

A dramatic window display featuring a mannequin in a vibrant red, ruffled dress. The mannequin is positioned horizontally, with its head resting on a dark, textured surface. The background is a deep, dark space filled with numerous small, bright white stars, creating a celestial or night sky effect. To the left, a portion of a mannequin's leg in a gold, textured outfit is visible. The overall lighting is low, emphasizing the red of the dress and the starry background.

Visual Merchandising

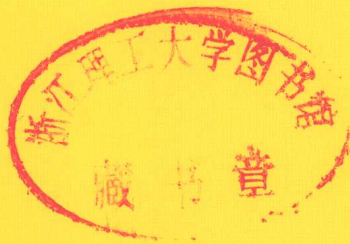
Window and in-store displays for retail

Tony Morgan



30805007

Laurence King Publishing



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Published in 2008 by Laurence King
Publishing Ltd in association with the
University of the Arts: London College
of Fashion

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A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 85669 539 8

Designed by Kerrie Powell

Printed in China

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A metallic window scheme entitled
“Mirror Mirror” attracts customers
with its reflective qualities at
Selfridges, London.

30805007

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Visual Merchandising

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The visual merchandiser is a vital part of any retail operation. Whether stopping shoppers in their tracks as they admire a window display or steering them through the store towards the season's key buys, effective visual merchandising can improve a store's brand image and dramatically increase sales. This invaluable handbook gives retail professionals and students a thorough grounding in the subject, using examples of best-practice visual merchandising from around the world. The book includes:

- The role of the visual merchandiser
- Store design
- Window dressing, in-store visual merchandising and the use of mannequins
- Exciting case studies, with photographs of cutting-edge windows and in-store merchandising
- Useful diagrams of successful window schemes and floor layouts
- Practical advice, hints and tips from leading visual merchandisers
- The visual merchandiser's toolbox
- A glossary of industry terms

Tony Morgan teaches visual merchandising at the London College of Fashion and is head of the VM department at the Fashion Retail Academy in London. He was previously at Selfridges for 18 years where he was manager for visual merchandising and currently runs his own creative retail consultancy.

With 280 illustrations

Front and back cover

Liberty, Great Marlborough Street,
London, by Maxine Groucutt in
collaboration with Laura Tarant Brown
(photo by Andrew Meredith).



£22.50

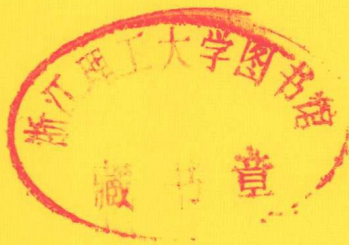
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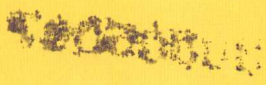
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Preface

"It is your imagination that needs to be stimulated. Once that happens, the rest is easy. The merchandise is always the leader."

Joe Cotugno, OVP and Creative Director, Bloomingdale's

If you have ever stood outside a shop admiring the artistry of the window display, or been distracted by a sale item while passing through a department store, or paused to take in information from a store guide, then you have been sidetracked by visual merchandising. If you purchased as a result of stopping in your progress along the pavement or through a store, then you have succumbed to its supremacy.

For years, the creative individuals who made the stores of the world look appealing for retailers and their loyal customers were known as window dressers or display artists. Display teams had a unique and much-envied function in a store. Occasionally with generous budgets – and most definitely with a huge amount of talent – they mysteriously locked themselves away in studios or lurked behind the curtains of the windows and produced stunning, eye-catching works of art for the shopping community to admire.

During the 1980s, possibly because of a global recession and the threat of e-commerce from the Internet, store bosses suddenly questioned the quantities and abilities of these non-profit-making departments. As a result, they began to push the display artists in-store to cast a creative eye over the racks and rails of discounted merchandise; thus the visual merchandiser was born.

