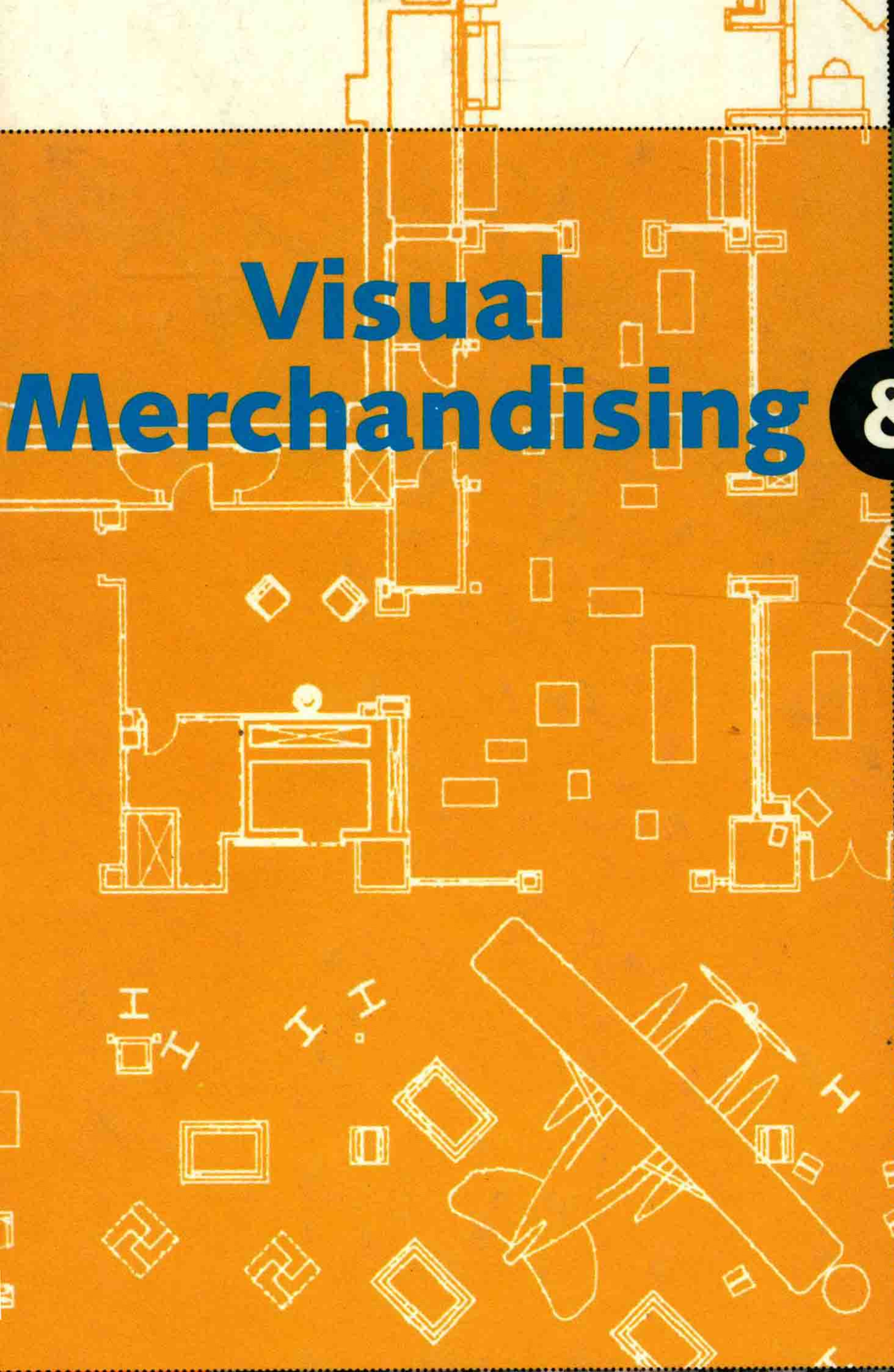
Visual Merchandising & Display

Third Edition



NORTH BEACH

Martin M. Pegler

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Third Edition

Martin M. Pegler
S.V.M.

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Preface

Retailing has moved out of the fashion supplements and the advertising layouts of our newspapers onto the front pages and financial pages – and mostly the news is not good! We read of mergers and department store closings – of famous fashion stores with illustrious names being bought out, reduced in size, or reorganized out of existence. These sorry stories do not mean that retailing is dead; they just mean that the field is getting tougher and more competitive. The market isn't getting larger; it's getting smarter, more sophisticated, more aware of what's new, what's desirable, and what things should cost.

Old loyalties to stores and shops are almost nonexistent because customers can no longer be depended upon. They want to be wooed, courted, stroked and serviced; they want to be entertained and each sale is a first sale. If ever something was needed to distinguish one store from another, to make one specialty shop seem more special, more unique, more tuned in to what the market wants – that "something" is needed *now*. That "something" is effective *Visual Merchandising and Display*. Visual merchandising is the presentation of merchandise at its best; color coordinated, accessorized, and self-explanatory. Display is the pizzazz – the theater, the sparkle and shine that surrounds a presentation of merchandise and makes the shopper stop, look, and buy what has been assembled with care and offered with flair.

