and the postwar office building," Alice Friedman widens the frame of display architecture, from its confinement within the retail environment to the larger landscape of cultural production and consumption. Examining the twin notions of "corporate identity" and "corporate culture" as core tenets of not only capitalist economic theory but also popular ideology within the industrialized societies of the United States and Western Europe, Friedman illustrates the significance and influence of the corporate context within the history of modern architecture and design, calling special attention to the role of display and conspicuous exhibition strategies in the articulation of corporate spaces. Examining a breadth of techniques and technologies utilized in corporate display and architecture, Friedman contextualizes these spaces against the backdrop of American popular culture, analyzing the efforts of a number of artists and designers who contributed to the translation and display of corporate identities. Lending the prestige and social status of the art world to new, ever-grander corporate projects, these companies leveraged art-world celebrity through such patronage to bolster and redefine the image of American corporations. Opening up the discourse on display architecture through the analysis of such projects from the 1950s and 1960s, "The cultured corporation" offers new ways of understanding the uneasy partnerships art and commerce forged in their making.

Similarly, in Chapter 16 Alexa Griffith Winton investigates an expanded definition of display in the dissemination and popularizing of Modernism among popular audiences in "'Knife/Fork/Spoon:' The Walker Art Center and the design and display of 'Contour' sterling flatware service, 1949–1951." Giving close consideration to the role of the museum in showcasing the possibilities of modern design, Winton analyzes a series of rotating exhibitions utilized in the Walker's national campaign to launch its modern flatware pattern, "Contour." Describing the close relationship between both the design and exhibition of "Contour," Winton suggests that the design of the product line and its promotion through public exhibitions were essential to the modernist project in the United States. Calling attention to the role of American modern art museums during the postwar period in domesticating previously avant-garde notions of design for the American public, this chapter situates the important role of display in these efforts to bring good design to middle-class consumers.

In Chapter 17, "Galerías Preciados (1943–1975): A Spanish cathedral of consumption and its display strategies during the Franco years," Ana María Fernández García analyzes the commercial history of Galerías Preciados starting soon after the Spanish civil war and during Franco's dictatorship at a time of isolation from the international community. She reconstructs the process of the arrival and dissemination of a department store model imported from Havana, Cuba, which, in turn, followed North American retailing practices. She argues that Galerías Preciados adopted this commercial model and developed with it a true mass-consumption society. Taking this store as a paradigm for modern consumerism, the chapter traces developments in window and merchandize display and, in the introduction of new technologies, innovations that would soon be copied by its competitor El Corte Inglés. The store became a symbol of Spain's modernization, and a paradoxical example of the economic achievements of an autocratic and nationalist regime that, on an ideological level, opposed capitalist consumption.

Note

1 The mission of the Planning and Visual Education Partnership (PAVE) is to "support students studying in the field of retail design and planning and visual merchandising through its annual design competitions for college students […] through projects, seminars, workshops, and the annual fundraising Gala with proceeds dedicated to educational programs and projects benefiting students." See PAVE, www.paveinfo.org/aboutpave/pavemission (accessed March 15, 2016).

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