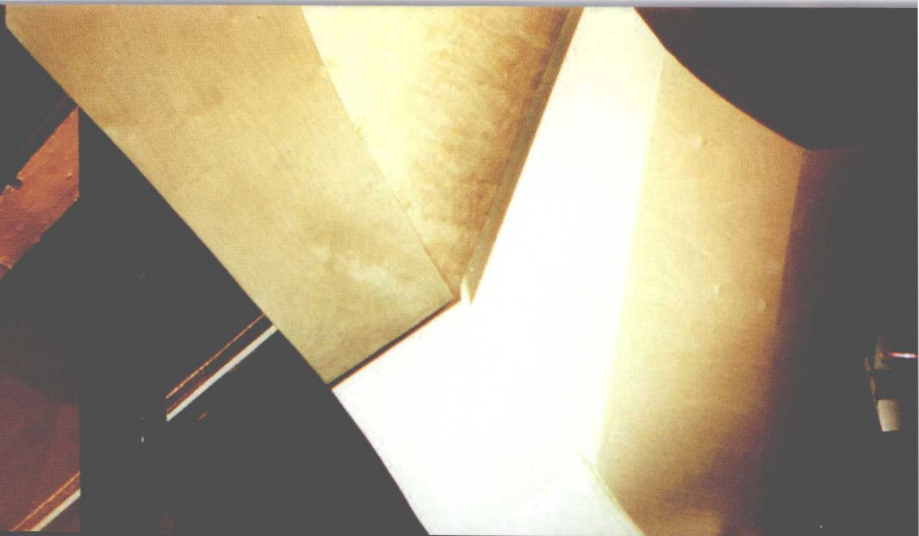
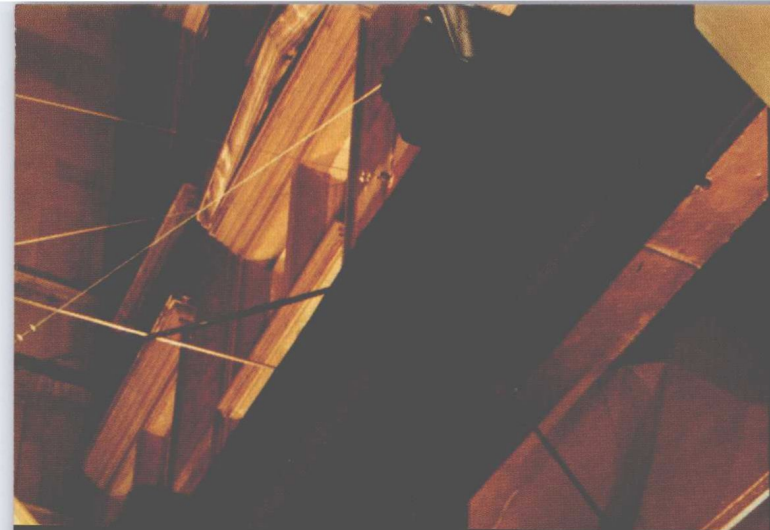
Rarely taken seriously at first because their new roles were unexplained, visual merchandisers were soon laying out departments complete with "sight-lines", "focal points" and "hot shops". A new retail vocabulary was born, and soon store interiors had as much sparkle as their windows. Today, visual merchandisers command respect, and are a much sought-after commodity in the retail world as they provide not only a service, but also inspiration and commerciality. This book aims to enlighten and educate students and retailers in the workings of the world of the visual merchandiser. It covers both the art of the window display and in-store visual merchandising and looks at the tools that will help any would-be visual merchandiser succeed.

By using case studies and specially commissioned illustrative diagrams together with images of the best in window display and in-store interiors from around the world, this book aims to prove how effective visual merchandising will improve a store's brand image and inspire customers to spend.