During a recession, depression, or in a financial crunch, store owners may take money out of the display budget and put more money into media advertising. However, radio, television, and print ads are worthless unless there is some follow-through at the store. Here at the point of purchase is where display or merchandise presentation becomes absolutely necessary. With changes in retail shopping patterns, such as the growth of malls and giant shopping centers, and the subsequent decline of much of "Main Street" and "in-town" shopping, the display windows that face out to the street are stepping back in favor of display on the selling floor.

Acknowledgments

In this display world of tinsel, glitter, sparkle, and larger-than-life presentations. I wish to thank: all those visual merchandisers, display persons, merchandise presenters, store planners, and display manufacturers and suppliers whose work and imagination made such a deep impression. My thanks to all the above for making the merchandising scene more exciting, more fun, and for putting more entertainment into this "show-ing business."

Thanks to all the students who have sat through my countless lectures while I tried and tested what appears on these pages.

Also thanks to all the members of the Society of Visual Merchandisers and their efforts on behalf of the education and advancement of visual merchandisers.

A very special thanks to Laurence Fuersich of *Retail Reporting* and *Views and Reviews* for the many photographs he allowed us to reproduce in this book,
and to the photographers of the Sandy L. Studio who braved the New York nights to get the photos.

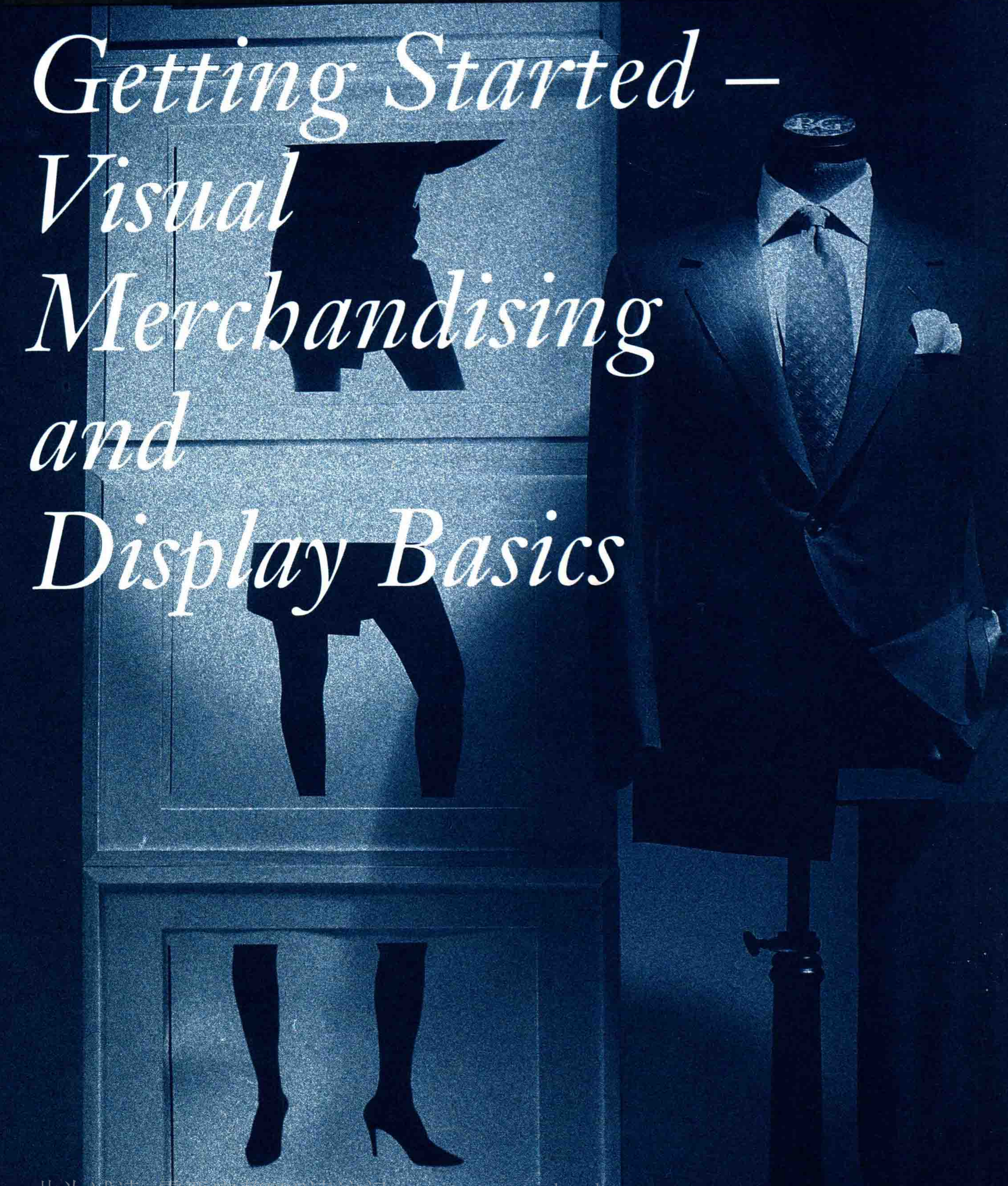
My love to those people who are real and make my life real and fulfilled…to Suzan, my wife…to my children: Karen and Jess, Lysa and Stephen, and Risa and Adam…and to the next generation: Brian, Amanda, Jake, Sam, Ben and "Marley."

Publisher's Note

A number of anonymous reviewers had offered suggestions over the years as they used the previous editions. Their input continues to influence this edition. Other readers were also very helpful. They include: Laura L. Bliss, Stephens College; Louis Canale, Genesee Community College; Fay Y. Gibson, University of North Carolina—Greensboro; Jolene Marchant, Midlands Technical College; Diane Minger, Cedar Valley College; and Ethel Rompilla, New York School of Interior Design. Special thanks to Diane Minger and Laura L. Bliss for carefully reading the manuscript during the editorial process. Their critiques and suggestions were invaluable to us during the preparation of this edition. Laura L. Bliss is also responsible for creating and writing the *Study Guide*, which now accompanies this edition.

Part One

Getting Started – Visual Merchandising and Display Basics



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Visual merchandising is no longer just a matter of making merchandise look attractive for the customer. It is the actual selling of merchandise through a visual medium. Visual merchandising is a way for stores to say "This is who we are and what we stand for." An understanding of basic visual merchandising concepts and theory is essential to the effective presentation of a store and its merchandise to the customer. Part One of this text is devoted to those visual merchandising "basics."

Chapter 1 introduces visual merchandising and display and, for the first of many times throughout the text, discusses the important concept of store image. The use of color and texture to add excitement to visual presentations is explored in chapter 2. Artistic principles such as line, balance, contrast, and rhythm are applied to visual merchandising and display in chapter 3. From a one-item display to a variety or assortment display, chapter 4 covers the gamut of possible display types and settings.

Chapter 1

Why Do We Display?

Objectives

- To define visual merchandising.
- To explain the concept of store image and describe its relationship to visual merchandising and display.
- To list the purposes of visual merchandising.

Key Terms / Concepts

store image
visual merchandising

We show in order to sell. Display or visual merchandising is "showing" merchandise and concepts at their very best, with the end purpose of making a sale. We may not actually sell the object displayed or the idea promoted, but we do attempt to convince the viewer of the value of the object, the store promoting the object, or the organization behind the concept. Though a cash register may not ring because of a particular display, that display should make an impression on the viewer that will affect future sales.

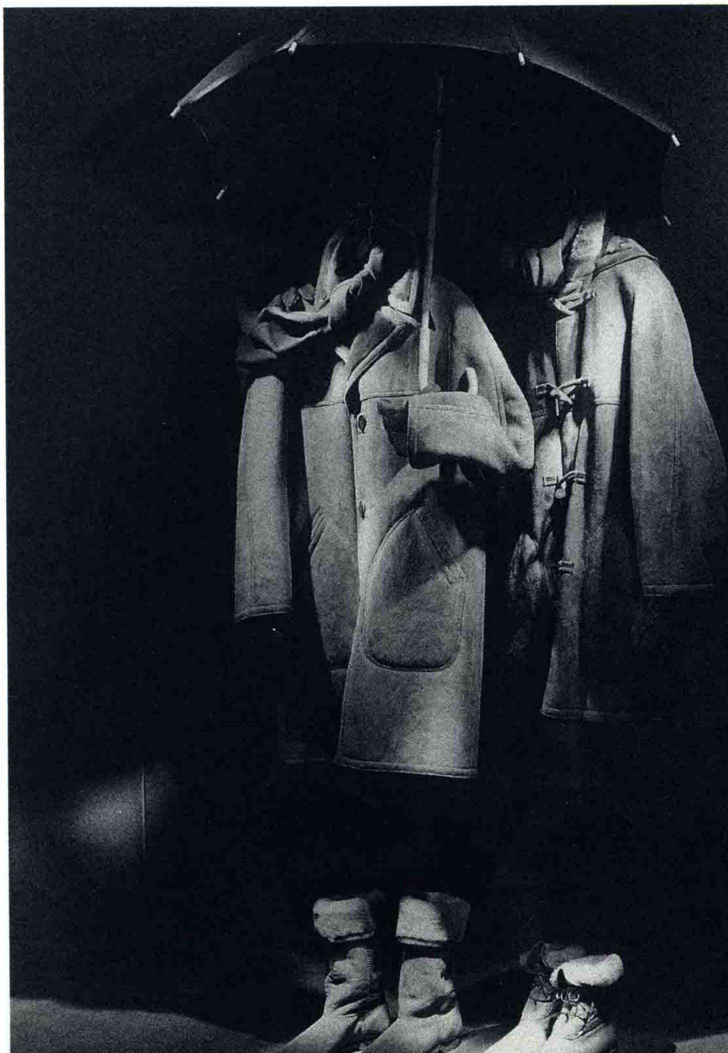
The display person used to be the purveyor of dreams and fantasies, presenting merchandise in settings that stirred the imagination and promoted fantastic flights to unattainable heights. Today's display person, however, sells a "reality." Today's shopper can be whatever he or she wants to be by simply wearing garments with certain labels having a built-in status. The display person dresses a mannequin (possessing a perfect figure) in skin-fitting jeans, flashes the lights, adds the adoring males or females, and reinforces the image of sexuality and devastating attractiveness that is part of the prominent name on the label. Wearing Brand-X jeans, whether size 8 or 18, makes the wearer feel special. She imagines herself to be that slim, sensuous femme fatale she has seen on television, surrounded by gaping admirers. He feels as special when he is wearing his television-advertised slim-fitting jeans.