Opposite

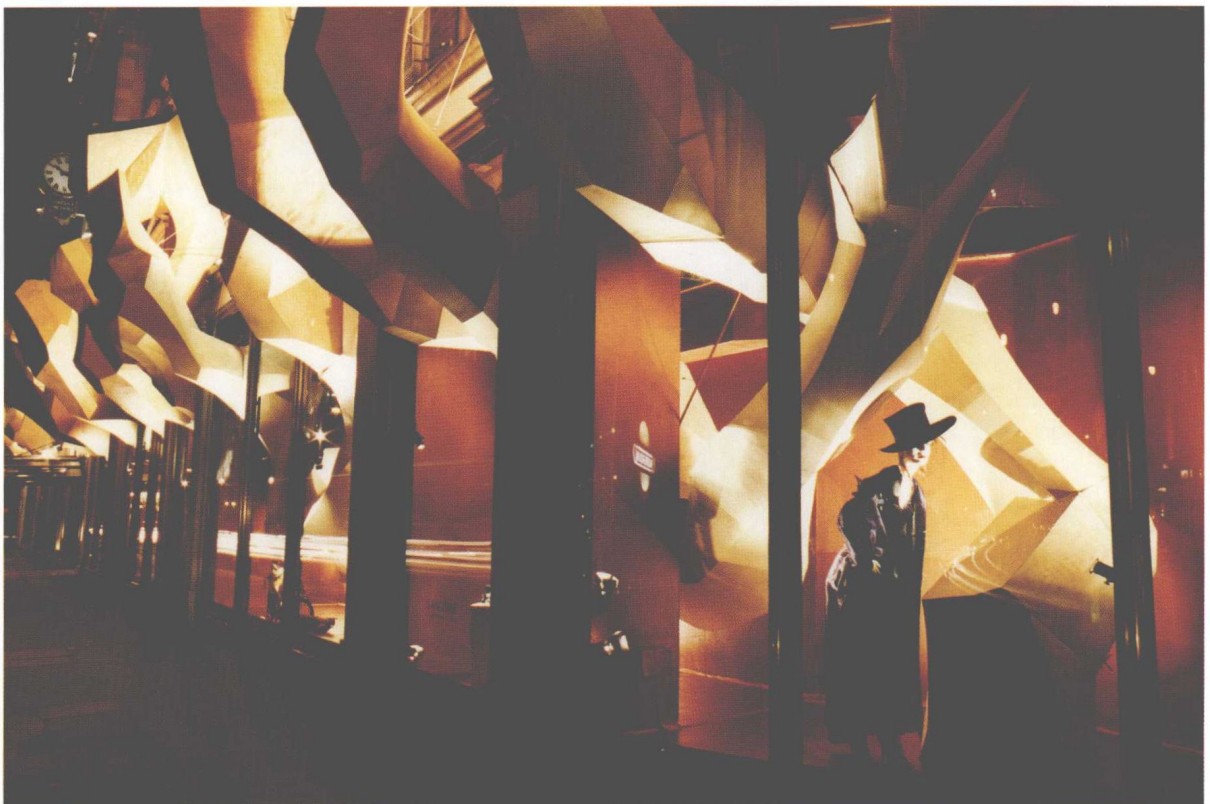
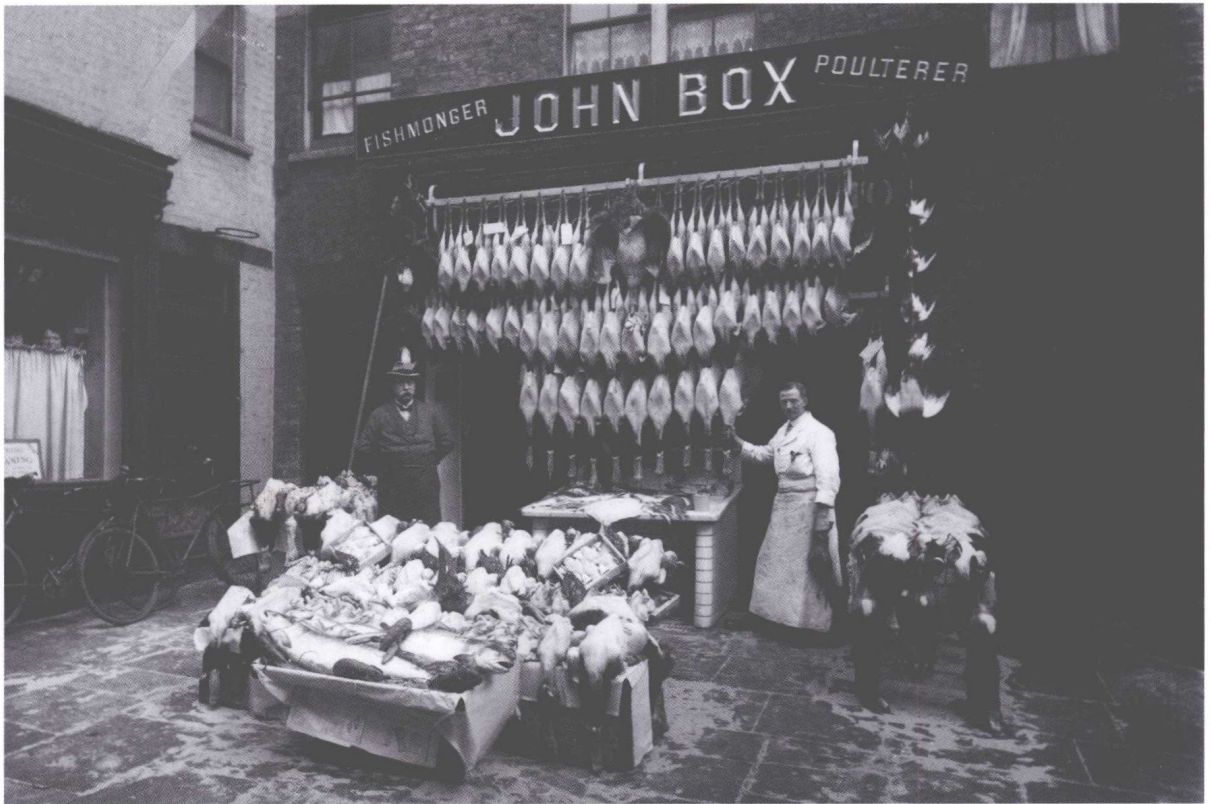
A mannequin reclining on a chaise longue lounges at the Rootstein showroom in New York. At a glance this realistic model looks almost human in appearance.