Today's mannequin often resembles the shopper on the other side of the glass; it may have a flawless figure, but far from perfect features. This prompts the customer to think, "If that mannequin can look so great, why not me?" That's reality! That's selling! The visual merchandiser, therefore, presents more than the merchandise. He or she presents the image of who or what the shopper can be when using the merchandise displayed.

It has been said by presidents and vice-presidents of large retail operations; it has been uttered by experienced shoppers and consumers: "There is very little difference between the merchandise sold in one store and that sold in another." Many department and specialty stores carry the same name brands—the same nationally advertised lines seen on television and in Vogue magazine. Often the real difference is in the price of the merchandise being offered for sale.

Why, then, does an individual shop in Store A and pay more for the same item selling for less in Store B? Why does a shopper tote the shopping bag from Store C rather than an equally attractive bag from Store D? Why do shoppers cover themselves with garments branded with a store's name on pockets, patches, shoulders, and

Figure 1.1 Display is an attention-getter as well as an image maker. The purpose of display is to gain the shopper's attention, bring the shopper closer to the merchandise presentation and make a fashion statement as to the store's image and style. *Saks Fifth Avenue, Fifth Avenue, New York.*



hips? It has to do with the store's image! If everyone believes that people who shop in Store A are young, smart, sophisticated, amusing, clever, trendy, and fun to be with, then a shopper who buys clothes at that store can also be young, smart, sophisticated, and so on. The display person reinforces that belief with merchandise displays, the types of mannequins shown, and the manner in which the mannequins are dressed, positioned, and lit. In this way, the display person promotes the store's image and fashion trendiness. Often the visual merchandiser is not selling any one piece of merchandise, but rather the idea that any purchase from that store will guarantee social success and the stamp of the "right" taste level. However, visual merchandising is still *selling*. We shall return often in later chapters to the concept of image and image projection in merchandise presentation.

In addition to selling actual merchandise, displays can be used to introduce a new product, a fashion trend, and a new "look" or idea. The display may be the first three-dimensional representation of something the consumer has thus far only seen in sketches or photos. Displays can be used to educate the consumer concerning what the new item is, how it can be worn or used, and how it can be accessorized. Displays may also supply pertinent information, the price, and other special features.

The visual merchandiser may create a display that stimulates, tantalizes, or arouses the shopper's curiosity to such a degree that he or she is "challenged" to enter the store and wander through it, even though the shopper is not motivated by the displayed product itself. This is still a victory. It gives the display person and the merchant many more opportunities to sell that shopper once he or she is inside the store. To make a shopper a *stopper* and a "walk-in" rather than a "walk-by" is a commercial achievement. And always, as mentioned earlier, the purpose of visual merchandising is to promote the store image; to let people know what the store is, where it stands on fashion trends, what one can expect inside the store, to whom it appeals, the price range, and the caliber of its merchandise and merchandising.

The visual merchandiser always puts the store's best "face" forward. His or her duty is to bring shoppers into the store, while at the same time ensuring that the interior presentation is in keeping with what has been promised on the outside.