The History of Visual Merchandising



Above

Here the fishmonger/poulterer has created an artistic display of his wares, the design of which would not look out of place in the display lore of visual merchandisers today.

Below

In these attention-seeking, award-winning windows designed by Thomas Heatherwick for Harvey Nichols in London, the scheme explodes through the glass onto the exterior of the store.

The first shopkeepers tried to lure consumers into their stores either by ostentatiously exhibiting their names or by displaying products in their windows or on tables in the street, proving that they were open for business and proud of their produce.

To this day, butchers still fill their windows with fresh meat that serves both as a display to attract customers and also shows the stock of produce available for sale that day. Florists often not only pack their windows with the finest blooms, but trail them outside the store and onto the pavement to entice customers across the threshold using colour and scent. Similarly, barbers will sometimes push a chair with an unsuspecting client up to the glass window in order to prove their skill and popularity.

With the advent of new technology in the 1840s that allowed the production of large panes of glass, department stores were perhaps responsible for taking the art of window display to a higher level, using their large windows as stages, some of them as theatrical as a Broadway show. Today, colour, props and atmospheric lighting on many occasions arrogantly overshadow the merchandise, as visual merchandising extends beyond its role of supporting the wares and becomes an art form, creating a statement and provoking a reaction. Stores like London's Harvey Nichols have collaborated with well-known designers and artists to produce eye-catching schemes where the merchandise becomes part of an artistic work.

It is the department store, with its huge array of merchandise and vast amount of window space, that is the pioneer of the window display. A relatively recent phenomenon, it first began in France. Even there, however, for many years department stores existed only in the capital, Paris. It was Aristide Boucicaut



Above

Bon Marché department store in Paris in the late nineteenth century offered an impressive shopping experience for its customers through the grandeur of its architecture.

Below

A Selfridges window from the 1920s shows skill and imagination for its time, with its delicate display of handkerchiefs.

**Above**

The 1960s saw the creation of high-street ready-to-wear, and Mary Quant was one of the first designers to use the window of her London store in 1959 as a showcase for her collections, as well as to promote social trends.

who first had the idea of setting up this kind of store. He wanted to create a shop designed to sell all sorts of merchandise, but also wanted to attract crowds of people who could wander freely about in a little “town within the town”. In 1852 Boucicaut opened the world’s first department store: Le Bon Marché.

The concept of the department store then spread to the United States, where famous stores as we know them today first opened: Macy’s in New York in 1858, Marshall Field’s in Chicago in 1865, Bloomingdale’s in New York in 1872 and also Wanamaker’s in Philadelphia in 1876.

No one retailer or department store can possibly take the credit for producing the first eye-catching staged window display; however, we can certainly look to various individuals who have helped set the standards for today’s visual merchandisers.

It was American retail entrepreneur Gordon Selfridge who had grand aspirations to bring the concept of the department store – and with it the language of visual merchandising – to Edwardian London. After leaving his post as managing director of the majestic Marshall Field’s department store in Chicago and emigrating to England, he arrived in London with great designs to build a long-awaited premier, purpose-built, modern department store.

On 15 March, 1909, Londoners witnessed the unveiling of Gordon Selfridge’s £400,000 dream. Selfridges became the benchmark of British retailing. Its vast, plate-glass windows were filled with the finest merchandise its proprietor had to offer. Selfridge also revolutionized the world of visual merchandising by leaving the window lights on at night, even when the store was closed, so that the public could still enjoy the presentations while returning home from the theatre.

Selfridge also included a few innovations in-store for his customers – including a soda fountain for the sociable and a silence room for the less so. He was never one to miss out on promotional opportunity. When, in July 1909, Louis Blériot crash-landed his aeroplane in a field in Kent after flying across the English Channel, Selfridge had the plane packed on a train at 2 a.m. and on display the same morning at 10 a.m. Fifty thousand people queued to see it that day. By 1928, Selfridges had doubled in size to become the



store we now know, due to the hype and success of Gordon Selfridge.

The 1920s saw an explosion of creativity in the arts and fashion, which spilled over into the art of window display, and once again, it was Paris that led the way. Frustrated that their canvases could only be seen in the homes of the rich and famous, many young artists in the city took their skills to the masses. Soon, the arcades of the capital were occupied with Art Deco-inspired themes, and fashion designers now found an innovative and exciting static runway on which to show their creations.

Above

Maybe it is not the most innovative display by today’s standards, but Marshall Field’s window from the early 1900s caused a public reaction at the time in Chicago.

Below

The coats on the mannequins in this 1950s window display at Printemps in Paris may look elegant, but the mannequins are rigid and not grouped to engage with each other.