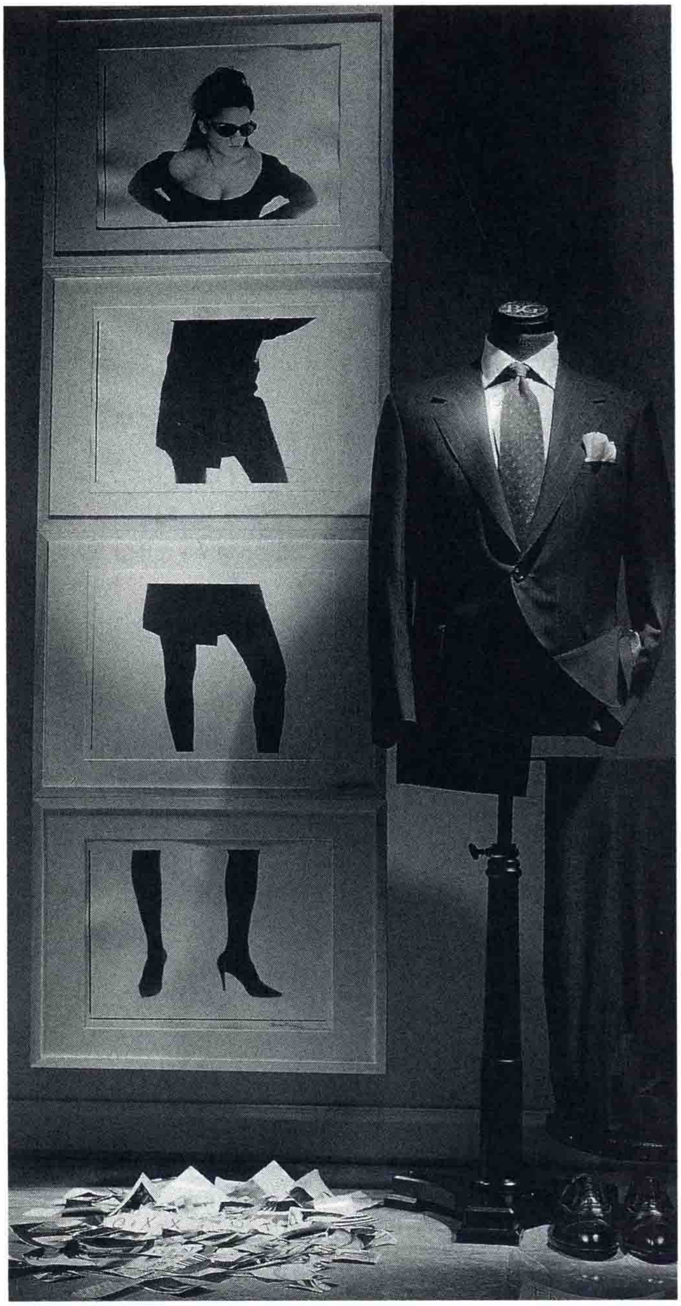


Figure 1.2 Do the unusual! Do the unexpected! Do something smart and clever! This unique use of parts of a photographs – cut up and reassembled in individual frames – serves to attract the shopper to the man's suit carefully rigged on a suit form. *Bergdorf Goodman, Store for Men, Fifth Avenue, New York.*

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Why Do We Display?: A Recap

1. Sell by showing and promoting.

2. Encourage the shopper to enter the store.

3. Get the customer to pause and "shop" the selling floor.

4. Establish, promote, and enhance the store's visual image.

5. Entertain customers and enhance their shopping experience.

6. Introduce and explain new products.

7. Educate customers by answering questions on the use and accessorizing of a product or fashion trend.

Questions for Review and Discussion

1. Describe the role of visual merchandising in retailing today.

2. Compare and contrast the store images of Kmart and J. C. Penney. How does each store promote the individual image through visual merchandising and display? Relate specific examples.

3. List five purposes of visual merchandising and describe a display that would fulfill each of these purposes.

4. What things attract customers to shop in one store over another?

Chapter 2

Color and Texture

Objectives

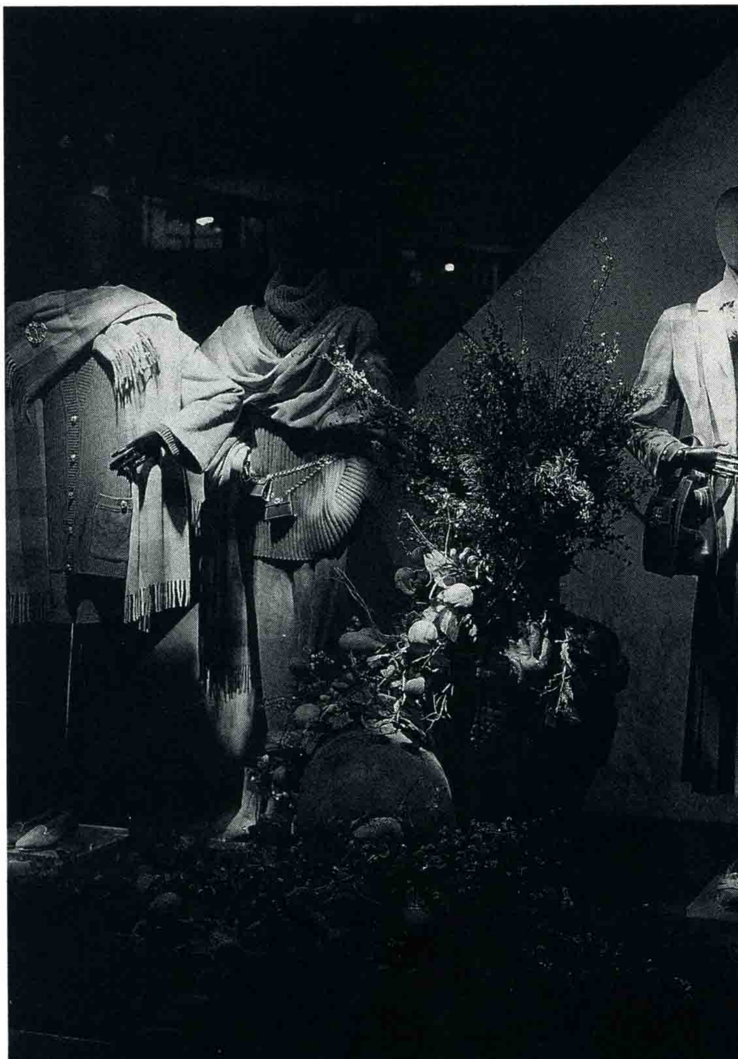
- To explain the relationship between color and personal emotion.
- To identify common associations with and reactions to various colors.
- To identify colors in the warm and cool families.
- To explain the concept of color mixing.
- To define primary, secondary, intermediate, and tertiary colors.
- To explain the concept of value as it relates to color.
- To differentiate between a tint and a shade.
- To describe the purpose of the color wheel.
- To describe and identify an analogous color scheme and a monochromatic color scheme.
- To cite examples of complementary colors.
- To explain how neutral colors are best used in store design.
- To define texture.
- To explain the relationship between texture and color.

Key Terms / Concepts

- *analogous color scheme*
- *color*
- *color wheel*
- *complementary colors*
- *contrasting colors*
- *cool colors*
- *emotional reactions to color*
- *intensity*
- *intermediate colors*
- *monochromatic colors*
- *neutral colors*
- *primary colors*
- *secondary colors*
- *shade*
- *tertiary colors*
- *texture*
- *tint*
- *value*
- *warm colors*

Color sells! It is one of the strongest forces in attracting shoppers and enticing them to buy. Because people are so color-conscious, it is an invaluable selling tool in display. For many customers, color is the most important factor when deciding to buy – even more important than style or price. From infancy, people see colors and are affected by and react to them. Many books have been written about color and the psychology of color: which colors expand or go forward, which contract or withdraw, which will "raise the roof" (or the ceiling at least), and which

Figure 2.1 The Ferragamo window is rich with fall features: wool and tweed fabrics, assorted dried flowers and foliage, branches and twigs, earthenware pottery and woven wicker baskets. The lighting enhances these textures by deepening the shadows as it brings forth the highlights. *Ferragamo, East 56th Street, New York.*



will seem to bring the ceiling down. Some colors make the viewer feel warm, expansive, generous, full of good feelings, all aglow responsive enough to buy anything. Some colors will make the viewer feel cold, aloof, unresponsive, moody, and impossible to reach.

To add to the color confusion, everyone does not react in the same way to the same color. A happy childhood, for example, surrounded by a loving family, and associated with a pink and pretty bedroom, pink and frilly dresses, just pink and pampered all the way, can make "pink" a joyful, loving color. But, if the pink room were forced on the person, the pink but not-so-pretty dresses were hand-me-downs, and pink evoked the memory of medicine, hospitals, and sickness, then "pink" will certainly not be a "turn-on" color. The display person/store planner will not be able to provide the ideal setting for each and every customer, but it is possible to satisfy the vast majority while alienating only a few.

Physical and Psychological Reactions to Color

Color psychology is very important in visual merchandising. Many theories have been espoused concerning the effects of color on people and their moods while shopping. Color can immediately create a mood. Most of us have colors that tend to cheer us up when we're feeling down and colors that calm us. Each of us also has colors that can make us physically feel hotter or cooler. The problem for the visual merchandiser lies in the fact that each person may have a distinct reaction to the same color. In our vast and global marketplace, there are cultural and regional differences in color preference. Also public taste in color changes, sometimes dramatically, over time. However, in trying to predict the effects of color on the public in general, many visual merchandisers rely on these widely researched color responses.

Yellow

It is sunshine and gold; happy, bright, cheerful, vital, fun-filled, and alive; daisies, marigolds, and lemons. It is optimism, expectancy, relaxation, and a wide-open-armed acceptance of the world, suggestive of change, challenge, and innovation. It is spring, summer, Easter, and when it "turns to gold," it is autumn.

Orange

A friendly, sociable color; agreeable, overt, glowing, and incandescent. It is exciting, vibrant, and filled with anticipation. It is fire and flame, a rising sun in the tropics or a setting sun in the desert; Halloween and autumn leaves.

Red

Exciting, stimulating, loving, powerful, and sexy – these are some of the words used to describe red. It can be assertive, demanding, and obvious, possibly even cheap or vulgar. Generally, it comes across as warm, stirring, and passionate. Red is Valentine's Day and Christmas. It is carnations for Father's Day and patriotism – one part of the flag and firecrackers. It conveys "sale," "clearance," a warning, a fire, and a fright. It is a popular color.

Pink

It may be regarded as sweet, lovely, pretty – little girl's complexion, rosebuds, and ribbons and lace. Or it may connote something fleshy, raw, undercooked, and underdeveloped. Pink is also flowers for Mother's Day, for Easter eggs and bunny ears; nightgowns and lingerie; and an elegant approach to Christmas.

Green

An alive, cool, and "growing" color. It is springtime and summer – lawns, bushes, vegetables, trees, and forests – the perfect accent to almost any setting, especially if it is alive and growing. It is St. Patrick's Day and the other half of a Christmas color scheme. Some shades of green can also be bilious and stomach-turning – or reminiscent of khaki and war.

Blue

Always a popular color choice and the favorite of most. Cool, calm, comfortable, and collected, it speaks of soft, soaring skies, serene lakes, gentle horizons, and the security of hearth, home, and flag. It is quiet, but can become cold, moody, or even depressing. It is always right for spring and summer skies, shadows on snow, and patriotic celebrations.

Blue-Green

The happy "marriage" of blue and green. It is a cool, tasteful color – sensitive and restful, but alive, vital though quiet. It is water, sky, and grass, peaceful and

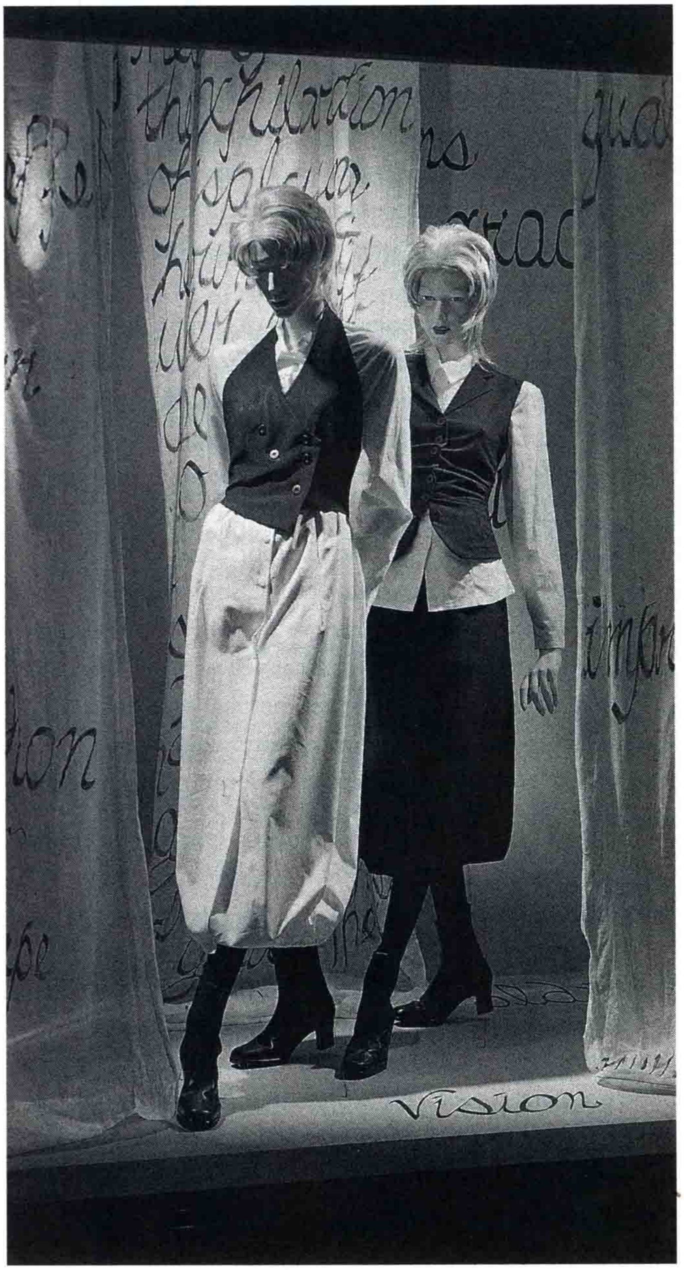


Figure 2.4 Nothing says contrast like black and white. Whether it is white against black, black on top of white or black with white, the white appears whiter and brighter while the black seems darker, deeper and richer. *Bergdorf Goodman, Fifth Avenue, New York.*

growing, a great summer color to complement white and glowing tan complexions.

Peach

Suggests the warmth and happy excitement of orange (toned down) with none of its grating qualities. A smiling, glowing color, it is easy to be with and delightful to be in. A new "neutral," a pastel "earth tone," a friendly color that will go with almost anything.

Rust

The other end of the orange scale, it is deep, rich, earthy without being earthbound. Rust is a full-bodied color with the warmth of orange, but with none of its obvious, blatant, or irritating qualities. It is the "earth" color that goes with other colors, but is neither invisible nor intruding. It is the personification of autumn.

Violet/Purple

This traditionally regal color has, in recent years, become a favorite with children. In some shades it is a happy, youthful color, while, in its deepest and richest form, it is a color of taste, distinction, and discretion. It is a high-fashion color that has to be sold. Purple can sometimes come off as overbearing and pompous. Lavender may convey "old-fashioned charm," Victorian and Easter trim.

Gray

The neutral barrier that makes separations, but no statements. Gray exists – and exists well – with other colors that have more to say. Gray may be either a depression, "down-in-the-dumps" color or a super-elegant and sophisticated color that suggests fine jewelry, silver, furs, and designer salons.

Brown

The earth, hearth, and home; the family and the farm; the simple things, wood, clay and other natural materials. It steps back to let other colors go forward but, unlike gray, it does not disappear. Brown is warm and can sometimes cast a glow. From the lightest off-white beige to the deepest charcoal brown, it is relaxed, unexciting, and in no way unnerving. It is the deep color for autumn.

White

The blankest of the blank, but a strong and able supporting player that makes every other color, by comparison, turn in bigger, bolder, and brighter performances. It is innocence and hope, angels and religious celebrations, a wedding gown, and the blinding brilliance of clear light. Cotton-puff white can be a sparkling accent, a sharp highlight, a crisp delineator, or an unpleasant comparison by which other "whites" may come off as dingy or unhappily yellowed. White can also be sterile, antiseptic, bleak, and harsh.

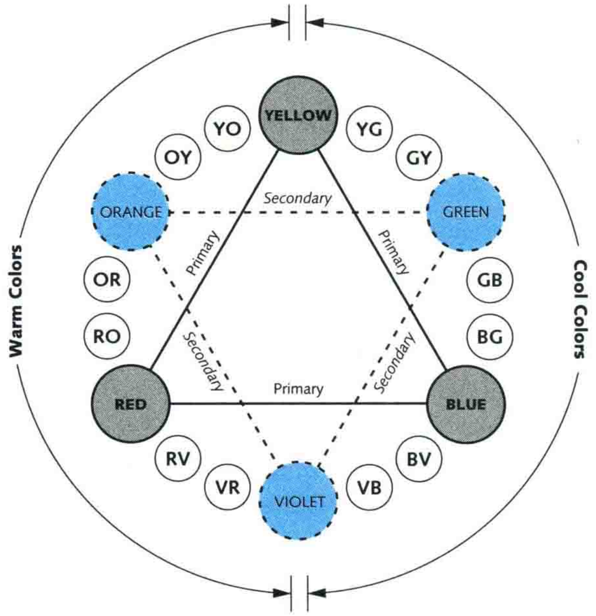
Black

Connotes night, a vacuum, and an absence of light. It is mystery, sex, and death, as well as the color of intrigue and sophistication. Ultra-chic or ultra-depressing, it also can be ominous and threatening or downright dull. It can be as sensuous as satin or as deep as velvet. Black is a neutral, but a neutral that requires careful handling.

The Color Families

In the descriptions of reactions to the colors listed above, certain adjectives appeared over and over again. Some colors were described as "warm and glowing," while others were "cool, calm, aloof." Still another group of colors could be categorized as "neutrals." Thus, most colors are grouped into ambiguous but convenient "families."

Figure 2.2 Mixing color pigments.



Red, orange, yellow, pink, rust, brown, and peach can all be classified as warm, aggressive, spirited, advancing colors. Blue, green, violet, and blue-green are regarded as a group of cool and receding colors. That leaves white, black, and gray to band together as the "neutral" color family.

By personal preference, people of certain age and social groups will respond more readily to one family over another. Young children and nonsophisticates, however, commonly delight in and respond to bright, sharp colors: yellow, red, green, brilliant blue, shocking pink, and clear turquoise. Casual, outgoing, fun-loving, high-spirited people who want fashions and settings to match are drawn to the warm colors. Sophisticated people are supposed to appreciate subtlety: the slightly off-colors, toned down and neutralized without being neutered. Elegant and big-ticket merchandise seems to make a better showing and get a better customer response in a "cool" environment. "Serenity" sells silver, furs, and other choice merchandise.

Color Mixing

In working with color, it is wise to have a basic idea about what color is, how it works, and what it can do. If we accept the long-established theory that there are three basic pigment colors from which all other colors can be mixed, we are well on the way to understanding color.

Red, yellow, and blue are called *primary colors*. By mixing red and yellow, we get orange. Blue and yellow combined will produce green. Equal parts of red and blue make violet, or purple. These resulting colors – orange, green, and violet – are *secondary colors*. Furthermore, mixing yellow (a primary color) with green (a secondary), and depending on the quantity of each color used, the result would be a yellow-green or a green-yellow. This is an intermediate color. Mixing two secondary colors (orange plus green or green plus purple) results in a tertiary color. All those romantic, exotic names with which fashion and decorating about such as shrimp, mango, avocado, chartreuse, peach, pumpkin, plum, and so on, are actually selling names of these tertiary colors.

Value refers to the amount of light or dark in a color. Add white to any of the full-value colors (primary,

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